

"The Keystone of Our Religion"

Lesson 1

Introduction

Picture in your mind a stone arch. When an arch is constructed correctly, it can remain standing even without any mortar between the stones. What holds the arch together? A keystone. The keystone of an arch holds the other stones in place. This lesson discusses the keystone of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints--the Book of Mormon.

The Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion.

Turn to the **introduction to the Book of Mormon**, and read the sixth paragraph.

Joseph Smith called the Book of Mormon the keystone of our religion. President Ezra Taft Benson explained, *"Just as the arch crumbles if the keystone is removed, so does all the Church stand or fall with the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon"* (Ensign, Nov. 1986, 6).

The Church *"stand[s] or fall[s] with the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon"* as President Benson explains: *"There are three ways in which the Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion. It is the keystone in our witness of Christ. It is the keystone of our doctrine. It is the keystone of testimony"* (Ensign, Nov. 1986, 5).

Turn to the **title page of the Book of Mormon**. This page was written by the prophet Moroni.

According to the second paragraph, there are three purposes of the Book of Mormon: 1) To show the remnant of the house of Israel the great things the Lord has done for their fathers; 2) to teach the covenants required by the Lord; and 3) to convince all people that Jesus is the Christ, manifesting Himself to all nations.

In 1982 the subtitle *Another Testament of Jesus Christ* was added to the title of the Book of Mormon.

1 Nephi 13:38-41 and 2 Nephi 29:6-9 help us understand why it is important to have this additional testament of the Savior. It is important to declare to the world that the Book of Mormon testifies of Christ. Think about what you have learned from the Book of Mormon about Jesus Christ and how the Book of Mormon has strengthened your testimony of Jesus Christ.

D&C 10:45-46 and D&C 20:8-12 show us some ways the Book of Mormon is the *"keystone of our doctrine"*. President Benson stated: *"The Lord Himself has stated that the Book of Mormon contains the 'fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ' (D&C 20:9). That does not mean it contains every teaching, every doctrine ever revealed. Rather, it means that in the Book of Mormon we will find the fulness of those doctrines required for our salvation. And they are taught plainly and simply so that even children can learn the ways of salvation and exaltation"* (Ensign, Nov. 1986, 6). Think about how the Book of Mormon has increased your understanding of important gospel doctrines.

Moroni 10:3-5 The Book of Mormon is fundamental to a testimony of the restored gospel. Blessings come to those who receive a testimony of the Book of Mormon and follow its teachings. This scripture teaches us what we must do to gain a testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon.

Many witnesses have testified of the Book of Mormon.

Think about the events recorded in the Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith. After Joseph Smith had finished translating the Book of Mormon, other people were privileged to see the plates, so we have the Testimony of the Three Witnesses and the Testimony of the Eight Witnesses.

Ether 5:2-4 It was important to have additional witnesses of the gold plates. Having additional witnesses helped the Prophet Joseph Smith establish the truth of his testimony concerning the ancient records. Other witnesses, including the current prophet, testify that the Book of Mormon is true as do many who have followed the previously-reviewed counsel in Moroni 10:3-5.

The Book of Mormon was written for our day.

2 Nephi 25:21-22; 2 Nephi 27:22; Mormon 8:34-35; Moroni 1:4 Although the Book of Mormon is an ancient document, it was written and preserved for our day.

Mormon 8:26-41 These verses contain a prophecy about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

Moroni foresaw the conditions that would exist in the world when the Book of Mormon was again brought forth. Think about how these conditions are evident in the world today:

“The power of God shall be denied” (verse 28).

“There shall be great pollutions upon the face of the earth” (verse 31).

People will *“lift themselves up in the pride of their hearts”* (verse 36).

People will *“love money ... more than [they] love the poor and the needy”* (verse 37).

People will be *“ashamed to take upon [themselves] the name of Christ”* (verse 38).

1 Nephi 19:23 Think about ways in which the teachings of ancient prophets can be a source of help to us. Knowing that the Book of Mormon was written for our day should influence the way we study it.

President Benson taught: *“The Book of Mormon ... was written for our day. The Nephites never had the book; neither did the Lamanites of ancient times. It was meant for us. ... Each of the major writers of the Book of Mormon testified that he wrote for future generations. ... If they saw our day and chose those things which would be of greatest worth to us, is not that how we should study the Book of Mormon? We should constantly ask ourselves, ‘Why did the Lord inspire Mormon (or Moroni or Alma) to include that in his record? What lesson can I learn from that to help me live in this day and age?’ ”* (Ensign, Nov. 1986, 6).

The Book of Mormon can bring us nearer to God.

Again, please read the **sixth paragraph of the introduction to the Book of Mormon.**

Precepts are commandments or principles. Think about how the precepts of the Book of Mormon can bring us nearer to God.

D&C 84:54-58 teaches us the consequences to us, individually and as a church, if we do not study the Book of Mormon.

Think about the changes and blessings that have come into your life when you have studied and pondered the Book of Mormon regularly.

Conclusion

President Ezra Taft Benson taught: *“The moment you begin a serious study of [the Book of Mormon, you] will find greater power to resist temptation. You will find the power to avoid deception. You will find the power to stay on the strait and narrow path. ... When you begin to hunger and thirst after those words, you will find life in greater and greater abundance”* (Ensign, Nov. 1986, 7).

Experience the fulfillment of these promises for yourself by studying the Book of Mormon this year.

An Additional Teaching: The importance of the Book of Mormon in the Restoration of the gospel

Note the order in which these events occurred

1. Joseph Smith receives the First Vision.
2. The Book of Mormon comes forth.
3. The Melchizedek Priesthood is restored.
4. The Church is organized.
5. Apostles are called.
6. Temple work for the dead begins

President Ezra Taft Benson: *“A ... powerful testimony to the importance of the Book of Mormon is to note where the Lord placed its coming forth in the timetable of the unfolding Restoration. The only thing that preceded it was the First Vision. ... “Think of that in terms of what it implies. The coming forth of the Book of Mormon preceded the restoration of the priesthood. It was published just a few days before the Church was organized. The Saints were given the Book of Mormon to read before they were given the revelations outlining such great doctrines as the three degrees of glory, celestial marriage, or work for the dead. It came before priesthood quorums and Church organization. Doesn’t this tell us something about how the Lord views this sacred work?”* (Ensign, Nov. 1986, 4).

All Things According to His Will

Lesson 2 - 1 Nephi 1-7

Introduction

Imagine that you have just learned that the city where you live is going to be destroyed and you must leave immediately. Think about how you would feel about this news. Think about what you would do. Would it make a difference in how you felt and what you did if you knew that this information had come through a prophet of God? This lesson is about Lehi and his family, who left their home in Jerusalem because the city was soon to be destroyed. The lesson will discuss where they went and what they did after departing from Jerusalem.

Lehi left Jerusalem and took his family into the wilderness.

One of the first events described in the Book of Mormon is the departure from Jerusalem of Lehi and his family.

1 Nephi 1:4-15,18-20 and 1 Nephi 2:1-3 record the circumstances that led to this departure.

1 Nephi 1:19-20; 1 Nephi 2:12-13; 1 Nephi 16:1-2 reveal that the people of Jerusalem rejected the message of Lehi and other prophets because those prophets testified of the wickedness and abominations of the people. The wicked take the truth as a "hard thing" and persecute those who deliver God's message of condemnation and direction to repent.

1 Nephi 2:16,19 Some people today rebel against the Lord and His servants because of their lack of humility and lack of interest in the Lord's work.

As an example of righteousness, Nephi responded to his father's message with great interest and sincere prayer. We can learn from Nephi's example how to make our hearts more receptive to the teachings of the prophets by listening, pondering, and seeking heavenly confirmation of their messages.

1 Nephi 2:19-20, 22 The Lord promised Nephi that if he would obey the commandments, he would prosper, be led to a promised land, and be a ruler over his brethren.

1 Nephi 2:21, 23-24 The Lord promised Laman and Lemuel that if they rebelled, they would be cut off from his presence and cursed. Each of these promises applies to us since they are consistent with eternal laws and the associated punishments.

1 Nephi 2:2 Lehi took his family in a wilderness (uninhabited land) when they left Jerusalem.

1 Nephi 2:4 The family left almost all worldly possessions behind as they departed.

Consider how Lehi's family felt having to leave their home, possessions, and friends. Then think about what sacrifices you have made to be obedient to the Lord. Finally, consider the blessings you have received as you have made such sacrifices.

1 Nephi 2:6-7; 1 Nephi 5:9; 1 Nephi 7:22 After three days in the wilderness, Lehi built an altar and gave thanks to the Lord. Think about how you can develop feelings of gratitude even in difficult circumstances.

Important blessings resulted from Lehi's obeying the Lord and leaving Jerusalem including Lehi's and Ishmael's families being saved from destruction; a branch of Israel was guided to the promised land; and the Book of Mormon, another witness of Jesus Christ, was provided.

Nephi and his brothers returned to Jerusalem to obtain the plates of brass.

1 Nephi 3:1-4 tells us that Lehi sent his sons back to Jerusalem to obtain the plates of brass that included the record of the Jews and important genealogical records.

1 Nephi 3:5 records how Laman and Lemuel responded to being sent back by complaining.

1 Nephi 3:7 records Nephi's dramatically different response in accepting the Lord's direction with faith and confidence.

If you had been asked to make this trip, think about how you might have responded and what difference it would have made to know that the Lord had asked it of you.

1 Nephi 3:3, 19-20; 1 Nephi 4:15-16; 1 Nephi 5:21-22; Mosiah 1:3-7 Lehi's family needed to obtain the brass plates to preserve their language, religion, and law (commandments).

1 Nephi 3:9 - 4:38 records the efforts of Nephi and his brothers to obtain the plates.

1 Nephi 4:6 Some situations may occur in which we might need to be "*led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which [we] should do*" in both our temporal and spiritual lives.

1 Nephi 4:7 We learn the importance of faith from Nephi's words: "*Nevertheless I went forth*".

1 Nephi 4:10 Nephi was reluctant to kill Laban because he had never before shed human blood.

1 Nephi 4:11-18 Nephi became convinced that he should kill Laban because of the Spirit's counsel and because of the importance of obtaining the indispensable records.

1 Nephi 3:7 The Lord did "prepare a way" for Nephi to do what he had been commanded to do. Think carefully about how the Lord has prepared ways for you to keep His commandments.

1 Nephi 4:35-36 Nephi and his brothers wanted Zoram to return to the wilderness with them so that the Jews would not know where they had gone and pursue them.

1 Nephi 4:31-34 Zoram was persuaded to accompany Nephi and his brothers by Nephi's pledge that Zoram would be free and that they were doing the Lord's work. Among the people in Lehi's time, an oath was sacred, so Zoram knew that Nephi would never break his oath. Consider how important it is that we be known as people who keep our word.

Although Laman and Lemuel obeyed their father by going into the wilderness and then returning to Jerusalem for the

brass plates, they murmured and rebelled repeatedly during the family's journeyings. Nephi and Sam, on the other hand, were faithful and obedient throughout their experiences.

1 Nephi 2:17; 1 Nephi 8:3 While Sam is not often mentioned, the scriptures indicate that he was faithful and obedient, as Nephi was.

In the following scriptures, look for words or phrases that characterize Nephi.

NEPHI

1 Nephi 1:1 Knew he had "goodly parents"

1 Nephi 2:16 Believed all the words spoken by his father

1 Nephi 2:16, 1 Nephi 2:19 Went to the Lord for understanding

1 Nephi 3:7 Was willing to go and do what the Lord commanded

1 Nephi 3:15 Refused to return without records

1 Nephi 4:1, 1 Nephi 4:3 Knew that the Lord was "mightier than Laban"

Note that Nephi demonstrated strong and abiding faith. It is an example we should follow.

In these scriptures, look for words or phrases that characterize Laman and Lemuel.

LAMAN AND LEMUEL

1 Nephi 2:11 Murmured against their father

1 Nephi 2:13 Did not believe all Lehi's words

1 Nephi 2:12 "Knew not the dealings of God"

1 Nephi 3:5 Complained that the Lord had asked "a hard thing"

1 Nephi 3:14 Wanted to give up after one try

1 Nephi 3:31 Doubted that the Lord could deliver Laban to them

1 Nephi 2:11-12 Laman and Lemuel murmured and rebelled.

1 Nephi 2:18 Laman and Lemuel were unable to know the dealings of God.

Nephi and his brothers brought the brass plates to their family.

1 Nephi 5:1-9 Lehi and Sariah reacted with great joy when their four sons finally returned with the brass plates.

1 Nephi 5:8 Their return strengthened Sariah's testimony as she realized that her husband was indeed called as a prophet and that her sons had been given power to do the work of the Lord.

1 Nephi 5:10-16; 1 Nephi 13:23 records that the brass plates contained the five books of Moses, a record of the Jews down to King Zedekiah [about 600 B.C.], prophecies of the holy prophets, and the genealogy of Lehi's family.

1 Nephi 5:17-19 Lehi prophesied that the brass plates would go forth to every nation, kindred, and tongue, and that they would never perish. These prophecies are being fulfilled as the gospel's missionary work is spreading across the entire face of the earth in our day.

Nephi and his brothers returned to Jerusalem for Ishmael and his family.

1 Nephi 7:1-2 Nephi and his brothers returned again to Jerusalem soon after bringing back the brass plates so that the sons might have wives and raise up posterity.

1 Nephi 7:4-5 Ishmael and his family were persuaded to join Lehi's family by the influence of the Spirit.

1 Nephi 7:6-7 Laman and Lemuel and some of the children of Ishmael rebelled during their journey in the wilderness because they wanted to return to Jerusalem. Think about why they may have wanted to return to Jerusalem in spite of what their fathers advised.

1 Nephi 7:13 Nephi said that if they continued in the wilderness and were faithful to the Lord, they would obtain a land of promise and that they would know that Jerusalem had indeed been destroyed.

1 Nephi 7:13-15 Nephi said that if they returned to stay in Jerusalem, they would perish with the Jews.

1 Nephi 2:17-18 and 1 Nephi 7:21 Qualities Nephi exhibited in his dealings with his brothers included compassion in his prayers concerning their welfare and forgiveness for their actions against him.

Think about how you can demonstrate these qualities in your relationships with your family members and others.

Conclusion

Because of Lehi's and Nephi's willing obedience, millions of people have been blessed. Always "*go and do the things which the Lord hath commanded*" (1 Nephi 3:7).

The Vision of the Tree of Life

Lesson 3 - 1 Nephi 8-11; 1 Nephi 12:16-18; 1 Nephi 15

Introduction

Many symbolic dreams and visions are recorded in the scriptures. For instance, King Nebuchadnezzar dreamed of a large image, or statue, of a man. Each part of the man's body was made of a different material. A stone destroyed the image and became a mountain, filling the whole earth. (See Daniel 2:31-45; see also D&C 65:2). The various parts of the image represented kingdoms that have reigned on the earth. The stone represented the kingdom of God, which would consume all other kingdoms in the latter days. Also, Pharaoh dreamed of seven lean and ill cattle devouring seven fat and healthy cattle and seven poor ears of corn devouring seven good ears of corn. (See Genesis 41:17-31). The seven healthy cattle and seven good ears of corn represented seven years of prosperity that would come to Egypt. The seven ill cattle and seven poor ears of corn represented seven years of famine that would follow the years of plenty. Finally, in a vision, the Apostle Peter saw unclean animals lowered from heaven in a great sheet, and he was commanded to kill and eat these animals. (See Acts 10:9-16, 28,34-35). The unclean animals represented the Gentiles, who were now to be taught the gospel.

Today's lesson discusses another symbolic dream described in the scriptures: the vision of the tree of life received by Lehi and Nephi. Unlike the many dreams or visions that have application only to specific people or at a specific time (like Pharaoh's dream of the cattle and corn), the vision of the tree of life applies to each of God's children. Seek to understand the symbols in the vision of the tree of life and the application of these symbols in your life.

The symbols in the vision of the tree of life

Lehi received a vision and told his family about it (1 Nephi 8:2). After Nephi heard his father speak about the things in the vision, he also wanted to *"see, and hear, and know of [those] things"* (1 Nephi 10:17). Because of Nephi's belief in Jesus Christ, his request was granted (1 Nephi 11:6). It is through Nephi's record of his experience that we know the interpretation of the vision. The major elements of the vision included:

THE TREE OF LIFE AND ITS FRUIT

Read **1 Nephi 8:2-10**. Lehi spoke about his dream and his joy and concern because of his sons' roles in the dream.

1 Nephi 11:8-11 When Nephi was shown the tree of life, he asked to know its interpretation.

1 Nephi 11:21-25 He learned that the tree represents the love of God.

1 Nephi 11:13-21,24,1 Nephi 11:26-33. To help him better understand God's love, Nephi saw the birth, ministry, and Atonement of Jesus Christ.

John 3:16 teaches that Heavenly Father showed the depth of His love for us when He *"gave his only begotten Son."* The Atonement is evidence of Jesus Christ's great love for us.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland taught that the tree of life is a symbol of Jesus Christ. He said: *"The images of Christ and the tree [are] inextricably linked. At the very outset of the Book of Mormon, Christ is portrayed as the source of eternal life and joy, the living evidence of divine love, and the means whereby God will fulfill his covenant with the house of Israel and indeed the entire family of man, returning them all to their eternal promises"* (Christ and the New Covenant [1997], 160, 162).

Consider the influence the love of God has in your life and how you can more fully recognize God's love for you.

1 Nephi 15:36; D&C 14:7. The fruit of the tree represented eternal life.

Lehi and Nephi described the tree of life and its fruit in the following passages:

- "Most sweet, above all that I ever before tasted" (**1 Nephi 8:11**)
- "White, to exceed all...whiteness" (**1 Nephi 8:11**; see also **1 Nephi 11:8**)
- "Desirable above all other fruit" (**1 Nephi 8:12**; see also **1 Nephi 15:36**)
- Having "beauty exceeding of all beauty" (**1 Nephi 11:8**)
- "Precious above all"; "most precious" (**1 Nephi 11:9**; **1 Nephi 15:36**)
- "Most joyous to the soul" (**1 Nephi 11:23**; see also **1 Nephi 8:10**)
- "The greatest of all the gifts of God" (**1 Nephi 15:36**). Eternal life is the "most sweet" and "most precious" blessing we can receive. Because of God's love for us, this blessing is available to us through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

1 Nephi 8:12 In the vision, once Lehi had partaken of the fruit of the tree, he wanted his family to partake. We also need to help our loved ones draw nearer to the Savior and receive the promise of eternal life.

THE ROD OF IRON

1 Nephi 8:19-20 describes the rod of iron and a path to the tree.

1 Nephi 11:25; **1 Nephi 15:23-24** The rod of iron represents the word of God. We find the word of God in the scriptures, the teachings of latter-day prophets, and the promptings of the Holy Ghost. The word of God helps us come unto Christ and helps keep us on the path to eternal life.

THE RIVER OF FILTHY WATER, THE MIST OF DARKNESS, and THE GREAT AND SPACIOUS BUILDING

1 Nephi 8:13,23,26-27 describe the river of water, the mist of darkness, and the great and spacious building.

1 Nephi 12:16; 1 Nephi 15:26-29 The river of filthy water represents the depths of hell.

1 Nephi 12:17 The mist of darkness represents the temptations of the devil.

1 Nephi 8:23; 1 Nephi 12:17 The effects of the mist of darkness include blinding of the eyes, hardening of the heart, and causing individuals to be led into evil that will destroy them. Satan wants our eyes to be blinded to the love of God; to the Atonement of Jesus Christ; to the word of God. Satan tries to blind our eyes with various temptations--ones chosen to prey on our individual weaknesses.

1 Nephi 8:19,24,30 The rod of iron "*extended along the bank of the river*", serving as a protection between the strait and narrow path and the filthy water. It also gave the people in the vision something to cling to when they were in the mist of darkness. This teaches that the word of God can help us by becoming a protection to us as we follow its precepts.

1 Nephi 11:34-36; 1 Nephi 12:18 The great and spacious building represented the vain imaginations and pride of the world.

1 Nephi 8:26 It is significant that the building "*stood...in the air*". From this we note that the building did not have a solid foundation. Pride can keep a person from receiving eternal life by enticing them to build on a worldly foundation rather than an eternal one.

1 Nephi 8:26-28 Some people in the vision tasted of the fruit but were ashamed because the people in the great and spacious building mocked them. It takes strength, our own and that of the Spirit as our companion, to withstand persecution.

THE PEOPLE IN THE VISION OF THE TREE OF LIFE

1 Nephi 8:21 In the vision, Lehi saw "*numberless concourses of people*". These people can be divided into four categories based on their actions in seeking the tree and the fruit.

a. **1 Nephi 8:21-23.** Those who start on the path, but then become lost in the mist of darkness.

b. **1 Nephi 8:24-28** Those who hold to the rod of iron until they reach the tree and partake of the fruit, but then become ashamed and fall away.

c. **1 Nephi 8:30** Those who hold to the rod of iron until they reach the tree and partake of the fruit, and who then remain faithful.

d. **1 Nephi 8:31-33** Those who never start on the path but instead go directly toward the great and spacious building.

Think about how these categories are manifested in the world today. For example, people who say that they want eternal life but are distracted by other things, such as material wealth or worldly pleasures, are like those who start on the path but then become lost.

1 Nephi 8:28; 1 Nephi 8:32; 1 Nephi 12:17 In the vision, people traveled "forbidden," "strange," or "broad" roads when they let go of the iron rod or left the tree of life. Think about what happens to those who follow such roads. If we are moving toward "forbidden," "strange," or "broad" roads, we need to change direction and return to the strait and narrow path by embracing the iron rod, the word of God.

Think about some things you must do to stay on the strait and narrow path. Also consider ways in which you may help others stay on the path or return to it.

Conclusion

Mark the following words in your scriptures: *commence* (1 Nephi 8:22), *caught hold* (1 Nephi 8:24), *clinging* (1 Nephi 8:24), and *continually* (1 Nephi 8:30). These words help us understand what we must do to reach the tree of life: we must commence in the strait and narrow path, catch hold of the rod of iron and cling to it, and continue moving toward the tree.

Additional Teachings

"He that diligently seeketh shall find" (1 Nephi 10:19)

1 Nephi 10:17 Nephi desired to see the same vision after he heard about his father's vision.

1 Nephi 10:17-19; 1 Nephi 11:1-6 To have this desire fulfilled, he pondered his father's description of the vision and exercised faith. Nephi's example can help us as we seek to understand gospel truths.

"Knowest thou the condescension of God?" (1 Nephi 11:16)

"Condescension of God" (1 Nephi 11:16,26) means coming down voluntarily to a lower level.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie: *"The condescension of God (meaning the Father) consists in the fact that he became the personal and literal Father of a mortal Offspring born of mortal woman. And the condescension of God (meaning the Son) consists in the fact that he [Jesus Christ] submitted to all the trials of mortality, suffering 'temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death' (Mosiah 3:5-8), finally being put to death in a most ignominious manner"* (Mormon Doctrine, 2nd ed. [1966], 155).

"And they were in the attitude of mocking" (1 Nephi 8:27)

As you consider the great and spacious building, note that the people in the building had an "*attitude of mocking*." This mocking led some who had partaken of the fruit to be ashamed and fall away (1 Nephi 8:27-28).

Our attitudes toward others might lead them to fall away. Accountable individuals are responsible for their own actions; however, our attitude toward others can either strengthen them in their righteous efforts or discourage them. We must strengthen each other and to never mock or belittle others.

"The Things Which I Saw While I Was Carried Away in the Spirit"
Lesson 4 - 1 Nephi 12-14

Introduction

Nephi saw these events and others in his vision of the future.

- The Crucifixion of Jesus Christ (A.D. 33)
- The Great Apostasy (approximately A.D. 100 through A.D. 1800)
- The final battle between the Lamanites and the Nephites (about A.D. 385)
- The discovery of the Americas by Christopher Columbus (A.D. 1492)
- The Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ (A.D. 1820-present)

Nephi saw the future of his descendants and his brothers' descendants.

In 1 Nephi 12, Nephi describes his vision of the future of his seed (his descendants) and the seed of his brothers. Note how some symbols in the vision of the tree of life (the mist of darkness, the great and spacious building, and the river of filthy water) foreshadowed the downfall of Nephi's seed.

1 Nephi 12:1-6 Nephi described the conditions on the earth that would precede the Savior's visit to America including a large population in many cities, great loss of life in wars, and darkness, thunder and lightnings, and earthquakes accompanied by fire and destruction.

Joseph Smith-Matthew 1:27-37 The conditions Nephi beheld were similar to the conditions that will precede the Savior's Second Coming.

1 Nephi 12:11-12; and note the fulfillment of this prophecy in 4 Nephi 1:2-4 Nephi saw generations pass away in righteousness following the Savior's visit.

4 Nephi 1:15 The love of God among the people brought about this righteousness and peace.

1 Nephi 12:12-15 Nephi saw that after nearly four generations of righteousness, his seed and the seed of his brethren would again begin battling each other.

1 Nephi 12:19-20 Nephi saw that his descendants would be overcome by the Lamanites in these battles.

1 Nephi 12:19 Nephi's descendants were overpowered and destroyed because of their pride and desire for the temptations of the devil. Pride and the temptations of the devil lead to destruction by drawing us away from the strait and narrow path to eternal life.

Nephi saw the formation of the great and abominable church, the colonization of the Americas, the Apostasy, and the Restoration of the gospel.

1 Nephi 13 is a record of Nephi's vision of the following:

- The formation of the great and abominable church.
- The discovery and colonization of the Americas.
- The Apostasy and the loss of many plain and precious parts of the Bible.
- The coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the Restoration of the gospel.

The formation of the great and abominable church

1 Nephi 13:4-5 Nephi saw the formation of a great church that "slayeth the saints of God" *"among the nations of the Gentiles"*.

1 Nephi 13:6 The devil is the founder of *the great and abominable church*.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie said, *"The titles church of the devil and great and abominable church are used to identify all churches or organizations of whatever name or nature; whether political, philosophical, educational, economic, social, fraternal, civic, or religious; which are designed to take men on a course that leads away from God and his laws and thus from salvation in the kingdom of God"* (Mormon Doctrine, 2nd ed. [1966], 137-38).

The great and abominable church is a symbol of apostasy in all its forms. It is a representation of all false doctrine, false worship, and irreligious attitudes. It does **not** represent any specific church in the world today.

1 Nephi 13:5-9 Some of the characteristics of the *"great and abominable church"* are that it weakens faith, desires worldly riches and sins, and seeks the praise of the world.

Compare **1 Nephi 13:5-9** with **1 Nephi 11:35-36** The symbol of the great and spacious building from the vision of the tree of life corresponds to the great and abominable church.

Around us, we can see evidence of the great and abominable church working to destroy the Saints today. We can ensure that we are not deceived by people or organizations that lead people away from God and His laws by following the prophet and the Spirit and keeping the commandments.

The discovery and colonization of the Americas

1 Nephi 13:12-13 The Gentiles who *"went forth...upon the many waters"* are understood to be Christopher Columbus and other early explorers and settlers of the Americas.

1 Nephi 13:14-19 The Spirit and power of God enabled these explorers and settlers to be successful in their endeavors.

D&C 101:77-80 These early explorers and settlers played a role in the Restoration of the gospel by preparing the way for the founding of the United States of America. The Constitution of the United States established freedoms regarding religion that were necessary for the Book of Mormon to be brought forth and the gospel to be restored.

The Apostasy and the loss of many plain and precious parts of the Bible

1 Nephi 13:20-23 The book Nephi saw the Gentiles carrying was the Bible.

1 Nephi 13:24-26 The great and abominable church took away many plain and precious parts of this book including covenants of the Lord.

1 Nephi 13:27 The Bible was altered to pervert the right, blind men, and harden the hearts of the children of men.

1 Nephi 13:29 Consequences resulting from the loss of "*many plain and precious things*" from the Bible are that many are confused about the truth and they stumble and fall under the power of Satan.

The coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the Restoration of the gospel

1 Nephi 13:35-36 The Lord knew that the great and abominable church would try to destroy the word of God in the Bible. These verses show that He ensured that His words would be preserved to come forth in the latter days. The record that was kept by Nephi's seed is The Book of Mormon.

1 Nephi 13:40-41; Mormon 7:8-9; D&C 20:8-12 Purposes of the Book of Mormon include being a second witness to truths in the Bible, testifying of Christ and his mission as the Savior of men, to teach the commandments that lead men to Christ, and to teach the gospel of Christ.

Many of us have seen these purposes fulfilled as we have studied and shared the gospel.

Some doctrines that are difficult to understand in the Bible but plain and precious in the Book of Mormon include the Atonement, resurrection, and baptism. Examples of how these doctrines are taught clearly in the Book of Mormon include **Alma 11:42-45**, which teaches plain and precious truths about the Atonement and resurrection, and **3 Nephi 11:21-26** and **Moroni 8:11-12**, which teach plain and precious truths about baptism.

Think about how the Book of Mormon has helped make the Bible more understandable to you or increased your testimony of the Bible.

Nephi saw the blessings promised to the faithful; he also saw the destruction of the great and abominable church.

1 Nephi 14:1-7 Blessings promised to the Gentiles (non-Israelites) if they remain faithful to the Lord include: 1) Christ shall manifest himself in word, power, and deed and take away their stumbling blocks, 2) they shall be accepted into the House of Israel, 3) they will be blessed in the promised land, 4) they shall remain free, 5) they will know of the covenants of the Lord unto the House of Israel, and 6) they will receive peace and eternal life.

Read the same verses The cursings promised to the Gentiles if they harden their hearts and turn away from the Lord include: 1) they will be destroyed and led away to hell, 2) they will be taken captive by the devil, 3) they will suffer the justice of God, 4) they will perish, 5) they will be delivered into captivity and both spiritual and temporal destruction by the hardness of their hearts and the blindness of their minds.

Obviously, we must soften our hearts so that we can receive the blessings and avoid the cursings.

1 Nephi 14:10; 2 Nephi 10:16 There only two forces in the world today--the forces loyal to Christ and those that oppose Him.

1 Nephi 14:3-4, 15-17; 1 Nephi 22:23 Eventually, the wrath of God will be poured out on the great and abominable church and it will be consumed as stubble.

Nephi saw that even though the members of the Lord's Church in the last days would be comparatively few, they would be able to overcome the persecution of the great and abominable church.

1 Nephi 14:14 Nephi saw the Saints of God armed with righteousness and the power of God. Think about how you can be "*armed with righteousness and with the power of God*".

Conclusion

Nephi's vision provides an overview of much that has occurred and will yet occur in the history of the earth. It also shows us that we must choose between only two options: following Jesus Christ or working against Him and thus following Satan. The blessings promised in 1 Nephi 14 are available to all of us if we choose to follow Jesus Christ.

"Hearken to the Truth, and Give Heed unto It"

Lesson 5 - 1 Nephi 16-22

Introduction

Read 1 Nephi 3:4 and think about what might have happened if Nephi had responded to the Lord's commandment with one of these statements:

"I don't want to."

"I'll think about it."

"I'll try."

How did Nephi respond? "*I will.*" (1 Nephi 3:7)

Nephi and his family were blessed as they traveled to the Promised Land because Nephi continued to have an "*I will*" attitude; he did not hesitate to obey the Lord's commandments. This lesson shows how you can follow Nephi's example of faith and willing obedience.

The Lord guided the families of Lehi and Ishmael according to their faith and diligence.

Alma 37:38 The "*ball, or director*" that the Lord gave Lehi was called "*Liahona*", a compass that the Lord specifically prepared for him.

1 Nephi 16:10, 29 The purpose of the Liahona was 1) to point the way they should go and, 2) to give them understanding of the ways of the Lord.

1 Nephi 16:28-29; Alma 37:40 The people needed to give faith, diligence and heed to the directions given in order for the Liahona to work.

Alma 37:41-42 Consequences that ensued when the people were unfaithful and disobedient included: 1) marvelous works of God ceased among them, 2) they did not progress in their journey, and 3) they suffered hunger and thirst while they were delayed or while they wandered without God's guidance.

Some guides in our lives that, like the Liahona, work according to our faith and diligence include the scriptures, as explained in **Alma 37:38-46**; the Holy Ghost; patriarchal blessings; teachings of living prophets; and our conscience, as explained in this quotation from **President Spencer W. Kimball**: "*The Lord gave to...every person, a conscience which tells him every time he starts to go on the wrong path. He is always told if he is listening; but people can, of course, become so used to hearing the messages that they ignore them until finally they do not register anymore. ...You must realize that you have something like the compass, like the Liahona, in your own system. Every child is given it. ... If he ignores the Liahona that he has in his own makeup, he eventually may not have it whispering to him. ...Our ship will not get on the wrong course... if we listen to the dictates of our own Liahona, which we call the conscience*" (Ensign, Nov. 1976, 79).

1 Nephi 16:18, 20 Laman and Lemuel reacted with anger (hardening their hearts) when Nephi broke his bow, and they began to murmur against the Lord and became sorrowful.

1 Nephi 16:20 Even Lehi joined in the murmuring and became sorrowful.

1 Nephi 16:22-23 Nephi encouraged his brethren not to harden their hearts and set an example by fashioning a bow and arrow and seeking guidance from his father.

We should learn from Nephi's response to this challenge. His example can help us when we face challenges, reminding us that we should trust in the Lord, work diligently to overcome the challenges, and avoid complaining against the Lord and His servants.

1 Nephi 16:23 After Nephi made a new bow; he asked Lehi where to go to obtain food.

1 Nephi 16:24-25 Lehi responded to his son's request by inquiring of the Lord.

1 Nephi 16:26-32 As a result of Lehi's humbling himself and turning to the Lord, Nephi was given direction to go forth to the top of a mountain, where he obtained food. We learn from the Lord's dealings with Lehi in this instance that the Lord will forgive and bless us when we humble ourselves and turn to Him.

Speaking of the Liahona, Nephi observed that "*by small means the Lord can bring about great things*" (**1 Nephi 16:29; see also Alma 37:6-7; D&C 64:33**). Think about how you have seen that this is true in your life. Think about how the knowledge of this principle can help you.

Nephi demonstrated unwavering faith by fulfilling the Lord's command to build a ship.

1 Nephi 17:8-11, 1 Nephi 17:16-19, 1 Nephi 17:50-51; 1 Nephi 18:1-3; see also James 2:17-18 Nephi's actions in response to the Lord's command to build a ship inspired this comment by **Elder L. Tom Perry**: "*This is one of the more interesting stories we have in the scriptures because it tells of an instance in which the Lord provided help but then stepped aside to allow one of His sons to exercise his own initiative. I have sometimes wondered what would have happened if Nephi had asked the Lord for tools instead of a place to find the ore to make the tools. I doubt the Lord would have honored Nephi's request. You see, the Lord knew that Nephi could make the tools, and it is seldom the Lord will do something for us that we can do for ourselves*" (Ensign, Nov. 1991, 64).

1 Nephi 17:17-22 Laman and Lemuel's reaction when they saw that Nephi was about to build a ship included murmuring

against him, complaining, refusing to labor on the project, doubting his ability to build a ship, refusing to believe that the Lord was directing him, rejoicing as they saw his disappointment, and complaining that they should never have left Jerusalem.

1 Nephi 17:23-44 Nephi rebuked them by reminding them of the Israelites' exodus from Egypt. The exodus of Lehi and his family was similar to the exodus of Moses and the Israelites as they followed a prophet to a promised land.

1 Nephi 17:45 Nephi told Laman and Lemuel that they *"were past feeling, that [they] could not feel [the Lord's] words"*. As you read the following quotation by Elder Packer, think about what it means to feel the words of the Lord, what causes people to become *"past feeling"*, and how you can prepare yourself to feel the words of the Lord. **Elder Boyd K. Packer** taught: *"The Holy Ghost communicates with the spirit through the mind more than through the physical senses. This guidance comes as thoughts, as feelings, through impressions and promptings. It is not always easy to describe inspiration. The scriptures teach us that we may 'feel' the words of spiritual communication more than hear them, and see with spiritual rather than with mortal eyes (see 1 Nephi 17:45)"* (Ensign, Nov. 1989, 14).

1 Nephi 17:46-47 When people harden their hearts against the truth like Laman and Lemuel, they are in danger of being cast off by the Lord.

1 Nephi 17:49 Nephi urged his brothers not to murmur against their father. Think about how murmuring affects your family. Then consider, if it is a problem that affects you, how you might overcome the practice of backbiting and speaking against family members.

1 Nephi 18:1-3 Nephi continued to pray for guidance as he built the ship.

1 Nephi 18:1, 3-4 The Lord answered his prayers by showing him how to work the timbers to build a fine ship and by touching his brethren to help them repent.

Laman and Lemuel bound Nephi, who demonstrated courage and gratitude despite this trial. After they freed him, he guided the ship to the Promised Land.

1 Nephi 18:9 As they sailed toward the Promised Land, Laman, Lemuel, the sons of Ishmael, and their wives *"began to make themselves merry"*.

1 Nephi 18:10 Nephi's response to their actions was to become concerned that the Lord might smite them for their iniquity.

1 Nephi 18:9 The evil in this merrymaking was that they forgot the Lord and acted with rudeness. Contrast this verse with **D&C 136:28**.

1 Nephi 18:15-20 The power of God, threatening them with utter destruction was the only thing that would convince Laman and Lemuel to release Nephi.

Contrast **1 Nephi 18:20** with **1 Nephi 2:14**; **1 Nephi 7:19-21**; **1 Nephi 16:39**; **1 Nephi 18:4** Laman and Lemuel became more hard-hearted as they rebelled against the Lord, repented, and then continued to rebel.

D&C 82:7 The danger of returning to the same sin over and over again is that the Lord will hold us accountable for all instances of that sin--even those we had previously sought to repent of.

1 Nephi 18:21-25 The Lord blessed the people after Laman and Lemuel repented and loosed Nephi so that they could continue to sail to the Promised Land, where they landed, planted, and prospered.

1 Nephi 16:18-20, 34-36; **1 Nephi 17:21** As the people traveled through the wilderness and across the sea, suffering, hardship and afflictions led many of them to murmur.

1 Nephi 18:16 Nephi's attitude was exemplary during these difficult times. Even when those around him complained against God, Nephi never wavered in his obedience and his love for the Lord.

Conclusion

The last words written by Nephi in the Book of Mormon are a fitting description of his true character: *"The Lord commanded me, and I must obey"* (2 Nephi 33:15).

Elder Heber J. Grant said: *"No obstacles are insurmountable when God commands and we obey"* (Conference Report, Oct. 1899, 18).

Other Insights from 1 Nephi 19-22

One of the first things the Lord commanded Nephi to do after the families arrived in the Promised Land was to keep a record of the people. (1 Nephi 19:1-4). Nephi said that he wrote *"sacred things"* for his people "that perhaps [he] might persuade them that they would remember the Lord their Redeemer" (1 Nephi 19:5, 18). Blessings will come to our posterity if we record sacred events in our lives.

1 Nephi 19:21-22 Nephi taught his brethren concerning *"the prophets of old"* and *"the doings of the Lord in other lands, among people of old"*. Think about how you have been blessed as you have studied the scriptures and learned of the prophets of old.

1 Nephi 19:23 Nephi taught that it is important to *"liken all scriptures unto us"*. Think about how you have benefited from doing this.

"Free to Choose Liberty and Eternal Life"

Lesson 6 - 2 Nephi 1-2

Lehi exhorted his sons to repent, obey the Lord's commandments, and put on the armor of righteousness

Chapter One contains counsel that Lehi gave to his sons shortly before he died. As we review the lesson material, look for specific things that Lehi counseled his sons to do and for the blessings that he promised they would receive if they obeyed his counsel.

2 Nephi 1:5 Lehi said that despite their afflictions, his people had "*obtained a land of promise*" by covenant.

2 Nephi 1:6-7, 9-10 The covenant between the Lord and Lehi's people required them to serve the Lord according to the commandments, be righteous (more than just obedient), and keep the commandments. If they did their part, the Lord would bless them with a consecrated land, liberty, a blessed land, prosperity, protection, blessings, and freedom from being molested by others, a land of inheritance, and safety forever.

2 Nephi 1:10-12 Lehi said the inhabitants of the land would suffer God's just judgments, invasion from other lands, loss of their land of inheritance, scattering and oppression, and bloodshed if they rejected the Savior.

2 Nephi 1:13; see also verses 2 Nephi 1:14, 21, 23 Lehi called his sons to repentance by commanding them to "*awake...from the sleep of hell, and shake off the awful chains by which [they were] bound*".

Sinfulness is like being in a deep sleep because it connotes an unconscious state in which one is unaware. Sinfulness is like being bound by chains because one cannot escape that consequence without great effort or help from another.

2 Nephi 1:21 Lehi counseled his sons to "*arise from the dust...and be men*" and avoid captivity.

2 Nephi 1:21-27 Qualities of a righteous man recorded here include determination (to choose the right), freedom from sin, righteousness, obedience to commandments, willingness to serve God, demonstrating leadership to others while following the Savior, faithfulness during suffering, humility, seeking the glory of God and the welfare of others, speaking plainly, being filled with the power of God, and being truthful.

The world's definition of manhood is not consistent with the gospel definition. Think about how you can help young men choose righteousness over the world's definition of manhood.

2 Nephi 1:15 Lehi spoke of the blessings received through his faithfulness. Note that while some of his sons were bound by the "*awful chains*" of sin, Lehi was "*encircled about eternally in the arms of [the Savior's] love*." Like Lehi, as we humbly come unto Christ through repentance and obedience, we will be redeemed and "*encircled about eternally in the arms of his love*."

Lehi testified of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

2 Nephi 2:5 Lehi said that "*by the law no flesh is justified; or, by the law men are cut off*". To be justified is to be reconciled to God, pardoned from punishment for sin, and declared righteous and guiltless.

James 2:10; 1 Nephi 10:21 The law cuts us off and prevents us from being justified because when we disobey the commandments, we become guilty and unclean, and no unclean thing can dwell with God.

2 Nephi 2:6-8 Since we cannot be justified by the law, we can only be justified and made worthy to enter God's presence by the Atonement of Jesus Christ as we repent and are forgiven of our sins.

2 Nephi 2:7 Lehi said that the Savior would "*answer the ends of the law*". The phrase "*the ends of the law*" refers to the consequences of the Fall and to the "*punishment that is affixed*" for disobedience to God's commandments (see 2 Nephi 2:5, 2 Nephi 2:10).

2 Nephi 2:7; Alma 34:13-16; D&C 19:16-19; D&C 45:3-5 The Savior answered the ends of the law by offering himself as a sacrifice for sin.

President Joseph F. Smith said, "*Jesus came and suffered, 'the just for the unjust,' he that was without sin for him that had sinned, and was subjected to the penalty of the law which the sinner had transgressed*" (Gospel Doctrine, 5th ed. [1939], 204).

2 Nephi 2:7; see also Romans 10:4; D&C 19:15-16; Articles of Faith 1:3. We must offer a broken heart and a contrite spirit so that we can be justified through Christ's suffering for our sins.

2 Nephi 2:6-8 "*These things*" that we should make known are the doctrines concerning the mission of the Savior and Redeemer. We can "*make these things known*" by bearing testimony to others of the gospel's truth. Making "these things" known shows gratitude to the Savior for His Atonement.

Lehi taught the importance of opposition and the freedom to choose good from evil.

As Lehi taught his sons about the need for opposition, he reviewed the account of Adam and Eve partaking of the forbidden fruit.

2 Nephi 2:15-25. Look for (1) conditions that existed for Adam and Eve before they partook of the forbidden fruit and (2) the opposition Adam and Eve experienced after they partook of the fruit. (See chart below.)

Note that in 2 Nephi 2, Lehi mentions some of the conditions that were brought about by the Fall. However, the doctrine of the Fall is broader in scope than is presented in this chapter. The Fall brought physical death and spiritual death into the world, thus bringing the plan of redemption into operation.

CONDITIONS BEFORE PARTAKING OF THE FRUIT	OPPOSITION EXPERIENCED AFTER PARTAKING OF THE FRUIT
They could act for themselves (2 Nephi 2:15-16), but they did not do good <i>"for they knew no sin"</i> (2 Nephi 2:23).	They could do good, and they could also commit sin (2 Nephi 2:23). They were commanded to repent of their sins (2 Nephi 2:21).
They did not have to till the ground in order for food to grow in the garden (2 Nephi 2:19; see also Moses 2:29).	They had to work to obtain food (2 Nephi 2:19).
They knew no misery or joy (2 Nephi 2:23).	They experienced misery and joy (2 Nephi 2:23)
They would have remained "in the same state...forever, and had no end" (2 Nephi 2:22).	They became fallen and mortal...subject to physical death (2 Nephi 2:22; see also Moses 6:48).

If Adam and Eve had not partaken of the fruit, they would not have experienced the opposition mentioned in this chart (2 Nephi 2:22-23).

2 Nephi 2:23-27; Moses 5:10-12 Blessings we can receive because the Fall of Adam and Eve brought opposition into the world include posterity, the ability to experience joy, the opportunity to do good, the ability to choose, the ability to act for ourselves, and freedom to choose eternal life.

2 Nephi 2:11; see also verse 2 Nephi 2:15 Lehi told his children that *"it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things"*. Think about how important it is to have opposition in our daily lives and how opposition can help us progress by presenting opportunities for testing and growth.

2 Nephi 2:24-28 According to these verses, our Father in Heaven wants joy, liberty, and eternal life for us.

2 Nephi 2:26-27; see also John 14:6. He provided a way for us to receive these blessings through proper use of our free agency.

2 Nephi 2:18, 2 Nephi 2:27, 2 Nephi 2:29 Satan wants misery, captivity, and spiritual death for us. Our individual actions determine whether we receive joy, liberty, and eternal life or misery, captivity, and spiritual death.

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin taught: *"The Lord has given you the gift of agency (see Moses 7:32) and instructed you sufficiently to know good from evil (see 2 Nephi 2:5). You are free to choose (see 2 Nephi 2:27) and are permitted to act (see 2 Nephi 10:23; Helaman 14:30), but you are not free to choose the consequences. With absolute certainty, choices of good and right lead to happiness and peace, while choices of sin and evil eventually lead to unhappiness, sorrow, and misery"* (Ensign, Nov. 1989, 75).

2 Nephi 2 contains the doctrines of the Creation (**2 Nephi 2:14-15**), the Fall (**2 Nephi 2:4-5, 2 Nephi 2:8, 2 Nephi 2:18-25**), and the Atonement (**2 Nephi 2:3-4, 2 Nephi 2:6-10, 2 Nephi 2:26-27**). These three doctrines are central to Heavenly Father's plan of redemption.

Conclusion

Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can be *"encircled about eternally in the arms of [the Savior's] love"* (2 Nephi 1:15). It is a great blessing to be *"free to choose,"* *"Choose liberty and eternal life"* through Jesus Christ, *"the great Mediator of all men"* (2 Nephi 2:27).

Using Lehi's teachings to counter the teachings of the world

Imagine that you have heard a friend, coworker, or schoolteacher present persuasive arguments for these false statements: "There is no good or evil, no law, no Christ, no existence after this life, no God, no purpose to life, and our actions are determined by genetics and environment."

Lehi shared truths that can give us peace and reassurance when we are confronted by the world's false teachings. Lehi's Teachings include **2 Nephi 2:5**--Men are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil. **2 Nephi 2:5**--The law is given unto men. **2 Nephi 2:6**--Redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah. **2 Nephi 2:10**--All men [will] stand in the presence of [God], to be judged of him. **2 Nephi 2:14**--There is a God. **2 Nephi 2:25**--Men are, that they might have joy. **2 Nephi 2:26-27**--We are free to act for [our]selves and not to be acted upon. We are free to choose liberty and eternal life...or to choose captivity and death.

"I Know in Whom I Have Trusted"

Lesson 7 - 2 Nephi 3-5

Introduction

There are four men mentioned in 2 Nephi 3 who have the same name. Look for these four men in 2 Nephi 3:1-15. Who did you find? You should have found:

- Joseph, last-born son of Lehi and Sariah (2 Nephi 3:1-3)
- Joseph of Egypt (2 Nephi 3:4)
- Joseph Smith Jr. (2 Nephi 3:6-15)
- Joseph Smith Sr. (2 Nephi 3:15)

Lehi taught that his descendants would be blessed through the Prophet Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon.

2 Nephi 3:4; see also Genesis 30:22-24; Genesis 37:1-3, Genesis 37:23-28. Lehi taught his son Joseph about a prophecy made by Joseph, the son of Jacob and Rachel who was "*carried captive into Egypt*".

2 Nephi 3:4-5; Jacob 2:25; see also Genesis 45:7. The covenants that Joseph of Egypt made with the Lord were important to Lehi's family because Lehi was descended from Joseph.

2 Nephi 3:6-15 The "*choice seer*" whom Joseph of Egypt saw in vision was the Prophet Joseph Smith.

2 Nephi 3:11 Joseph Smith "*[brought] forth [the Lord's] word*". As you think about how you have been blessed because of the word of God brought forth by Joseph Smith, consider this statement: **Elder LeGrand Richards** said: "*The Prophet Joseph Smith brought us the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and many other writings. As far as our records show, he has given us more revealed truth than any prophet who has ever lived upon the face of the earth*" (Ensign, May 1981, 33).

2 Nephi 3:12 The Lord told Joseph of Egypt about the Bible, which would contain words written by descendants of Judah, and the Book of Mormon, which would contain words written by descendants of Joseph.

Think about how the Bible and the Book of Mormon have "*grow[n] together*" as predicted in this prophecy.

2 Nephi 3:12 The Lord said blessings would come because the Bible and the Book of Mormon would "*grow together*" to confound false doctrines, resolve contentions, and establish peace among the fruit of his loins.

2 Nephi 3:5 The Lord promised that "*a righteous branch*" of the descendants of Joseph of Egypt would be "*broken off*" but would be "*remembered in the covenants of the Lord*".

2 Nephi 3:12-13, 18-21; 2 Nephi 30:3-6 The roles of Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon in the fulfillment of these covenants are foretold in these verses.

This promise is being fulfilled today as the gospel is being proclaimed across the face of the earth and the covenants the Lord has made with his people are being remembered.

The Book of Mormon helps you remember and keep your covenants with the Lord by clarifying and explaining many covenants and providing examples of God's fulfillment of covenants with the people of the Book of Mormon.

2 Nephi 3:4-7, 11-12, 18-21 Connections between Joseph of Egypt, Lehi's son Joseph, and Joseph Smith, in addition to their name, include lineage, covenants, and the Book of Mormon.

Nephi lamented his sinfulness but gloried in the goodness of God.

2 Nephi 4:3-12 Just before Lehi died, he counseled and blessed his children and grandchildren. Counsel concerned keeping the commandments, the mercy of the Lord, the continuance of the seed of Laman and Lemuel, and the blessings to be given to the families of Ishmael, Nephi, and Sam.

2 Nephi 4:13 Soon after Lehi's death, "*Laman and Lemuel and the sons of Ishmael were angry with [Nephi] because of the admonitions of the Lord*". As Nephi wrote of these continuing difficulties, he recorded his feelings in a passage that is sometimes called "*the Psalm of Nephi*." A psalm is a poem or hymn, much like our hymns today.

2 Nephi 4:16 Nephi said, "*My soul delighteth in the things of the Lord; and my heart pondereth [them] continually*".

2 Nephi 4:15-16 Specific things that Nephi delighted in the scriptures and the things of the Lord.

Think about what it means to ponder the things of the Lord--to think deeply and carefully about them. The challenge, of course, is for us to make time to ponder the things of the Lord. Think about how pondering the things of the Lord can help you. Words we might use to describe Nephi include righteous, obedient, and humble, but that is not what Nephi had to say about himself.

2 Nephi 4:17, 27; see also 1 Nephi 10:6 Nephi said that he was a "*wretched man... whose...soul grieveth because of [his] iniquities*".

From this, we should see that it is important to recognize our fallen nature before God.

President Ezra Taft Benson said: "*Just as a man does not really desire food until he is hungry, so he does not desire the salvation of Christ until he knows why he needs Christ. No one adequately and properly knows why he needs Christ until he understands and accepts the doctrine of the Fall and its effect upon all mankind*" (Ensign, May 1987, 85).

2 Nephi 4:18-19 Nephi found hope despite feeling "*encompassed about*" by temptation and sin because of his trust in the Lord.

2 Nephi 4:20-25 These verses remind us of how the Lord had helped Nephi in the past as the Lord had:

- Been Nephi's support (2 Nephi 4:20).
- Led Nephi through afflictions in the wilderness (2 Nephi 4:20)
- Filled him with His love (2 Nephi 4:21).
- Confounded his enemies (2 Nephi 4:22).
- Heard his cry (2 Nephi 4:23).
- Given him knowledge by visions (2 Nephi 4:23).

Consider times when you have received similar blessings from the Lord. Then think about how remembering blessings you have received in the past can help you through difficult times.

2 Nephi 4:26-27 Nephi asked himself why he yielded to sorrow and sin in spite of the things that he had seen and the things that he knew. We sometimes struggle with sorrow and temptation despite our knowledge of the gospel so that we can be tested as we journey through mortality.

2 Nephi 4:28-30 Nephi's psalm teaches us to overcome sorrow and temptation by turning to the Lord and thinking of how blessed we are by the salvation he offers us.

2 Nephi 4:15-30 In the first part of his psalm, Nephi's words were directed toward himself.

2 Nephi 4:30-35 The conclusion of the psalm was a prayer.

2 Nephi 4:31-33 In this prayer, Nephi asked Heavenly Father to redeem him, protect him from his enemies, help him abhor and avoid sin, help him avoid hell and be welcomed into heaven, to be obedient and faithful, and to let him have divine protection in his life.

Take a moment to consider parts of Nephi's prayer that may be especially meaningful to you.

2 Nephi 4:31, 33. The Lord will "*deliver [us] out of the hands of [our] enemies*" by giving us guidance and clear direction...and when we obey, he will provide needed protection.

2 Nephi 4:31; Mosiah 5:2; Alma 13:12 To "*shake at the appearance of sin*" means that we have changed our worldly nature and now have no desire for sin.

2 Nephi 4:32 Consider what you think it means to "*walk in the path of the low valley*" and "*be strict in the plain road*".

2 Nephi 4:33 Think about what you think it means for the Lord to "*encircle [us] around in the robe of [His] righteousness*".

2 Nephi 4:30, 2 Nephi 4:34-35 In his prayer, Nephi promised to trust God and praise Him forever.

2 Nephi 4:34; 2 Nephi 28:31 Nephi, when he said, "*I will not put my trust in the arm of flesh*" meant that he would rely on the Lord for his strength and not be influenced by worldly concerns.

Some ways that people "*trust in the arm of flesh*" include thinking that their worldly wealth can provide all they need, or thinking that their knowledge and educational achievements can provide all they need to know.

Trusting in man or worldly things is dangerous, so consider what you can do to increase your trust in the Lord.

The anger of Laman and Lemuel increased against Nephi, and the Lord commanded the followers of Nephi to separate from the followers of Laman.

2 Nephi 4:13; 2 Nephi 5:3 Laman and Lemuel were angry toward Nephi because of the admonitions of the Lord and because they thought they should be in charge because they were older than Nephi.

2 Nephi 5:2, 4 As a result of their increasing anger, Laman and Lemuel sought to take away Nephi's life.

2 Nephi 4:27-29 Compare their anger with Nephi's efforts to control his anger, as recorded in these verses.

Increasing anger can overcome the spirit and cause us to act in anything but a Christlike manner. Think about what you can do to be a peacemaker in the home, your community, and the Church.

President Howard W. Hunter taught: "*We need a more peaceful world, growing out of more peaceful families and neighborhoods and communities. To secure and cultivate such peace, we must love others, even our enemies as well as our friends. ... We need to extend the hand of friendship. We need to be kinder, more gentle, more forgiving, and slower to anger. We need to love one another with the pure love of Christ. May this be our course and our desire*" (Ensign, May 1992, 63).

2 Nephi 5:1 Because of the anger of his brothers, Nephi prayed for help.

2 Nephi 5:5 The Lord answered his prayers by telling him to leave and separate himself and his followers from his wicked brethren.

2 Nephi 5:27 When Nephi and his people had departed, they "*lived after the manner of happiness*".

2 Nephi 5:10-17 Practices they engaged in that contributed to their happiness included keeping the commandments, preserving the records that were on the plates of brass, building a temple, and working together. The Nephites' example should help us as we strive to live "*after the manner of happiness*".

"O How Great the Goodness of Our God"

Lesson 8 - 2 Nephi 6-10

Think about what Jesus Christ has done for you. Read 2 Nephi 6:17; 2 Nephi 7:2; 2 Nephi 8:3-6, 2 Nephi 8:12. Look for words in the verses that refer to things the Savior does for us. The list may include the following words: *deliver* (2 Nephi 6:17; 2 Nephi 7:2), *redeem* (2 Nephi 7:2), *comfort*, *comforteth* (2 Nephi 8:3, 2 Nephi 8:12), *light* (2 Nephi 8:4), *judgment*, *judge* (2 Nephi 8:4-5), and *salvation* (2 Nephi 8:5-6). This lesson discusses the Atonement, which is the greatest act Jesus Christ has done for us and helps us understand our need for the Atonement of Jesus Christ. It also teaches us how to receive all the blessings of the Atonement.

Through His Atonement, Jesus Christ offers redemption from temporal death and spiritual death.

2 Nephi 9 contains a discourse by Jacob, one of Nephi's younger brothers, about the Atonement of Jesus Christ, which is the central event in the plan of salvation. To understand the teachings in this chapter, it is helpful to know how Jacob referred to temporal death and spiritual death:

2 Nephi 9:6 *Temporal death* is the death of the physical body and the separation of the spirit from the physical body. As a result of the Fall of Adam, all people will die temporally.

In 2 Nephi 9, Jacob uses the following words and phrases to refer to temporal death: "*death*" (verse 6), "*the death of the body*" (verse 10), and "*the grave*" (verse 11).

2 Nephi 9:6 *Spiritual death* is separation from the presence of God. We are all separated from God as a result of the Fall of Adam.

Romans 3:23; Alma 12:16; Helaman 14:18 We further separate ourselves from God when we sin.

In **2 Nephi 9**, Jacob uses the following words and phrases to refer to spiritual death, or separation from God: "*shut out from the presence of our God*" (verse 9), "*the death of the spirit*" (verse 10), "*spiritual death*" (verse 12), "*hell*" (verse 12), and "*death*" (verse 39).

2 Nephi 9:1-26, 39-54 Jacob teaches the doctrines of the atonement and the resurrection to his people and urges them to prepare to meet God.

2 Nephi 9:5-7, 12, 21-22; see also Luke 22:44; Mosiah 3:7; D&C 19:16-19 The Savior died, arose from the grave, suffered for the sins of man, and suffered greatly in body and spirit to provide a way for man to overcome temporal death and spiritual death.

2 Nephi 9:12-13, 22 Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, all people will be resurrected/saved from temporal death.

2 Nephi 9:6-10 Without the power of Christ's Resurrection, temporal and spiritual death would be permanent. We would be shut out from God's presence forever, and our spirits would be subject to Satan. We would "*remain with the father of lies, in misery.*" This shows that temporal death and spiritual death are indeed an "*awful monster*" (verse 10).

2 Nephi 2:10; 2 Nephi 9:15 Through the Atonement of Jesus Christ, all people will be restored to God's presence to be judged.

2 Nephi 9:23; Mormon 7:7 However, not all people will be "*saved in the kingdom of God,*" or permitted to dwell in God's presence forever.

2 Nephi 9:18, 21, 23-24, 39, 41, 50-52 According to Jacob, some of the things we must do to be "*saved in the kingdom of God*" include believe in Christ, endure the crosses of the world (endure suffering for a righteous cause), hearken to the voice of the Savior, repent, accept baptism, have *perfect* faith in Christ, be spiritually-minded, come unto the Lord, be righteous, follow the strait and narrow way of the gospel, labor for the kingdom of God, feast upon the gospel message (make it part of you), remember the teachings and commandments, pray continually, give thanks to God, and be joyful in Christ.

2 Nephi 9:18, 23-24, 41	Think about the reasons it is essential to believe in Jesus Christ, the Holy One of Israel, and come unto Him to receive all the blessings of His Atonement.
2 Nephi 9:18	Think about what it means to endure the crosses of the world. (See Matthew 16:24, footnote 24d; 3 Nephi 12:29-30.)
D&C 1:38; D&C 18:33-36; D&C 88:66	These verses help us understand how we can hear the voice of the Lord.
2 Nephi 9:23-24	Repent, be baptized, and endure to the end.
2 Nephi 9:39; see also Romans 8:5-8	We must be spiritually minded. Consider carefully what it means to you to be spiritually minded and how being spiritually minded leads to " <i>life eternal</i> ".
2 Nephi 9:50-51	" <i>Feast upon that which perisheth not</i> ". Think about some things that never perish and how you can " <i>feast</i> " on these things.
2 Nephi 9:52	Remember the words of God. 3 Nephi 15:1 Helps us see how remembering God's words so that we can do them helps us receive all the blessings of the Atonement.
2 Nephi 9:52	Prayer to express gratitude to our Heavenly Father helps you draw nearer to Him and His Son.

Certain attitudes and actions prevent us from receiving all the blessings of the Atonement.

In addition to speaking of requirements for receiving all the blessings of the Atonement, Jacob spoke of attitudes and actions that prevent us from receiving those blessings.

2 Nephi 9:27-38 Some attitudes and actions that prevent us from receiving all the blessings of the Atonement include the following:

2 Nephi 9:27	Transgressing the commandments and wasting the days of our probation. In the Book of Mormon, prophets often refer to our life on earth as a <i>"state of probation,"</i> or a time to be tested (2 Nephi 2:21; see also 2 Nephi 2:30; Mormon 9:28). Some people waste the days of their probation by remaining in sin, refusing to repent or procrastinating the day of repentance, hardening their hearts, and seeking happiness in iniquity. (See 2 Nephi 9:38; Alma 34:31-33; Helaman 13:38 .)
2 Nephi 9:28-30, 37	Placing learning, money, and other idols above God. The pursuit of knowledge and riches can keep us from receiving all the blessings of the Atonement if we rely on our own wisdom rather than hearkening to the counsel of God, fail to help the needy with our funds, and let pride influence us. (See 2 Nephi 9:28, 30, 42 .) In some situations learning and riches are good (See 2 Nephi 9:29; Jacob 2:18-19 .) if we hearken to the counsel of God, seek the kingdom of heaven, and use our riches to help others.
2 Nephi 9:31-32	Being spiritually deaf and blind. Consider what it means to be spiritually deaf and blind and how you can open your ears and eyes to the truths of the gospel.
2 Nephi 9:33	Being <i>"uncircumcised of heart"</i> . In ancient Israel, a man who was uncircumcised was breaking a covenant with God (Genesis 17:11, Genesis 17:14). With this understanding, think about what it means to be <i>"uncircumcised of heart"</i> .
2 Nephi 9:34-36	Lying and committing murders and whoredoms.

The Lord remembers His covenants with His people.

2 Nephi 10:2-6 Jacob prophesied that the Nephites' descendants would *"perish in the flesh because of unbelief"* and that the Jews in Jerusalem would crucify the Savior and be scattered because of their sins.

2 Nephi 10:2, 7-8, 21-22; see also 1 Nephi 21:15-16; 2 Nephi 9:1-3, 53; 2 Nephi 30:2 These verses tell us what the Lord will do for these people when they believe in Him and repent of their sins. **Mosiah 26:22** shows us how this applies to us individually.

Elder Boyd K. Packer taught: *"The discouraging idea that a mistake (or even a series of them) makes it everlastingly too late, does not come from the Lord. He has said that if we will repent, not only will He forgive us our transgressions, but He will forget them and remember our sins no more (see Isaiah 43:25; Hebrews 8:12; Hebrews 10:17; Alma 36:19; D&C 58:42)"* (Ensign, May 1989, 59).

2 Nephi 10:22-23 Jacob said that his people should *"cheer up [their] hearts"* because the Lord remembers His covenant people. Think of how you can find comfort in the knowledge that the Lord remembers His covenant people.

2 Nephi 10:23-24 As Jacob concluded this address to the people; he encouraged them to remember that it is only through the grace of God that we are saved.

2 Nephi 2:26-27 We choose either the way of everlasting death or the way of everlasting life. Think about why it is important to remember that *"it is only through the grace of God that [we] are saved"*.

Conclusion

2 Nephi 10:25 is Jacob's concluding message in this discourse. We should pause to consider our gratitude for the Atonement of Jesus Christ, and commit ourselves to *"choose...the way of eternal life"* (2 Nephi 10:23).

"My Soul Delighteth in the Words of Isaiah"

Lesson 9 - 2 Nephi 11-25

Introduction

Read **Mosiah 8:17-18**. Seers are able to see past, present, and future events. Because he was a seer, Isaiah saw in vision such events as the War in Heaven, the destruction of Jerusalem after the Savior's death, the battle of Armageddon, and the millennial reign of the Savior. Many of Isaiah's writings seem difficult to understand because they refer to a wide range of past and future events described in symbolic language. However, you can come to understand them as you make a consistent, prayerful effort to read and study them. This lesson discusses some of Isaiah's most significant writings. Today's lesson will help you understand how these prophecies apply in your life.

Nephi testified of Isaiah's writings and gave keys for understanding them.

1 Nephi 19:23; 2 Nephi 11:2-6,8; 2 Nephi 25:3 These verses give us insight as to why Nephi found Isaiah's words important for his record:

WHY NEPHI QUOTED ISAIAH

- **1 Nephi 19:23** To "*more fully persuade them to believe in the Lord*"
- **2 Nephi 11:2-4** To provide another witness of Jesus Christ
- **2 Nephi 11:5-6, 8** To help us (his readers) rejoice
- **2 Nephi 25:3** To reveal God's judgments

These reasons are just as important for us today as they were for Nephi's generation.

Nephi provided several keys that can help us better understand the writings of Isaiah.

Key 1: 1 Nephi 19:23; see also 2 Nephi 11:2, 8 "*Liken all scriptures unto us*". Many of Isaiah's prophecies deal with events in the latter days. As we watch these prophecies unfold and as we participate in their fulfillment, we can better understand Isaiah's teachings and apply them in our lives. For example, **2 Nephi 15:26** contains Isaiah's prophecy that the Lord will "*lift up an ensign to the nations*" to gather Israel. This prophecy can help us better understand the importance of sharing the restored gospel...the ensign, or standard, to guide all nations to the Lord.

Key 2: 2 Nephi 25:1 "*Know...concerning the manner of prophesying among the Jews*". Isaiah's prophecies are written in a style that the Jews were accustomed to reading and hearing. We can better understand Isaiah's writings if we remember that he used imagery and symbolism that would have been familiar to Jewish people in his time. For example, in 2 Nephi 12:1-3, Isaiah uses the word "*mountain*" to symbolize a high spiritual place, a place for revelation and closeness with God, such as the temple.

Key 3: 2 Nephi 25:3; 6 "*Know the judgments of God*". Isaiah foresaw how the kingdoms of Israel and Judah would suffer because of their wickedness, but he also prophesied that their blessings would be restored when they repented and followed Jesus Christ. From Isaiah's accounts of what happened to Israel and Judah, and from his prophecies of the future restoration of the house of Israel, we can better understand how God works in our lives and how He blesses nations according to their righteousness.

Key 4: 2 Nephi 25:6 "*Know concerning the regions round about [Jerusalem]*". Knowing the geography and place-names in Israel helps us better understand Isaiah's prophecies concerning the kingdoms of Israel and Judah and the nations that threatened them. For example, in 2 Nephi 20:28-34, Isaiah named the cities the Assyrian army would pass through and how it would be stopped just as it reached Jerusalem. The events happened exactly as he prophesied.

Key 5: 2 Nephi 25:4 Be "*filled with the spirit of prophecy*". In **Revelation 19:10** we find that the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. We obtain a testimony by actively following his teachings and principles in our lives. The spirit of prophecy can help us understand Isaiah's teachings about the Savior as the Holy Ghost enlightens our minds.

Isaiah saw the latter-day temple and the gathering of Israel.

2 Nephi 12:2-3 The Salt Lake Temple fulfills a portion of Isaiah's prophecy recorded in these verses. Isaiah described the temple as "*the mountain of the Lord*" because ancient prophets often went up into the mountains to commune with the Lord and receive revelation from Him. All temples can be "*mountains*" for our worship if we use them as sacred places where we draw close to the spirit and seek knowledge of spiritual things. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been established in the tops of the mountains and temples are being built where people can come and learn about the Lord.

2 Nephi 14:6 Isaiah described temples as a "*place of refuge*" from heat and storms. Think about some "spiritual storms" that you have faced in this life and how the temple can help protect you from such storms.

2 Nephi 12:3-5 We as Latter-day Saints can help establish the kingdom of God on earth, as described in these verses. D&C 133:7-14 tells us how--by proclaiming the gospel to all corners of the earth.

2 Nephi 12:5 Isaiah exhorted the house of Jacob to "*walk in the light of the Lord*" instead of "*all [going] astray, every one to his wicked ways*".

Idol worship and pride are specific sins mentioned in 2 Nephi 12:7-12. We can probably all agree that these sins still prevalent in one way or another today. Think about how you can avoid these pitfalls and "*walk in the light*".

Isaiah prophesied that the Lord would raise an ensign and gather Israel.

2 Nephi 15:26; see also 2 Nephi 21:12 Isaiah prophesied that the Lord would *"lift up an ensign to the nations"*. An ensign is a banner or flag; a standard-bearer.

2 Nephi 15:26-29 records Isaiah's prophecy of what would happen when this ensign was raised as people would come to the standard bearer from all over the earth.

Joseph Smith-History 1:40 When the angel Moroni appeared to Joseph Smith, he said that chapter 11 of Isaiah (quoted in 2 Nephi 21) was about to be fulfilled.

D&C 64:41-43; D&C 105:39; D&C 115:4-6 The restored gospel of Jesus Christ is an ensign to all nations as an example of the glory of the Lord, a place of peace, a light to the nations, and a refuge from the wrath of God.

2 Nephi 21:12 The prophecy that nations will be *"gather[ed] together"* is being fulfilled today as missionaries are going throughout the world to teach the gospel and gather people to the truth. Carefully consider what you can do to help fulfill this prophecy.

Isaiah and Nephi testified of Jesus Christ's redeeming power.

2 Nephi 16: 1-4 contains Isaiah's account of a vision in which he saw the Lord. Isaiah described the setting of the vision as a temple in which the Lord sat on a high throne.

2 Nephi 16:5 Isaiah felt unclean in the presence of the Lord.

2 Nephi 16:6-7 Isaiah's sins being forgiven was symbolized by the angel touching Isaiah's lips with the burning coal.

2 Nephi 16:8 Isaiah's response when he heard the voice of the Lord asking whom He should send, was a firm *"Here am I; send me"*. In another scriptural account, Abraham 3:27, we have seen similar language used. When we are called to serve, we need to give a similar response to the Lord.

2 Nephi 22:1-6. These verses contain Isaiah's description of how all people will praise the Savior during the Millennium. Think about what impresses you about these verses.

2 Nephi 22:5 Reflect on what *"excellent things"* the Savior has done for us.

2 Nephi 25:19-30 records Nephi's testimony of the Savior. Consider what impresses you about Nephi's testimony.

2 Nephi 25:23; see also verse 2 Nephi 25:26 Think about how you, like Nephi, can *"labor diligently"* to persuade your children *"to believe in Christ"*.

2 Nephi 25:23 Also see 2 Nephi 10:24-25; D&C 20:29-31 Nephi taught that *"it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do"*. This statement teaches us the relationship between the grace of Jesus Christ and our works--that we must do all that we can, but it is the atonement of Christ that enables us to receive salvation and exaltation.

2 Nephi 25:29 Think about what you might do this week to comply more fully with Nephi's exhortation to worship the Lord *"with all your might, mind, and strength, and your whole soul"*.

Conclusion

3 Nephi 23:1 The Savior gave His approval of Isaiah's teachings in this single statement: *"Yea, a commandment I give unto you that ye search these things diligently; for great are the words of Isaiah"*.

Additional Teachings

Calling "evil good, and good evil" (2 Nephi 15:20)

2 Nephi 15:20 Sometimes our society, like ancient Israel, makes the mistake of calling *"evil good, and good evil"*.

Moroni 7:12-17 teaches us how to be sure that we recognize good and evil for what they really are.

How the Book of Mormon increases our understanding of Isaiah

The Book of Mormon is one of the greatest guides to help us understand the writings of Isaiah.

a. The Book of Mormon quotes, either in their entirety or in part, 22 of the 66 chapters in the book of Isaiah, and it contains additional commentary about those chapters. Because the Book of Mormon prophets lived near the time of Isaiah, their commentaries can help us understand his teachings.

b. The writings of Isaiah that are quoted in the Book of Mormon include words, phrases, and explanations that do not appear in any other copies of the book of Isaiah.

c. The world's oldest known copy of Isaiah was discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls. The *"Isaiah scroll"* dates back to 200 B.C. (Bible Dictionary, *"Dead Sea Scrolls,"* 654). However, the chapters of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon date back to the time of Nephi, approximately 600 B.C. Joseph Smith's translation of the Book of Mormon provided the world with a copy of Isaiah's writings that predates the Dead Sea Scrolls by 400 years.

d. Because the tone of the first 33 chapters of Isaiah differs from the last 33 chapters, many people believe that the book of Isaiah was written by two different people. The Book of Mormon quotes from both the first and last half of Isaiah and identifies Isaiah as the author, thus bearing witness of and authenticating his writings.

"He Inviteth All to Come unto Him"

Lesson 10 - 2 Nephi 26-30

Introduction

Elder Gene R. Cook said: *"Last summer on a lonely stretch of desert highway, we saw ahead what appeared to be the road covered with water. My children would have wagered their entire savings on that fact. But within a few minutes we were at the distant spot and saw not one drop of water. What an illusion! "How many things there are in this life that appear to be one way and all of a sudden are the reverse. ...Satan operates that way. He is the master of illusion. He creates illusions in an attempt to detour, dilute, and divert the power and the attention of the Latter-day Saints from the pure truth of God"*

(Ensign, May 1982, 25).

An illusion is something that deceives or misleads. Today we will discuss some illusions that Satan uses to lead people astray and how we can discern between these illusions and the truth. The chapters discussed in this lesson contain powerful prophecies concerning the last days. Nephi prophesied about people who would be deceived by Satan and fall away from the truth. However, he also foresaw the Restoration of the gospel and the blessings that would be given to the righteous. This lesson discusses these prophecies and helps us understand how to avoid being deceived by Satan's falsehoods and remain faithful to the truth. Through the Restoration of the gospel and the teachings of the Book of Mormon, the Lord will cause truth to triumph over evil.

Nephi prophesied of the Savior's ministry among the Nephites.

2 Nephi 26:1-2 Nephi foresaw that before the Savior visited the Nephites, there would be *"great wars and contentions"* for many generations.

2 Nephi 26:3-7 He prophesied that between the time of Christ's death and His ministry among the Nephites, the wicked would be destroyed.

2 Nephi 26:8 Nephi described those who would be preserved at the Savior's coming as the righteous who hearken unto the words of the prophets, look forward to Christ and the signs of His coming, and are willing to endure persecution. These same qualities are important for us today as we await the Second Coming.

2 Nephi 26:9 The righteous Nephites and their posterity were blessed to see the Savior in person, be healed by him, and be at peace with Him.

2 Nephi 26:10 Nephi prophesied that after four generations of peace and righteousness, his people would meet a *"speedy destruction"*.

2 Nephi 26:10-11 This destruction would be caused by pride, foolishness, and yielding to the temptations of the devil. Pride is such a serious sin because it replaces the humility that is needed to have the Spirit as our constant companion. We must remain humble and be guided by the Spirit if we wish to have lives that please our Heavenly Father.

2 Nephi 26:22 Here, Nephi described the way Satan leads people to destruction. A flaxen cord is made of thin, light strands. Satan uses *"flaxen cords"* before binding people with *"strong cords"* so that we stray slightly from the good at first and then, as we lose the Spirit's guidance, we are gradually drawn into deeper and more serious sins.

2 Nephi 26:23-27, 2 Nephi 26:33 Here, Nephi described the way the Savior leads people to salvation by offering an invitation in the light and giving salvation to those who desire it and are willing to be of service to God and their fellowmen.

2 Nephi 26:24 We help others *"partake of his salvation"* by showing love to them.

2 Nephi 26:29; Alma 1:16 Nephi warned against priestcrafts. Priestcrafts are characterized by men setting themselves up as an example and deceiving men for praise and worldly gain.

2 Nephi 26:30-31; 3 Nephi 18:24; Moroni 7:45-47 Examples of priestcraft are evident in the world today as we see prosperous religious leaders who preach popular philosophies of men instead of the teachings of Christ. We counteract these conditions by having charity--the pure love of Christ and sharing it with our brethren.

Nephi testified of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

Chapter 27 contains further prophecies about the last days. Events described in **2 Nephi 27:6-35** have been fulfilled in this dispensation.

a. 2 Nephi 27:9, 6, 19-23 An ancient book would be delivered to a man for translation. This book was the Book of Mormon. The reason the Lord gave for choosing a young, unlearned man to translate the Book of Mormon was that the book had been rejected by the learned and the unlearned had exhibited faith and humility.

b. 2 Nephi 27:15 A portion of the words of the book would be shown to a learned man, who would ask to see the book.

Joseph Smith-History 1:63-65 The event prophesied in these verses was the showing of manuscript to Dr. Anton. According to 2 Nephi 27:16, the learned man wanted to see the book to get gain and the glory of the world. The Book of Mormon remains *"sealed"* from those who seek the glory of the world because it was not sent for worldly amusement, but instead as a guide back to our Father's heavenly home.

c. 2 Nephi 27:12-14 Witnesses would testify of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. According to Ether 5:2-4 (see also 2 Corinthians 13:1), it was important for witnesses to see the plates so that the truth would be established in the mouths of multiple witnesses.

d. 2 Nephi 27:26, 2 Nephi 27:29-30, 2 Nephi 27:35 The power of the Book of Mormon would be manifest in people's lives. Think about the changes you have seen in your life or the lives of others because of the power of the Book of Mormon.

Nephi prophesied that Satan would spread false doctrines in the last days.

2 Nephi 28:3-9; see also 2 Nephi 26:20-21 Nephi prophesied that in the last days people would deny the power of God and teach false, vain, and foolish doctrines.

Joseph Smith-History 1:5-6, 19, 21 This prideful and foolish condition was prevalent in Joseph Smith's time and is prevalent today.

2 Nephi 28:7-9 In these verses, Nephi described the false teaching that people would use to justify sinning. Rationalizations that people use today to excuse sin include their contentions that "everybody does it" and "it's not a big deal, it's just a little white lie," etc.

2 Nephi 28:8 The dangers of not worrying about "*committing a little sin*" are that we may lose the Spirit and be led into greater sins while still deluding ourselves into thinking that God will forgive our sins freely.

2 Nephi 28:12-15 Nephi also foresaw that people in the last days would be filled with pride.

2 Nephi 26:10-11 The eventual result of the pride of the Nephites was that they made foolish and sinful choices and were destroyed and consigned to hell. Pride is a stumbling block to our spiritual growth. Think about how you can overcome pride.

2 Nephi 28:13 Nephi taught that pride would lead many to "*rob the poor*". A desire for "*fine clothing*" or other luxuries could cause us to neglect the poor if we budget for the luxuries instead of contributing a generous fast offering each month. We can help those who are less fortunate, both physically and spiritually through the fast offering program and by teaching the spiritually needy the gospel.

2 Nephi 28:20, 28 According to Nephi, many people would react with anger to the word of the Lord in the last days. The words of God often "*stir [many] up to anger against that which is good*" because God's word conflicts with their habits and their way of life.

2 Nephi 28:21 Nephi prophesied that Satan would pacify the people and "*lull them away into carnal security*". Carnal security is to find security in following the appetites of the flesh or trusting in worldly objects or ideas. The contentment of carnal security may keep us from repentance. The phrase "*leadeth them away carefully*" (2 Nephi 28:21) suggests that Satan's tactics are cunning and gradual.

Elder James E. Faust shared the following analogy: "*Thomas R. Rowan...said: 'Author and commentator Malcolm Muggeridge once told a story about some frogs who were killed without resistance by being boiled alive in [a] cauldron of water. Why didn't they resist? Because when they were put in the cauldron, the water was tepid. Then the temperature was raised ever so slightly, ...then a bit warmer still, and on and on and on. The change was so gradual, almost imperceptible, that the frogs accommodated themselves to their new environment...until it was too late. The point that Mr. Muggeridge was making was not about frogs but about us and how we tend to accept evil as long as it is not a shock that is thrust on us abruptly. We are inclined to accept something morally wrong if it is only a shade more wrong than something we are already accepting'*" (National Press Club Forum). After sharing this analogy, **Elder Faust** said, "*This gradual process was foretold by ancient prophets*" (Ensign, May 1989, 32).

2 Nephi 28:22 Nephi described how Satan would "*flatter*" some people by telling them that there is no hell and no devil. Satan wants us to believe that there is no devil and no hell because if that is true, there would be no punishment for sin and we could do whatever we please without fear of punishment.

2 Nephi 28:24 Studying the Book of Mormon can help us be spiritually alert and avoid becoming "*at ease in Zion*".

President Ezra Taft Benson said: "*The Book of Mormon exposes the enemies of Christ. It confounds false doctrines and lays down contention. (See 2 Ne. 3:12. [2 Nephi 3:12] It fortifies the humble followers of Christ against the evil designs, strategies, and doctrines of the devil in our day. The type of apostates in the Book of Mormon are similar to the type we have today. God, with his infinite foreknowledge, so molded the Book of Mormon that we might see the error and know how to combat false educational, political, religious, and philosophical concepts of our time*" (Ensign, May 1975, 64).

Nephi taught about the importance of the Book of Mormon.

2 Nephi 29:3; see also 2 Nephi 28:29 Some people in the last days will reject the Book of Mormon by saying that the Bible is all the word of God that they need.

2 Nephi 29:4-14; see also 2 Nephi 28:30 We should study the Book of Mormon in addition to the Bible so that we gain precept on precept and develop a complete knowledge of God's laws and ordinances and the plan of salvation.

Nephi prophesied that the Book of Mormon would be successful in bringing the Gentiles (2 Nephi 30:3), the posterity of Lehi (2 Nephi 30:3-6), and the Jews (2 Nephi 30:7) to a belief in Jesus Christ as the Savior. These prophecies are beginning to be fulfilled in our dispensation through our extensive missionary program.

Conclusion

Through studying the Book of Mormon and living the gospel, we will gain the power to avoid Satan's deceptive illusions and be guided as we strive to stay on the strait and narrow path. Study the Book of Mormon individually and with your family so that you may receive the blessings the Lord has promised to the righteous.

"Press Forward with a Steadfastness in Christ"

Lesson 11 - 2 Nephi 31-33

Introduction

Describe a feast. What kinds of foods would be on the table? How is a feast different from an ordinary meal? Read 2 Nephi 32:3, beginning with *"Wherefore, I said unto you."* The Lord has invited us to a feast...one that will give us eternal life. This lesson discusses Nephi's teachings on how to live the doctrine of Christ and feast on His words.

Nephi stands as one of the most valiant of all the sons of God. Though he experienced family strife, warfare, and other trials, he loved the Lord with all his heart. He was full of faith, zeal, and integrity, and he never wavered in his obedience. As you study the assigned chapters, remember that these words are among Nephi's last.

Nephi taught of the doctrine of Christ.

Nephi began his final writings by saying that he would *"speak concerning the doctrine of Christ"* (2 Nephi 31:2). Ponder this phrase and what it might mean as we discuss chapter 31.

2 Nephi 31:4 Nephi began by reminding the people that he had previously spoken about Jesus' baptism.

2 Nephi 31:5 Jesus was baptized to fulfil all righteousness.

2 Nephi 31:6-7 He *"fulfil[led] all righteousness"* by being baptized because he made covenants with his Father.

President Joseph F. Smith said that to fulfil all righteousness is *"to fulfil the law"* (Conference Report, Apr. 1912, 9[.])

According to **2 Nephi 31:9**, the other reason Jesus was baptized was to set an example for us.

2 Nephi 31:13, 17 and D&C 20:37, 71-74 These scriptures explain why we need baptism:

- a. To receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (**2 Nephi 31:13**).
- b. To receive a remission of sins (**2 Nephi 31:17**).
- c. To enter the gate for the path to eternal life (**2 Nephi 31:17**).
- d. To receive membership in the Lord's Church (**D&C 20:37, D&C 20:71-74**).

2 Nephi 31:13 Nephi exhorted his people to *"follow the Son, with full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God"*. Think about acting without hypocrisy or deception before God--being completely faithful and believing. Following the Son *"with full purpose of heart"* helps us avoid hypocrisy and deception by having real intent, repenting, and being guided by the Spirit as we do what the Savior would do if he were in our place.

2 Nephi 31:13 The gift we will receive when we show our willingness *"to follow [the] Savior down into the water"* through baptism is the Gift of the Holy Ghost.

2 Nephi 31:13; 2 Nephi 32:2-3 Nephi described the way a person could speak after being baptized and receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost as being *"with the tongue of angels"*. To *"speak with the tongue of angels"* means to speak the words of Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Situations in which we might be blessed to speak with the *"tongue of angels"* may include when we are teaching or testifying to friends and family, during a talk in church, or when we pray.

2 Nephi 31:17 Nephi also taught that after baptism we receive a remission of sins *"by fire and by the Holy Ghost"*. Nephi used the word *"fire"* in describing this process because just as fire purifies and cleanses, the Holy Ghost cleanses from sin those who sincerely repent and are baptized.

2 Nephi 31:18 Nephi taught that the Holy Ghost *"witnesses of the Father and the Son"*. It is essential for us to receive a testimony of the Father and the Son through the Holy Ghost as a witness that we are in the right way--the strait and narrow path.

D&C 8:2 (and see the following quotation from Elder Packer.) A witness from the Holy Ghost can come to us in our heart and our mind.

2 Nephi 32:5 It is important to understand how the Holy Ghost speaks to us because the Holy Ghost will be telling us what to do.

President Boyd K. Packer taught: *"The Holy Ghost speaks with a voice that you feel more than you hear. It is described as a 'still small voice' "* (Ensign, Nov. 1994, 60).

Note: Many times members of the Church feel the influence of the Spirit but are not aware that the feelings they are experiencing are from the Holy Ghost. On occasion throughout the year, we feel the influence of the Spirit in our Sunday School Class during these lessons, or while we read the lessons in personal study. You may not feel the influence of the Spirit in exactly the same way I do, but the influence of the Spirit brings peace and joy as we study the doctrines of the Savior's gospel.

Nephi taught that we must press forward and endure to the end.

Nephi taught that baptism is the gate to enter the strait and narrow path to eternal life. He also taught what it means to walk in this path.

Review the question Nephi asked in **2 Nephi 31:19**--is all done once you're on the path? For the answer to this question, see **2 Nephi 31:19-20**. To "*press forward*" is to move forward with determination, regardless of adversity or distraction. Ponder some of the things that might distract you from pressing forward and think seriously about why pressing forward is an important part of enduring to the end.

2 Nephi 31:20 To have "*a steadfastness in Christ*" means that we do not waver or hesitate in following Him.

Following Christ helps us have a "*perfect brightness of hope*" because we know that if we are faithful and obedient, He will keep his promises to us. Ponder some ways you can help others in their efforts to press forward. It is especially important to help new members of the Church as they begin their journeys along the path...

President Gordon B. Hinckley taught: "*With the ever increasing number of converts, we must make an increasingly substantial effort to assist them as they find their way. Every one of them needs three things: a friend, a responsibility, and nurturing with 'the good word of God' (Moroni 6:4). It is our duty and opportunity to provide these things*" (Ensign, May 1997, 47).

2 Nephi 31:13, 2 Nephi 31:15; see also 3 Nephi 11:31-40 Based on Nephi's teachings in these verses, define "*the doctrine of Christ*". His doctrine includes believing in Christ, repenting, being baptized, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end.

Nephi spoke of the importance of feasting on the words of Christ.

In 2 Nephi 32, Nephi gave additional instructions about what we must do after we have entered in the path to eternal life.

2 Nephi 32:1-3 Specific instruction is given in verse three for us to feast upon the words of Christ. Sources we have for receiving the words of Christ include the scriptures, the prophets, and answers to our own personal prayers.

As you read the quotation below, think about what it means to feast on these words and how "*feasting*" is different from reading or even studying.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell said: "*We need to feast upon the words of Christ in the scriptures and as these words come to us from living prophets. Just nibbling occasionally will not do.*" (See **2 Nephi 31:20** and **2 Nephi 32:3**.) *Feasting means partaking with relish and delight and savoring...not gorging episodically in heedless hunger, but partaking gratefully, dining with delight, at a sumptuous spread carefully and lovingly prepared...over the centuries*" (Wherefore Ye Must Press Forward [1977], 28).

2 Nephi 32:3 Nephi's promise regarding the words of Christ is that they will tell us what to do. Think about how you have found this to be true.

2 Nephi 32:8 Nephi taught that the Spirit teaches, or encourages, a person to pray.

2 Nephi 32:9 It is important that we pray before we perform "*any thing unto the Lord*" so that our performance will be consecrated for the welfare of our souls. Ponder how you have been blessed as you have followed this counsel.

Nephi declared that people will believe his words if they believe in Christ.

This chapter contains Nephi's testimony of the truth of his words and of their importance to all people.

2 Nephi 33:3-5 Nephi's words are "*of great worth*" because they strengthen us, persuade us to do good, inspire us to believe in Christ, and encourage us to endure to the end. We learn of the worth of these words by following them in daily life.

2 Nephi 33:10; see also Moroni 7:13-17 We can know that the words of Nephi are true because they teach us to do good and draw closer to the Savior.

2 Nephi 33:11 Nephi said that we will meet him "*face to face*" at the judgment bar.

2 Nephi 33:14 Nephi's words could "*condemn [us] at the last day*" if we choose to reject these words or disobey the principles they teach, so then we will be cut off from the presence of the Lord.

2 Nephi 33:15 Among Nephi's last written words is the declaration "*For thus hath the Lord commanded me, and I must obey*". This is a fitting end to Nephi's writings because we have seen his unflinching obedience throughout his record. Ponder carefully what you have learned from Nephi's example that can help you as you strive to be more obedient.

Conclusion

In summary, the doctrine of Christ includes believing in Christ, repenting, being baptized, receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost, and enduring to the end.

"Seek Ye for the Kingdom of God"

Lesson 12 - Jacob 1-4

Introduction

Think of a magnifying glass. What does a magnifying glass do? The word "*magnify*" means to enlarge, to increase in significance, to cause to be held in greater esteem or respect. What does it mean to "*magnify*" a calling in the Church? Read Jacob 1:17-19 and identify phrases that describe how Jacob magnified his calling from the Lord. You could include the following:

- Obtained his errand from the Lord (Jacob 1:17).
- Had been consecrated, or set apart (Jacob 1:18).
- Took responsibility (Jacob 1:19)
- Taught the word of God with all diligence (Jacob 1:19)
- Labored with his might (Jacob 1:19).

When Nephi neared the end of his mortal life, he gave his younger brothers, Jacob and Joseph, responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the Nephites. Jacob felt the weight of his calling and sorrowed over the growing pride that led his people to be greedy and unchaste. He strongly exhorted them to repent...to be reconciled to God through the Atonement. Think about your own callings in the Church and how you might better magnify those callings.

Jacob magnified his calling from the Lord.

Jacob was a son of Lehi and Sariah and was born in the wilderness. He saw the Savior in his youth, and he was ordained to the priesthood (2 Nephi 2:4; 2 Nephi 6:2; 2 Nephi 11:3). He became custodian of the small plates and succeeded Nephi in the ministry.

Jacob 1:1-4 When Nephi gave the small plates to Jacob, he also gave Jacob specific instructions. Nephi instructed Jacob to record precious things--sacred preaching, great revelations, and prophecies on these plates.

Jacob 1:5-8 It was important to record and preserve this information to persuade their people to come unto Christ, partake of the goodness of God, enter into God's rest, and believe in Christ unto salvation. These verses remind us that we should be recording sacred events, faith-promoting experiences, and the personal inspiration we receive in our lives.

Jacob 1:10 Jacob wrote that his "*people...loved Nephi exceedingly*". They had this great love for Nephi because he had protected them and labored diligently to serve them. Think about how you have felt toward those who have labored to serve you.

Jacob 1:17-18 Jacob said that he "*first obtained [his] errand from the Lord*" before he taught the people. We obtain our errand from the Lord by being called and set apart. We find out what the Lord wants us to do in our callings by fasting, praying, and following the counsel and direction of our priesthood leaders.

Jacob 1:19 Jacob said that if he and Joseph did not teach the people diligently, their sins would be upon his head and he would not be blameless in the judgment. It is important that we magnify our callings so that we are not responsible for leaving others in ignorance of the Lord's commandments and direction.

Ponder your experience to remember some good examples you have seen of people magnifying their callings. **D&C 58:26-28** teaches us how we can better magnify our callings by going the extra mile to do more than is required to meet the minimum responsibilities of our calling. Think about times in the past when you have been blessed as you have done your best to fulfill your callings.

Jacob warned against the love of riches, pride, and unchastity.

Jacob 2:3 As he began to preach to the people of Nephi, Jacob said that he was "*weighed down with much more desire and anxiety*" than he had been before.

Jacob 2:5-9; see also Jacob 1:15-16 Jacob's soul was "*burdened*" because he had received a strict commandment from God to admonish the people because of their sins. Ponder Jacob's choice of words as he described sin as "*labor*" (Jacob 2:5).

Jacob 2:12-16 The search for material wealth became a stumbling block to the Nephites of Jacob's day as they found precious metals, gained riches, and began to swell up with pride and then persecute their brethren. Obtaining an abundance of material wealth can lead to pride if the wealth is used to differentiate yourself from others as you become "special".

Jacob 2:17-21 Jacob counseled them in proper ways to use wealth and encouraged them to avoid the misuse of wealth by seeking first the kingdom of God and using wealth to assist others with their needs.

President Spencer W. Kimball taught: "*The possession of riches does not necessarily constitute sin. But sin may arise in the acquisition and use of wealth. ... 'For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.'* (1 Tim. 6:10-11. [1 Timothy 6:10-11]. *Book of Mormon history eloquently reveals the corrosive effect of the passion for wealth. ...Had the people used their wealth for good purposes they could have enjoyed a continuing prosperity. But they seemed unable for a sustained period to be simultaneously wealthy and righteous*" (The Miracle of Forgiveness [1969], 47-48).

Jacob 2:23-24 After warning the people about pride and the love of riches, Jacob called them to repentance for their immoral behavior. The Nephites were rationalizing their immoral behavior by pointing to the actions of David and Solomon. Many

people today try to excuse unchastity with a variety of excuses--none of which really justify their evil behavior.

Jacob 2:27-29; see also Exodus 20:14; 1 Corinthians 6:18-20 It is important to be morally clean because God delights in chastity.

Jacob 2:31-35; Jacob 3:10 Sexual immorality can affect the sinner's family and friends and all members of society by causing the hearts of their wives to be broken and their children and associates to lose confidence in them because they cannot be trusted to keep sacred vows.

Jacob 3:1-2 Jacob gave counsel and comfort to those who had been hurt by the immorality of others, telling them to look to God with firmness and to pray for comfort.

What must a person do to be forgiven of immorality? **President Ezra Taft Benson** suggested five steps to be forgiven of unchastity ("The Law of Chastity," in Brigham Young University 1987-88 Devotional and Fireside Speeches [1988], 53-54):

"1. Flee immediately from any situation you are in that is either causing you to sin or that may cause you to sin."

"2. Plead with the Lord for the power to overcome."

"3. Let your priesthood leaders help you resolve the transgression and come back into full fellowship with the Lord."

"4. Drink from the divine fountain [the scriptures and words of the prophets] and fill your lives with positive sources of power."

"5. Remember that through proper repentance you can become clean again."

Jacob 3:5-7 According to Jacob, the Lamanites would be blessed for being chaste--they would be preserved and would one day become a blessed people. Consider what the Lord promises as the blessings of being morally clean.

Jacob testified of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

After calling his people to repentance, Jacob ended his sermon by testifying of the hope of forgiveness through the Atonement.

Jacob 4:4-6 The scriptures and the prophets help us gain a testimony of the Atonement and help us develop our faith because of their affirming witness of the reality of the Atonement.

Jacob 4:10-12 We obtain the hope in Christ that Jacob spoke of by following His teachings as recorded in the scriptures and as spoken by the prophets.

Jacob 4:14 When we see it recorded that the Jews looked "*beyond the mark*", it means that the Jews delighted in expounding the difficult texts of scripture, but without faith and the help of the Holy Ghost they could not understand them. They despised the "*words of plainness*" in the scriptures and looked for salvation in some other way than through Jesus Christ.

Mosiah 3:17 Do you sometimes "*look beyond the mark*" in your daily living? Ponder how you can be more diligent in applying this scripture and remembering the importance of the Savior in your life.

Conclusion

Jacob's teachings help us understand the importance of magnifying our callings and avoiding pride and immorality. By emphasizing the Atonement at the conclusion of his sermon, Jacob taught that we must rely on the Savior.

Additional Teachings in these chapters

Jacob condemned the unauthorized practice of plural marriage

Jacob 2:23-24 The Nephites claimed David and Solomon as examples to justify their whoredoms. But David and Solomon were unworthy examples as shown in D&C 132:38-39. The Lord gave wives and concubines to David and Solomon, but they sinned by marrying additional wives outside of the covenant. Anciently, a concubine was not an immoral mistress, but a legal wife of lesser social standing (see Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], 154).

Jacob 2:27-28 The marriage law Jacob taught to the Nephites was monogamy.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, "*I have constantly said no man shall have but one wife at a time, unless the Lord directs otherwise*" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 324). The Lord gave such direction for plural marriage in D&C 132, but He later withdrew His sanction of plural marriage when conditions changed (see Official Declaration 1).

The law of the Lord regarding marriage today is the same as it was in Jacob's day.

Jacob warned against racial prejudice

Jacob 3:5,9 Many of the Nephites look down on the Lamanites because of their dark skins.

Jacob 3:8-9 Jacob said this prejudice was unfounded and the Nephites had sins of their own. Prejudice can prevent the Church from fulfilling its divine mission. **President Howard W. Hunter** said: "*The restored gospel is a message of divine love for all people everywhere, based upon the conviction that all humans are children of the same God. ... The validity, the power of our faith is not bound by history, nationality, or culture. It is not the peculiar property of any one people or any one age*" (Ensign, Nov. 1991, 19).

The Allegory of the Olive Trees

Lesson 13 - Jacob 5-7

Introduction

Picture an olive tree in your mind. Think of as many things about an olive tree as you can think of in one minute. Some things that may have been in your thoughts include:

- May live to be very old
- Olive branch a symbol of peace
- Requires nourishment
- Bears fruit
- Many branches
- Gnarled trunk

This lesson discusses how the olive tree was used as a symbol to describe the Lord's dealings with the house of Israel.

Jacob quoted Zenos's allegory of the olive trees.

In this chapter Jacob quotes an allegory from Zenos, a Hebrew prophet mentioned several times in the Book of Mormon. An allegory is a literary device in which one object or event is used to describe or represent another. Zenos's allegory uses olive trees to summarize Israel's history and foretell its destiny.

Let's review the symbols Zenos used in this allegory and the meanings of these symbols:

ZENOS'S ALLEGORY

Symbol	Meaning
Vineyard	The world
Master of the vineyard	Jesus Christ
Tame olive tree	The house of Israel, the Lord's covenant people
Wild olive tree	Gentiles (people not born into the house of Israel)
Branches	Groups of people
Servants	Prophets and others called to serve
Fruit	Lives or works of people

Jacob 5:3-4 The allegory begins with the master of the vineyard finding that his tame olive tree is beginning to decay. This decay represents Apostasy.

Jacob 5:4-14 When the master of the vineyard found his tame olive tree decaying, he pruned, cultivated, and nourished it. When that failed to save the tree from its decaying "main top", he decided to graft in portions of a wild olive tree.

Jacob 5:11, 18 Grafting is a process in which part of a second plant is joined to a first plant in such a way that it becomes a permanent part of the first plant. The master asked the servant to graft in some wild branches to save the tree and allow it to correct its decay.

Grafting in this allegory represents bringing Gentiles into the house of Israel through baptism. **Acts 10** records when the gospel was first taken to the Gentiles by the apostles after the departure of the Resurrected Christ.

1 Nephi 10:12-13 The scattering of the House of Israel is represented by transplanting the tame branches into distant parts of the vineyard.

1 Nephi 2:19-20; 1 Nephi 22:3-4 Specific groups these tame branches represent include Lehi and Ishmael's families along with others who would be led away from Jerusalem.

Amos 9:8-9 Israel was scattered to be sifted among other nations.

The master of the vineyard repeatedly worked with his servant to prune, dig about, and nourish his tree. This suggests much about Jesus Christ's involvement in the lives of His people...that he is actively and very personally involved in trying to bring about their salvation.

Jacob 5:15-18 When the master visited the vineyard for the second time, he discovered that the wild branches that were grafted into the tame tree had taken hold and strengthened the tree so that it was now bearing tame fruit in abundance. The bearing of good fruit symbolizes the accomplishment of good works. From this illustration we see that new converts add life and strength to the Church.

Jacob 5:19-25 The master found when he visited the natural (tame) branches he had planted in various places around the vineyard that the branches planted in poor ground brought forth good fruit, while the branches planted in good ground yielded both good and wild fruit. Ponder what application these situations might have for us today.

Jacob 5:29-32, 37-42 When the master visited the vineyard the third time, he found that all the fruit from the natural tree that had had wild branches grafted in had turned bad and become corrupted. The many kinds of corrupt fruit symbolizes

universal apostasy.

Jacob 5:37, 40, 48 The apostasy was caused by "loftiness" of the branches overcoming the roots. The "*loftiness*" of the vineyard symbolized pride. Think about how our own loftiness, or pride, might prevent us from bearing good fruit--doing the good works the Lord requires of us and bringing others to the gospel.

Jacob 5:41, 47 The master's response to his corrupted vineyard--his weeping and obvious grief--tells us about the Lord's feelings for His people. Ponder how knowing that the Lord loves you makes a difference in your life.

Other verses that illustrate the Lord's love for us include:

"I will prune it, and dig about it, and nourish it, that...it perish not" (Jacob 5:4).

"It grieveth me that I should lose this tree" (Jacob 5:7).

"What shall we do unto the tree, that I may preserve again good fruit thereof unto mine own self?" (Jacob 5:33).

"I may have joy again in the fruit of my vineyard" (Jacob 5:60).

Jacob 5:49-54, 58, 62-64 To save his corrupted vineyard, the master decided to nourish and prune the vineyard once more and graft some of the transplanted branches back into the original tree.

1 Nephi 10:14; 2 Nephi 29:14; D&C 33:3-6 This final nourishing, pruning, and grafting represents the Restoration of the gospel and the gathering of scattered Israel.

D&C 133:8 The "other servants" mentioned in Jacob 5:61, Jacob 5:70 are the elders (missionaries) of the Church.

Jacob 5:71-75 Although these servants are few, the results of their efforts were great. The vineyard was saved as the bad was cast out and the natural fruit was restored as a balance was achieved between the roots and the branches.

We can help in this final nourishing, pruning, and grafting in the Lord's vineyard as we proclaim the gospel to all those within our circle of influence and as we support the missionaries in the worldwide mission fields.

Jacob exhorted his listeners to repent and follow Christ.

Jacob 6:1 After relating Zenos's allegory, Jacob prophesied that the allegory would come to pass.

Jacob 6:2 The time period Jacob referred to in this verse is the latter days. Obviously, this tells us that Zenos's allegory is quite relevant to us.

Jacob 6:4-5 These verses teach that the Savior will recover Israel in the last days by extending an invitation to all who will accept the gospel and bear good fruit (do good works).

Jacob 6:3-13 Gospel principles Jacob emphasized after testifying that the events in Zenos's allegory would all come to pass include God's mercy, the reward for faithful service, the humility required to accept the gospel, the necessity of repentance and whole-hearted acceptance of the gospel, the need to listen to the promptings and teachings of God and his messengers, the requirement to endure to the end, and the counsel to be wise.

Jacob 6:11-12; Moroni 6:3-4 Responsibilities of those who "*have been nourished by the good word of God*" include being obedient, walking in the strait and narrow way, enduring to the end, and being wise. Specific ways in which we can fulfill these responsibilities include inviting our nonmember friends to talk with the missionaries, serving diligently as home teachers and visiting teachers, and couples serving full-time missions together.

Conclusion

President Joseph Fielding Smith said, "*Today Latter-day Saints are going to all parts of the world as servants in the vineyard to gather this fruit and lay it in store for the time of the coming of the Master*" (Answers to Gospel Questions, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., 5 vols. [1957-66], 4:142). We should participate in this great gathering. Because we have been nourished by the Lord, we are obligated to help others receive this nourishment.

Additional Teachings

Sherem's false teachings

The account of Sherem is found in Jacob 7:1-23.

Jacob 7:1-7 Sherem led many people away from the truth by flattery and appeals to their pride. Some people today use similar methods to lead others away from Christ as they flatter their followers.

Jacob 7:8-22 Jacob was able to confound Sherem through the power of God being manifested in him.

Jacob 7:23; Romans 16:17-18; Ephesians 4:11-15 give us insight into how we can protect ourselves from the deceptions of anti-Christ.

President Joseph Fielding Smith said: "*There is not anything in this world of as great importance to us as obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Let us search these scriptures. Let us know what the Lord has revealed. Let us put our lives in harmony with his truth. Then we will not be deceived*" (Doctrines of Salvation, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954-56], 1:301).

"For a Wise Purpose"

Lesson 14 - Enos, Jarom, Omni, Words of Mormon

Introduction

Try to recall an incident or feeling that would have been forgotten if you had not recorded it in a journal. Why did you write about that incident or feeling? How has it benefited you to have this information written in your journal?

In 1 Nephi 6:4; 1 Nephi 9:5; 1 Nephi 19:3; and 2 Nephi 25:26, Nephi gave some reasons for the importance of keeping his written record.

The keepers of the records that have become the Book of Mormon labored mightily to preserve the word of the Lord and the experiences of their people in learning to keep His commandments. They recognized the importance of recording this information for future generations. Because of their diligence in keeping the records and because of God's hand in protecting and preserving the records, we are able to learn from the spiritual successes and failures of those who have gone before us. The four books discussed in today's lesson, *Enos, Jarom, Omni, and Words of Mormon*, were written by eight men who, like Nephi, understood the importance of keeping sacred records.

Enos prayed for himself, the Nephites, and the Lamanites.

Enos 1:1 Enos credited his father Jacob (Jacob 7:27) with teaching him the gospel.

The teaching and example of righteous parents help children develop faith in the Savior. Regarding what it means to teach children *"in the nurture and admonition of the Lord"*, **President Gordon B. Hinckley** counseled parents to be righteous examples for their children, as Enos's father was for him: *"Treat your children as sons and daughters of God. Be kind. Love them. Respect them. Counsel with them. Teach them. Pray for them. Guide them and God will bless both them and you"* (in Church News, 1 Nov. 1997, 2).

Enos 1:3-4 Jacob's teachings influenced Enos to kneel in prayer and supplication.

Enos 1:2 Enos described his prayer to the Lord using the word *"wrestle"*. Ponder Enos' choice of words--calling his experience a *"wrestle"*. Enos' account of seeking forgiveness can remind us of the sincerity and long-suffering required in truly repenting.

Enos 1:5-6 Enos knew that his sins had been forgiven by hearing the Lord's voice.

Enos 1:7-8 His faith enabled Enos to receive forgiveness of his sins.

Faith in Christ is necessary for us to repent and receive forgiveness because he is the one who paid the price and holds the keys of forgiveness for sin.

How can we know our sins have been forgiven? **President Harold B. Lee** said: *"If the time comes when you have done all that you can to repent of your sins...and have made amends and restitution to the best of your ability... , then you will want that confirming answer as to whether or not the Lord has accepted of you. In your soul-searching, if you seek for and you find that peace of conscience, by that token you may know that the Lord has accepted of your repentance"* (Stand Ye in Holy Places [1974], 185).

Enos 1:9 , 11-13 After Enos learned that his sins were forgiven, he prayed for the welfare of his Nephite brethren, for the Lamanites, and he also asked that a record of his people be preserved.

Enos 1:13-14 Enos wanted to be sure that the records would be preserved so that they could be used in bringing about the salvation of the Lamanites.

Consider Enos' example and what you might learn about prayer from Enos.

Enos 1:22-23 Enos described the Nephites of his time as a *"stiffnecked people"* who were only moved by *"exceeding harshness"* and *"exceedingly great plainness of speech"*. Doesn't it sound as if there are similarities between the Nephites of Enos's time and some people today?

Enos 1:15-18, 26-27 Enos's faith and testimony are impressive because he was completely convinced that the Lord would answer his requests, and he was able to rest, knowing for a certainty that he would be exalted because of his faith and works.

The Nephites prospered through continual repentance.

Jarom 1:1-2 Jarom said his purpose in adding to the records was to record genealogy and to keep his father's instructions. Jarom did not record the prophecies and revelations he had received because he said that previous writings already revealed the plan of salvation in sufficient detail.

Jarom 1:3-4 Jarom described his people, the Nephites, as *hard-hearted* and *stiff-necked*--stubborn and proud!

Jarom 1:5, 7-12 They were able to prosper in the land and overcome the Lamanites because they kept the commandments and repented when necessary.

Jarom 1:11-12 Prophets, priests, and teachers played a vital role in the success of the Nephites as they carried out their callings to preach, teach, exhort, and persuade their people to follow the law of Moses and understand the intent of that law.

Jarom 1:12 To *"prick their hearts with the word"* meant that the priests and teachers kept the people stirred up to repentance.

Think about a time when your heart has been pricked by the words of a prophet or another Church leader or teacher to get your life in order or continue in good works.

Jarom 1:11; see also Mosiah 3:13 The Nephite leaders persuaded the people to *"look forward unto the Messiah, and*

believe in him to come as though he already was". We also need to follow this counsel as we prepare for the Second Coming.

Omni, Amaron, Chemish, Abinadom, and Amaleki kept the records.

The book of Omni covers approximately 200 years and was written by five record keepers, yet it is only 30 verses long. Although the writers of the book of Omni wrote little, each writer obeyed the commandment to keep and preserve the plates. Preserving the records was vital to accomplishing the Lord's plan for these peoples.

The second half of the book of Omni, written by Amaleki, illustrates the importance of preserving the records by showing what happened to a people that had not preserved its records.

Amaleki recorded the story of Mosiah and his followers, who were commanded by the Lord to leave the land of Nephi.

Omni 1:13 Mosiah and his followers were led to Zarahemla.

Omni 1:14 They found the people of Zarahemla there.

Omni 1:15-16 ; see also 1 Nephi 1:4 The origin of the people of Zarahemla is explained here. Zedekiah was king of Jerusalem at the time that Lehi and his family went into the wilderness.

Omni 1:14 The Mulekites, the people of Zarahemla, were so happy to see Mosiah and his followers because they brought with them the plates of brass, the record of the Jews.

Omni 1:17 Consequences Amaleki implied had come to the Mulekites because they did not bring any records with them when they left Jerusalem included the degeneration of their language and the loss of the knowledge of Jesus Christ and His teachings.

Mosiah 1:3-5 If we did not have the scriptures, we might not know of the mysteries of God. Keep in mind that when we have the scriptures but do not study them we are no better off than if we did not even have the scriptures.

Omni 1:20-22 By interpreting an engraved stone kept by the Mulekites, Mosiah learned of another civilization, the Jaredites, that had existed in the land. The Jaredites came to the western hemisphere at the time of the Tower of Babel. Coriantumr, the last survivor of the Jaredite nation, had lived with the Mulekites for a time. The records of the Jaredites are abridged in the book of Ether, and they will be discussed in later lessons.

Amaleki counsels us wisely in **Omni 1:25-26**. Ponder his counsel that we should "*offer [our] whole souls as an offering*" to the Savior.

Mormon added the small plates of Nephi to his abridgment of the large plates.

From 1 Nephi through Omni, the Book of Mormon contains a straight chronological account. The Words of Mormon, however, were written more than 500 years after Amaleki completed the book of Omni.

Words of Mormon 1:1-5 Mormon wrote the Words of Mormon after seeing his people almost completely annihilated (around 385AD) because he wanted to explain his inclusion of Nephi's small plates in the record.

Words of Mormon 1:3-5 After Mormon abridged the large plates of Nephi, he found the small plates of Nephi and included them in his record. The first six books of the Book of Mormon, from 1 Nephi through Omni, are a translation of these small plates. The book titled *Words of Mormon* is Mormon's explanation of why he included the small plates. It serves as a transition between the records from the small plates and the records from the large plates.

Words of Mormon 1:4, 6 Mormon's impressions of the small plates were that they were "choice" to him and should be "choice" to his brethren.

Words of Mormon 1:7 He decided to include the small plates in his record because he was inspired to do so by the Spirit. The "*wise purpose*" to which Mormon referred was the Lord's way of preserving the information on the 116 pages of manuscript that would be lost by Martin Harris.

Look at the chart showing the records that Mormon and Moroni abridged and compiled. Note that the books that are not listed on the chart (Words of Mormon, Mormon, and Moroni) were written by Mormon and Moroni.

Records Abridged and Compiled by Mormon and Moroni

ORIGINAL SOURCE	CONTENTS	CURRENT FORM
Large Plates of Nephi	Book of Lehi	Lost 116 pages
	Mosiah, Alma, Helaman 3 Nephi, 4 Nephi	Abridged by Mormon and included in the Book of Mormon
Small Plates of Nephi	1 Nephi, 2 Nephi, Jacob, Enos, Jarom, Omni	Included by Mormon in the Book of Mormon
Plates of Ether	Book of Ether	Abridged by Moroni and included in the Book of Mormon

The small plates of Nephi covered approximately the same time period (600 to 200 B.C.) as the first records in the large plates. There was no apparent need for Mormon to include both in his abridgment. But the Lord knew that the translation of the first records from the large plates would be lost centuries later, when Martin Harris took 116 pages of the Book of Mormon manuscript to show to his family members and friends. After these 116 pages of the translation were lost, the Lord instructed Joseph Smith not to retranslate the same records (D&C 10:8-14). These records are not found in the Book of

Mormon today. Instead, the same time period is described through the account from the small plates.

Words of Mormon 1:2, 8; see also the title page of the Book of Mormon Mormon said the purpose of the entire sacred record he was abridging was to bring people to a knowledge of God and the redemption of Christ.

It is important that we read the Book of Mormon with this purpose in mind to concentrate on and understand the important spiritual doctrines and teachings in this sacred record.

Conclusion

The writers of the Book of Mormon kept and preserved the records of their people so that future generations would know the dealings of the Lord with these people. Study the Book of Mormon so that you may be guided and directed by the word of the Lord contained within it.

Additional Idea

Feeling the promptings of the Spirit

Read **Jarom 1:3**. Four conditions Jarom mentioned that can keep us from feeling the promptings of the Spirit are a hard heart, deaf ears, a blind mind, and a stiff neck.

Ponder what these four symbolic conditions represent and how they prevent us from feeling the promptings of the Spirit.

Jarom 1:4 Blessings of communion with the Holy Spirit come to those who overcome these conditions.

"Eternally Indebted to Your Heavenly Father"

Lesson 15 - Mosiah 1-3

Look at the picture of Christ in the Americas on the cover of your Book of Mormon lesson manual or class member study guide. There are 238 chapters in the Book of Mormon. Only 50 (about 21 percent) of those chapters contain accounts of events that occurred after Jesus' birth. Only 18 (about 8 percent) of those chapters contain accounts of Jesus' visit among the Nephite people. Given those facts, why do think the picture of the appearance of Christ was chosen to represent our study of the Book of Mormon? Because, as recorded in Mosiah 3:13, Jesus Christ is the central figure in the Book of Mormon. His Atonement applies to people who lived before His mortal ministry, just as it applies to those who lived during His mortal ministry and just as it applies to us today. Today's lesson and next week's lesson focus on the words of King Benjamin, a prophet-leader who helped his people exercise faith in Jesus Christ hundreds of years before His mortal ministry and Atonement.

King Benjamin taught his sons and had Mosiah call the people together.

Mosiah 1:2-8 In the book of Mosiah, the first account of Benjamin is not about his reign as king but about his teachings as a father. He wanted his sons to be men of understanding and to know the prophecies of their fathers. This concern for their education in the importance of spiritual subjects demonstrates that King Benjamin was an excellent example to follow as a father or parent.

Mosiah 1:2-7 King Benjamin taught his sons about the family's religious heritage and the commandments of God. Note that the word *mysteries* in verses 3 and 5 refers to *spiritual truths that are known only by revelation*.

Mosiah 1:5 The difference between the Nephites, who studied the scriptures, and the Lamanites, who did not, was that the Lamanites had dwindled in unbelief and accepted false traditions instead of the true revelations from God. This difference is also reflected in our modern society. Parents can help their children develop a love for the scriptures by teaching their children from the scriptures, setting a righteous example by personally studying the scriptures, and using examples from the scriptures to teach principles necessary for successful daily living.

Mosiah 1:16 King Benjamin *"gave [Mosiah] charge concerning the records...on the plates of brass"*. The Lord has commanded today's prophets, seers, and revelators to see that the scriptures are *"preserved in safety"* (D&C 42:56).

Mosiah 1:3-5 Think about why it is important that the scriptures be *"preserved in safety"*.

Mosiah 1:10-12 King Benjamin asked his son Mosiah to call the people together so that he could proclaim Mosiah as his successor and to give the people a name to distinguish them from others. Note that the name that King Benjamin referred to was the name of Christ. Toward the end of his discourse, King Benjamin taught the people to take the name of Christ upon themselves. More discussion of that teaching will be included as part of lesson 16.

King Benjamin taught the people of their eternal indebtedness to God.

Mosiah 2:5-6 The people organized themselves as families once they arrived at the temple to hear King Benjamin. Note that they faced themselves toward the temple.

Mosiah 2:7-8 King Benjamin constructed a tower when he observed that not all the people could hear his words and when that proved insufficient, he had his words transcribed and sent to the ones who could not personally hear his address. This gathering was similar to general conference today--observed in person by many and sent to those outside the immediate area by various forms of communications technology.

Mosiah 2:9 King Benjamin told the people that he had not commanded them to come together to trifle with his words, meaning that he did not want them to treat those words lightly.

Mosiah 2:9 In addition to his previous counsel on the seriousness of his intent, he counseled them to open their ears, hearts, and minds as they listened to his teachings. To hearken to and understand the teachings of living prophets requires that we pay close attention, be open to accepting the teachings and principles, and ponder the truths being taught as well as how we might apply the teachings in our lives.

Mosiah 2:10-16 Personal characteristics demonstrated in the way Benjamin served as king included humility, devotion to God, integrity, selflessness, love, leadership, service, reverence, and honesty.

Mosiah 1:1; Mosiah 6:7 King Benjamin's leadership had a calming effect on his people so that they came together in peace during his reign.

Mosiah 2:17-19 King Benjamin taught his people about service, proclaiming that serving others was service to God. Ponder that concept and consider how our service to others shows our gratitude to God for the blessings we receive from Him. Ponder what manner of service inspires others to *"thank [their] heavenly King"*. For some examples, see Mosiah 18:8-10; D&C 18:10-16 and think about the service we promise to do as we make our baptismal covenants.

Mosiah 2:20-25 and the quotation below. These verses should cause us to think about what it means to be an unprofitable servant even if we praise and serve God with all our souls.

President Joseph Fielding Smith said: *"Do you think it will ever be possible for any one of us, no matter how hard we labor, ...to pay our Father and Jesus Christ for the blessings we have received from them? The great love, with its accompanying blessings, extended to us through the crucifixion, suffering, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is beyond our mortal comprehension. We never could repay"* (Improvement Era, June 1966, 538).

As unprofitable servants, we are *"eternally indebted to [our] heavenly Father, to render to him all that [we] have and are"* (Mosiah 2:34).

Mosiah 2:17, 22; Mosiah 4:10 These verses help us understand how we can render all that we are by serving others, keeping the commandments, repenting of our sins, and humbling ourselves before God.

Mosiah 2:22, 41; see also D&C 84:38 Heavenly Father, when we give Him *"all that [we] have and are"*, gives us prosperity in the land, temporal and spiritual blessings, and never-ending happiness in heaven if we endure to the end in righteousness.

Mosiah 2:36-39 The consequences of refusing to obey the commandments after having been taught them include withdrawal of the Spirit of the Lord from us; loss of guidance in the path of wisdom--leaving us in need of blessings and guidance; guilt before God for rebelling against Him; the consequence of being an enemy to God; guilt, pain and anguish; loss of God's mercy; and never-ending torment.

Mosiah 2:38; see also Mosiah 3:23-27 According to King Benjamin, the cause of the torment that is often likened to a lake of fire is our own sense of guilt.

King Benjamin repeated an angel's prophecies about Jesus Christ and His Atonement.

Before his address to the people, King Benjamin had been visited by an angel who came *"to declare glad tidings of great joy"* (Mosiah 3:1-4). Mosiah 3 contains the angel's message.

Mosiah 3:5-10; also Alma 7:11-12. Jesus suffered temptations, pain, hunger, thirst, and fatigue so that salvation might be offered to mankind and that righteous judgment would be rendered to all.

The answers to the following questions are contained in the quotation below by Elder Hales: Why did He suffer anguish for the wickedness of the people? Why is it important to know that He was the Son of God and of Mary? Why did He give His life? In what ways is this a message of *"great joy"*? (Mosiah 3:3).

Elder Robert D. Hales said: *"What we must remember about the Savior is that He and He alone had the power to lay down His life and take it up again. He had the ability to die from His mortal mother, Mary, and the ability to overcome death from His immortal Father. Our Savior, Jesus Christ, went willingly and deliberately to His death, having told His followers that this would happen. Why? one might ask. The answer: to give immortality to all mankind and the promise of eternal life to those who believed in Him (see John 3:15), to give His own life for a ransom for others (see Matthew 20:28), to overcome Satan's power, and to make it possible for sins to be forgiven. Without Jesus' Atonement, there would be an impassable barrier between God and mortal men and women. When we comprehend the Atonement, we remember Him with awe and gratitude"* (Ensign, Nov. 1997, 26).

According to the angel, those who will receive salvation through the Atonement of Jesus Christ are listed below.

- a. People *"who have died not knowing the will of God concerning them, or who have ignorantly sinned"* (Mosiah 3:11); note that from D&C 137:7-9 we learn that people who die without a knowledge of the gospel but who would have received the gospel with all their hearts will be heirs of the celestial kingdom.
- b. People with a knowledge of the gospel who repent and exercise faith in Jesus Christ (**Mosiah 3:12-13**).
- c. Little children who die in their infancy (**Mosiah 3:16, 18, 21; see also D&C 137:10**).

Mosiah 3:10 The promise of salvation for these three groups shows the Atonement's power to ensure *"that a righteous judgment might come upon the children of men"*.

Mosiah 3:16, 21; Moroni 8:12; D&C 29:46 These verses teach that little children are *"blameless before God"*. Although *"by nature, they fall"*, they are *"blameless before God"* because they are *"alive in Christ"* through the Atonement.

Mosiah 3:19 The angel said that *"the natural man is an enemy to God"*. The meaning of the phrase *"natural man"* is found in **Alma 42:6-10** and the quotation below.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie said: *"After the fall of Adam, man became carnal, sensual, and devilish by nature; he became fallen man. ... All accountable persons on earth inherit this fallen state, this probationary state, this state in which worldly things seem desirable to the carnal nature. Being in this state, 'the natural man is an enemy to God,' until he conforms to the great plan of redemption and is born again to righteousness. (Mosiah 3:19.) Thus all mankind would remain lost and fallen forever were it not for the atonement of our Lord. (Alma 42:4-14.)"* (Mormon Doctrine, 2nd ed. [1966], 267-68).

Mosiah 3:19 counsels us to *"[put] off the natural man"*. We do so by:

- a. Yielding to *"the enticings of the Holy Spirit."* This helps us *"[put] off the natural man"* by following the guidance of the Holy Ghost as taught in 2 Nephi 32:5; Mosiah 5:2; and 3 Nephi 28:11.
- b. Become *"a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord."* Ponder what it means to be a true *saint*. The word *saint* implies sanctification, or holiness. In the Book of Mormon, the word is used to refer to devoted members of the Lord's Church. See, for example, the use of the word *saints* in 1 Nephi 14:12 and 2 Nephi 9:18. The Atonement helps us become true saints.
- c. Become *"as a child."* Think about how you can become *"alive in Christ,"* as little children are. See Mosiah 3:17-19, Mosiah 3:21; see also 2 Nephi 25:23-26; Moroni 8:10.

Mosiah 3:20 The angel said that the knowledge of the Savior would spread throughout every nation, kindred, tongue and people. This prophecy is being fulfilled as the Church's missionary service teaches the gospel and as Church broadcasts reach faraway outposts even in lands that are not open to the missionaries at this time. It will continue to be fulfilled as new areas are opened for the proclamation of the gospel.

"Ye Shall Be Called the Children of Christ"

Lesson 16 - Mosiah 4-6

Introduction

To sit on the right hand of God is to receive exaltation and live with God again. What kind of people will be entitled to sit on the right hand of God? on the left hand of God? See **Matthew 25:33-46; D&C 29:27**. At the end of his sermon, King Benjamin told his people what they needed to do to be entitled to sit on the right hand of God. We can learn from King Benjamin's words because the requirements are the same for us.

King Benjamin's people sought and received a remission of their sins.

Mosiah 4:1 After King Benjamin taught his people about the mission of the Savior, he saw that *"they had fallen to the earth"*.

Mosiah 4:1-2 The people fell to the earth because the fear of the Lord had come upon them.

Helaman 12:4-8; Moses 1:9-10 We are *"less than the dust of the earth"* because we do not respond to God's commands with the obedience that even the elements of the earth exhibit.

Mosiah 4:5-8, 11-12 King Benjamin emphasized his people's *"nothingness"* and unworthiness to get them to think seriously about how dependent they were on the Lord. It is essential for us to recognize our dependence on the Lord so that we will call on Him in humility and realize that only He can save us.

Mosiah 4:2 Understanding their *"carnal state"* led King Benjamin's people to cry to the Lord for mercy and forgiveness.

Mosiah 4:3 The Spirit of the Lord came upon them and caused them to become *"filled with joy"* due to the remission of their sins and the peace of conscience they felt. Their exceeding faith enabled them to be forgiven of their sins.

How did they know they had been forgiven and how can we know that we are forgiven after we repent? **President**

Harold B. Lee said: *"If the time comes when you have done all that you can to repent of your sins ... and have made amends and restitution to the best of your ability ... , then you will want that confirming answer as to whether or not the Lord has accepted of you. In your soul-searching, if you seek for and you find that peace of conscience, by that token you may know that the Lord has accepted of your repentance"* (*Stand Ye in Holy Places* [1974], 185).

Mosiah 4:9-10 King Benjamin taught that to obtain a remission of our sins, we must believe in and exhibit faith in Jesus Christ and acknowledge his omnipotence and power, humble ourselves before him, and sincerely ask for forgiveness, believing that we will receive.

Mosiah 4:11-12 He taught that to retain a remission of our sins, we must remember the greatness of God, his mercy and blessings to us, humble ourselves and pray daily, and be faithful and obedient to our covenants.

Mosiah 4:26. To retain a remission of our sins is to walk guiltless before God and to do good works.

Ponder how King Benjamin's words to his people can give you hope when you are discouraged by your weaknesses.

King Benjamin taught his people how to live Christlike lives.

The following three sets of verses may each be summarized in a single sentence like those suggested here:

Mosiah 4:13-15 Teach the children.

Mosiah 4:16-26 Share with the poor.

Mosiah 4:27-30 Watch your thoughts, words, and deeds.

Mosiah 4:14-15 According to King Benjamin, obligations parents have to their children include providing for them temporally and spiritually, teaching them to keep the commandments, live in peace and harmony, be truthful and sober, and to love and serve one another.

Conditions in the world today make King Benjamin's counsel to parents especially important because there is so much contention and selfishness that needs to be overcome with love and charity.

It is so important that parents teach the gospel to their children because parents are commanded by God to ensure that their children know the gospel principles that will guide them back to their Heavenly Father.

President Gordon B. Hinckley reminded us that... *"The health of any society, the happiness of its people, their prosperity, and their peace all find their roots in the teaching of children by fathers and mothers"* (Ensign, Nov. 1993, 60).

We teach children to love and serve one another through loving and consistent daily example.

Mosiah 4:16 King Benjamin also instructed his people to care for the needy.

Mosiah 4:17, 22 According to King Benjamin, some people refuse to help the needy because they judge the person in need and condemn him for what they think may be his culpability in his situation.

Mosiah 4:18-23 We have *"great cause to repent"* if we have this attitude because we are all beggars and are all dependent on God for life and sustenance.

Mosiah 4:19-20 In the sense that we are all dependent upon God's mercy and powerless to provide for all our own needs and wants, we are all beggars.

Charitable service is an important characteristic of members of Christ's Church because it gives us an opportunity to learn to love others and humble ourselves to serve others unselfishly.

Mosiah 4:16, 20-21 We follow Heavenly Father's example as we give to the needy by ensuring that their plea for help does not go unanswered and that we give freely in a sincere effort to be of service.

We ensure that when we give to the needy, we give the right assistance in the right way by following the Spirit and being generous and loving. There is no single right approach to helping the needy. We should remember the principles taught by King Benjamin and seek the guidance of the Spirit in each situation. The Lord has established ways in which we can help the needy. When we give fast offerings or donate money, goods, time, or other service to the Church, we can be confident that our contributions are being used wisely.

Mosiah 4:24-25 King Benjamin counseled the poor who could not impart of their substance to have a charitable heart and be generous with any surplus they do have.

We can develop a generous heart regardless of our financial situation by always remembering what God has done for us and being willing and desirous to follow his example.

Mosiah 4:26 Serving others helps us retain a remission of our sins by giving us an opportunity to serve God by rendering service to our fellowmen.

Mosiah 4:27. Consider what it means to do all things *"in wisdom and order"* and how you can be helped by this counsel.

Mosiah 4:29-30 King Benjamin taught his people that to avoid sin and maintain their commitment to God, they must watch their thoughts, words, and deeds.

Our thoughts, words, and deeds are related because thoughts provide motivation, words reveal our motivation, and deeds are the execution of our motivation. Our words and deeds will be affected when we watch our thoughts as we control, avoid, and eliminate thoughts that do not lead us to Christlike actions.

King Benjamin's people experienced a "mighty change" and covenanted to do God's will in all things.

Mosiah 5:2 The people knew that King Benjamin's words were true because of the Spirit they felt.

Mosiah 5:2-5 records that the Spirit of the Lord had an effect on the people so that they no longer had any desire to do evil, but instead wanted to do good continually.

Think about how your life and relationships might be affected if you *"had no more disposition to do evil"*.

It is important for us to know that the people who heard King Benjamin's sermons and experienced a mighty change of heart were already members of the Church because we need to assure that we realize our own need to overcome the desire to do evil.

Mosiah 5:2 Once we have experienced a *"mighty change...in our hearts"*, we face challenges in maintaining this change because Satan still desires to have us. We meet these challenges successfully by remembering our covenants and keeping them faithfully.

Mosiah 5:2 , 5-7 To become children of Christ means that we take his name and covenant to be like him in all respects.

Mosiah 5:8-11 To *"take upon [ourselves] the name of Christ"* means to covenant to be obedient, endure to the end, and never transgress his laws.

Mosiah 5:11-15 These verses teach us that each day we can do good works to help us keep Christ's name written in our hearts.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks explained: *"Our willingness to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ affirms our commitment to do all that we can to be counted among those whom he will choose to stand at his right hand and be called by his name at the last day. In this sacred sense, our witness that we are willing to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ constitutes our declaration of candidacy for exaltation in the celestial kingdom. Exaltation is eternal life, 'the greatest of all the gifts of God' (D&C 14:7)"* (Ensign, May 1985, 83).

Mosiah 5:5,7-8 ; D&C 20:37, 77, 79 The covenant made by King Benjamin's people is similar to the covenant we made at baptism and it is renewed each time we take the sacrament.

It is important that we renew this covenant frequently so that the cumulative effects of sin do not drive away the Spirit.

We need to rid ourselves of sin as quickly as we recognize it.

Mosiah 6:1-2 King Benjamin saw that all his people (except those who were too young) had entered into the covenant to obey God's commandments.

It was important to record their names so that they would be known and cared for by the leaders of the Church.

Mosiah 6:3 It is important to appoint teachers and priests over the people so that they can help stir us up to remembrance of our covenants with God.

Our teachers and Church leaders help us remember the covenants and promises we have made by teaching gospel lessons, speaking in Church meetings, and visiting us regularly in our homes as Home and Visiting teachers.

Conclusion

Mosiah 5:15 records the final words of King Benjamin's address. These blessings of admission to the celestial kingdom and everlasting life are available to each of us. Seek and maintain that *"mighty change"* of heart that will enable you to be a child of Christ.

"A Seer...Becometh a Great Benefit to His Fellow Beings"

Lesson 17 - Mosiah 7-11

Introduction

In order to understand the Lord's dealings with His people in the book of Mosiah, it is helpful to understand the events described in 2 Nephi 5, the book of Omni, and Mosiah 7 and Mosiah 9.

After Lehi's death, the Lord commanded the followers of Nephi to separate from the followers of Laman. The Nephites settled in a land that they called the land of Nephi (2 Nephi 5:5-8). The land was later also known as "*the land of Lehi-Nephi*" (Mosiah 7:1).

About 400 years later the Nephites were led by a king named Mosiah. The Lord commanded Mosiah to flee from the land of Nephi with "*as many as would hearken unto the voice of the Lord.*" Mosiah and his people discovered a group of people called the people of Zarahemla. The two groups of people united and called themselves Nephites. Mosiah was appointed to be their king (Omni 1:12-19.)

A group of Nephites left the land of Zarahemla to regain part of the land of Nephi (Omni 1:27). They obtained land there under the leadership of a man named Zeniff, who became their king (Mosiah 9:1-7).

About 79 years later King Mosiah II, the grandson of the first King Mosiah, "*was desirous to know concerning the people who went to dwell in the land of Lehi-Nephi.*" He permitted a man named Ammon to lead an expedition for this purpose (note: this Ammon was not the son of Mosiah who later preached the gospel among the Lamanites). Ammon and his brethren found King Limhi and his people. Limhi was Zeniff's grandson (Mosiah 7:1-11).

Ammon and his brethren found Limhi and his people. Ammon taught Limhi of the importance of a seer.

Mosiah 7:8-11 Limhi took Ammon and his companions captive so that he could question them.

Mosiah 7:12-15 Limhi rejoiced when he learned that Ammon was from Zarahemla and one of his Nephite brethren.

Note: Later in the lesson we will review how Limhi's people were brought into bondage.

Mosiah 7:17-20, 29-33 Limhi shared a message with his people after talking with Ammon--telling them that they were in bondage as just punishment for their iniquities, but that there was hope of God's blessings if they would repent. This reveals Limhi's qualities as a leader in that he spoke honestly to his people and told them what they must do to improve their lives.

Mosiah 8:7 Limhi told Ammon that he once sent 43 people to search for their brethren in Zarahemla.

Mosiah 8:8-11; see also Ether 1:1-2 Instead of finding their brethren, this group found the remains of the Jaredite civilization. The Jaredites had settled there centuries before the Nephites arrived.

Mosiah 8:11-12 Regarding the 24 gold plates of the Jaredites, Limhi asked if Ammon could translate the engravings or if he knew someone who could. Limhi thought it be helpful for Limhi's people to "*know the cause of [the] destruction*" of the Jaredites. If they knew why the civilization was destroyed, they could prevent that from happening to them.

Mosiah 8:13-14 Ammon responded to Limhi's request, saying that Mosiah, the king in Zarahemla, was a seer who could translate the records.

Mosiah 8:16 Other titles Ammon associated with the title of seer were revelator and prophet. Today, we sustain as prophets, seers, and revelators the members of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles.

Mosiah 8:13, 17-18 The roles of a seer include translator of ancient records, revealer of hidden or secret things from the past or things that may occur in the future, and a miracle worker. To see how latter-day prophets, seers, and revelators fulfill these roles, see Elder Packer's quotation below--it can help explain how latter-day prophets, seers, and revelators have been "*a great benefit*" to you.

Elder Boyd K. Packer said: "*The scriptures speak of prophets as 'watch[men] upon the tower' who see 'the enemy while he [is] yet afar off' and who have 'beheld also things which were not visible to the natural eye...[for] a seer hath the Lord raised up unto his people.'* [Many years ago] the Brethren warned us of the disintegration of the family and told us to prepare. ... The weekly family home evening was introduced by the First Presidency. ... Parents are provided with excellent materials for teaching their children, with a promise that the faithful will be blessed. While the doctrines and revealed organization remain unchanged, all agencies of the Church have been reshaped in their relationship to one another and to the home. The entire curriculum of the Church was overhauled...based on scriptures. ...And years were spent preparing new editions of the Bible, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. We can only imagine where we would be if we were just now reacting to [the] terrible redefinition of the family. But that is not the case. We are not casting frantically about, trying to decide what to do. We know what to do and what to teach. ...The course we follow is not of our own making. The plan of salvation, the great plan of happiness, was revealed to us, and the prophets and Apostles continue to receive revelation as the Church and its members stand in need of more" (Ensign, May 1994, 20).

The record of Zeniff recounts a brief history of Zeniff's people.

Chapters 9-22 of the book of Mosiah contain a history of the people who left Zarahemla to return to the land of Nephi. The history begins with the account of Zeniff, Limhi's grandfather.

Mosiah 9:1 Zeniff was a member of a group of Nephites who wanted to regain from the Lamanites some of the land of Nephi.

Mosiah 10:11-17 The Lamanites' attitude toward the Nephites was negative and they were "*wroth*" because they felt that Laman and Lemuel, their ancestors, had been "*wronged by their brethren.*" Because of this, they taught their children to hate the Nephites. The traditions of the past sometimes stir people up to hatred. Such traditions are perpetuated by those who are ignorant and believe the lies passed on to them, those who try to cover past sins or mistakes by blaming others, and those who try to gain a worldly advantage by perpetuating false teachings that allow them to gain power and influence.

Mosiah 9:1 We can learn from Zeniff about overcoming feelings of hatred. Zeniff was sent as a spy to determine how to destroy the Lamanites. However, when he saw "*that which was good*" among the Lamanites, he no longer wanted to destroy them. We too should look for the good in others and try to help them. Think about what you can do to honestly see the good in others rather than concentrating on their faults.

Mosiah 7:21-22; Mosiah 9:3 The mistakes Zeniff made in his efforts to "*inherit the land of [his] fathers*" were being over-zealous, falling for the deceptions of King Laman, and being slow to remember God.

Mosiah 9:3-12; Mosiah 10:18 As results of Zeniff's over-zealousness, the Lamanites took his people into bondage, caused the Nephites to work hard to support the Lamanites' laziness, and caused suffering among Zeniff's people.

The dangers of being overzealous, even in a good cause, include becoming susceptible to deceit and hearing only what you want to hear, and losing your objectivity when looking at a situation. Ponder how you can be zealous in the Lord's work without being overzealous.

Mosiah 9:3 In their determination to obtain a part of the land of Nephi, Zeniff and his people "*were slow to remember the Lord [their] God*".

Mosiah 9:13-17 A deadly attack by the Lamanites finally led them to turn to the Lord.

Mosiah 9:18; Mosiah 10:19-21 They were blessed when they remembered the Lord and prayed for deliverance. Their prayers were answered and they defeated the enemy in battle.

As members of the Church, we have made a covenant to "*always remember*" the Lord (D&C 20:77, 79). Ponder some things you can do that can help you keep this covenant.

Abinadi warned the people, but they were blind to Noah's wickedness.

Mosiah 11:1 One of his sons, Noah, became king after Zeniff.

Mosiah 11:1-19 Noah was the kind of ruler who "*[walked] after the desires of his own heart*" and "*changed the affairs of the kingdom*", leading his people in immorality and whoredoms; creating wasteful government and high taxes to support Noah's sinful lifestyle; installing corrupt priests and worshipping idols; building lavish palaces and spacious buildings; glorying in worldly riches and riotous living; creating vineyards to satisfy his penchant for drunkenness; and neglecting to provide for appropriate defense from their enemies.

Mosiah 11:2, 5-7 Noah's influence on the lives of his people caused them to sin. The people and Noah share the responsibility for their sinfulness because they all made the wrong choices and failed to follow the Lord's commandments.

Mosiah 11:20 The Lord sent the prophet Abinadi to call Noah and his people to repentance.

Mosiah 11:20-25 The Lord gave warnings of divine judgment, delivered then into the hands of their enemies and bondage, and warned that He would not easily respond to their cries of sorrow in bondage through his prophet, Abinadi.

Mosiah 11:26-28; see also Mosiah 12:13-15 Noah and his people responded to Abinadi's warnings with anger and death threats against Abinadi and with self-deception and lies to each other, denying their sins.

Mosiah 11:7, 29 The people were angry with Abinadi and not with Noah, who had taxed them and caused them to support him in his iniquity, because they worshipped idols, had lost their true religion and moral principles, were blinded by their acceptance of Satan's practices, and they hardened their hearts against God and the truth.

Mosiah 8:16-18; D&C 1:38; D&C 84:36-38 Some people today reject servants of the Lord, like Abinadi, in favor of people like Noah because of the hardness of their hearts and their desire to find happiness in sin. It is important to recognize and follow prophets of God if we wish to have God bless our mortal lives and grant us entry into his kingdom after death.

Conclusion

Follow the counsel of righteous leaders, particularly those whom the Lord has called as prophets, seers, and revelators.

"God Himself...Shall Redeem His People"

Lesson 18 - Mosiah 12-17

Introduction

There are many scriptural accounts of the Lord commanding people to fulfill difficult missions. Think about these difficult missions or callings recorded in the scriptures:

- a. Noah preaching to the people
- b. Moses leading the Israelites out of Egypt
- c. Lehi warning the people in Jerusalem
- d. Esther going before King Ahasuerus
- e. Abinadi preaching to King Noah
- f. Samuel preaching in Zarahemla
- g. Joseph Smith fulfilling his mission as the Prophet of the Restoration

Why were these missions difficult? Why do you think these people were willing to fulfill their missions despite the difficult circumstances? This lesson has us thinking of the prophet Abinadi before King Noah and discusses his teachings. As you review this lesson, look for reasons why Abinadi was willing to give his life in order to preach to the people.

Abinadi called Noah and his priests to repentance, exhorted them to keep the commandments, and taught of the Atonement.

Mosiah 12:1-8 Two years after Abinadi had originally preached to Noah's people, he returned to tell them that because they had not repented, they would suffer and be brought into bondage. He also warned again that they would be destroyed if they did not repent.

Mosiah 12:9-16 The people responded to this message with anger and they chose to defend their wicked King Noah.

Mosiah 12:20-24 After Abinadi withstood the priests' efforts to "*cross him*," one of the priests asked him a question about a scripture passage quoted in these verses.

Mosiah 12:25-27 The priests were unable to understand this scripture passage because they were perverting the ways of God and not applying their hearts to understanding the scriptures.

D&C 8:2-3 teaches us clearly that personal revelation comes to our hearts and minds through the Spirit as we apply our hearts to understanding. It is important to apply our hearts as we study and teach the gospel so that we will be in tune with the Holy Ghost, who can testify of the truths we are learning or teaching.

Mosiah 12:28-37 Abinadi revealed that the problem with the priests' claim that they taught the law of Moses was two-fold: First, they did not understand the law's purpose and secondly, they did not live it themselves.

It is vital that we live according to the truths we teach because our example is a far more important testimony of our beliefs than our words.

Mosiah 13:1-9 Something miraculous happened to make it possible for Abinadi to deliver his message as Abinadi was transfigured before them and his face shone with a celestial glory. The Lord did this so Abinadi would be able to testify of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. This illustrates the importance of the message of the Atonement.

Mosiah 13:11 Abinadi read the Ten Commandments to Noah and his priests, as he says, because it was not in their hearts. Consider what it means to have the commandments "*written in [our] hearts*". Having the commandments written in our hearts would positively affect our efforts to obey them because those commandments would be an integral part of us.

After calling Noah and the priests to repentance for not keeping the law of Moses, Abinadi said, "*Salvation doth not come by the law alone*" (Mosiah 13:28).

Mosiah 13:14, 28, 32-35; Articles of Faith 1:3 Salvation comes by obeying the commandments and through Christ's atonement which allows the repentant to overcome their sins and be forgiven and cleansed.

Mosiah 13:29-33 When we review the purpose of the law of Moses we see that the performances and ordinances of the law of Moses were types, or symbols, of things to come. They were given to help the people look to Christ.

Abinadi quoted Isaiah, testified of the Atonement, and exhorted Noah's priests to teach the people that redemption comes through Christ.

As part of his testimony of Jesus Christ, Abinadi quoted the prophet Isaiah. Some things we learn about the Savior from the prophecy quoted in Mosiah 14 include:

- a. The Savior lived meekly and humbly (**Mosiah 14:2**).
- b. Many people rejected Him (**Mosiah 14:3**).
- c. He carried our griefs and sorrows (**Mosiah 14:4**).
- d. He took upon Himself the sins of all people (**Mosiah 14:5-6, 8, 10-12**).
- e. He willingly subjected Himself to persecution and death (**Mosiah 14:7-9**).
- f. He was without sin (**Mosiah 14:9**).

Abinadi said that the Savior "*satisfied the demands of justice*" (Mosiah 15:9).

Alma 42:11, 14 The demands of justice referred to by Abinadi are that fallen men be cut off from the presence of God forever.

Mosiah 15:9; Alma 42:12-13, 15 To satisfy the demands of justice, the Savior ascended into heaven where He stood

between men and justice and took upon himself their iniquities and transgressions and redeemed mankind.

Mosiah 15:10; see also Mosiah 14:10 Here, Abinadi spoke of the seed, or the sons and daughters, of Jesus Christ.

Mosiah 15:11-14; see also Mosiah 5:5-7 Consider Abinadi's explanation of what it means to be the Savior's sons and daughters. Jesus Christ is the author of salvation. There is a Father-child relationship between Him and those who accept His gospel. We become His seed, or His sons and daughters, when we believe in Him, repent of our sins, and covenant to do His will and obey His commandments.

Mosiah 12:20-24 One of Noah's priests asked Abinadi to interpret Isaiah's statement *"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings"*.

Mosiah 15:19-25; D&C 76:40-42 These good tidings are enumerated here: the bands of death are broken, the Savior reigns, the resurrection is brought to pass, and those in the first resurrection obtain eternal life.

Mosiah 15:13-18 The messengers who share these good tidings include the Savior Himself, the prophets, and others who share the gospel. Ponder how you can help bring these good tidings to others through missionary activity.

Mosiah 15:21-23; Mosiah 16:8-11 We will be blessed after we die if we have believed in Christ, followed Him, and accepted His Atonement by being raised in the first resurrection and obtaining eternal life and happiness.

Mosiah 15:26-27; Mosiah 16:2-3, 5, 10-12 If we have rejected Christ and His Atonement, Christ's redemption will have no part for us as we are turned over to the claims of justice and the devil will have power over us--as if there had been no redemption.

Mosiah 16:13-15 At the end of his discourse, Abinadi exhorted Noah and the priests to truly repent, accept Christ and teach about Him. Think about how you can apply this counsel in your life.

Abinadi sealed his testimony of the Savior with his life.

Mosiah 17:2-4; Alma 5:11-12 Abinadi was successful in his mission to King Noah and his people--not in converting them, but in doing what he was called to do. Only one listener was converted because of Abinadi's teachings.

Mosiah 17:1, 7 After Abinadi had given his message, King Noah and the judges decided to find him worthy of death.

Mosiah 17:8 Abinadi could have recalled his condemnation of King Noah and his followers to avoid being put to death.

Mosiah 17:9-10, 20 He refused to recall the words he had spoken because they were true and he would rather suffer death than lie. Further, his testimony was given as a witness against them for shedding innocent blood.

Although we will likely not need to die for our faith, ponder the ways you can follow Abinadi's example.

President Ezra Taft Benson said: *"Christ changes men, and changed men can change the world. Men changed for Christ will be captained by Christ. ... Men captained by Christ will be consumed in Christ. ... Their will is swallowed up in His will. (See John 5:30.) They do always those things that please the Lord. (See John 8:29.) Not only would they die for the Lord, but more important they want to live for Him"* (Ensign, Nov. 1985, 6).

Conclusion

The actions of Abinadi and Alma can help us see the importance of the Atonement. Abinadi's life was preserved by the Lord so he could testify of the Atonement (Mosiah 13:1-9). After Abinadi had shared this message, he *"sealed the truth of his words by his death"* (Mosiah 17:20). Alma wrote *"all the words which Abinadi had spoken"* (Mosiah 17:4). He then obeyed Abinadi's command to *"teach ... that redemption cometh through Christ the Lord"* (Mosiah 16:15). Stay true to your testimony and share the message of the Atonement.

Additional Teaching - "The Father and the Son" (Mosiah 15:2)

When Abinadi spoke of Jesus as *"the Father and the Son,"* he did not teach that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ are the same being. Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost are three separate and distinct personages (D&C 130:22). When ancient prophets spoke of God or of the Lord, they often referred to Jehovah, the premortal Messiah (Mosiah 13:33-34; Mosiah 14:6). Thus, Abinadi taught of Jesus Christ when he said, *"God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people"* (Mosiah 15:1; see also Mosiah 7:27-28). Abinadi's teachings in Mosiah 15:1-9 refer to Jesus' Fatherly roles and to His roles as the Son of God.

Jesus' roles as Father include (a) His work as *"the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning"* (Mosiah 3:8); (b) His mission as the Father of those who accept His gospel and follow Him (Mosiah 5:7; Mosiah 15:10-13; Ether 3:14); and (c) His authority to speak and act in behalf of Heavenly Father, which has been termed *"divine investiture of authority."* Jesus' roles as the Son of God include (a) His Atonement for the sins of the world (Mosiah 15:6-9) and (b) His service as our Mediator and Advocate with Heavenly Father (Jacob 4:10-11; D&C 45:3-5).

Abinadi said that Jesus was called the Son *"because he dwelleth in flesh"* and the Father *"because he was conceived by the power of God"* (Mosiah 15:2-3; see also D&C 93:3-4). When Abinadi spoke of *"the will of the Son being swallowed up in the will of the Father"* (Mosiah 15:7), he referred to Jesus subjecting His flesh to His spirit (Mosiah 15:2-5; see also 3 Nephi 1:14). When Jesus subjected His flesh to His spirit, He also subjected His will to the will of Heavenly Father (Matthew 26:39; D&C 19:16-19).

The unseen results of missionary work

Abinadi may have died without knowing if anyone believed his teachings. But Alma was converted because of Abinadi's efforts, and he and his descendants had a great influence on the Nephites for many generations. Share the following story

told by President Gordon B. Hinckley: *"You don't know how much good you can do; you can't foresee the results of the effort you put in. Years ago, President Charles A. Callis, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, but who previously was president of the Southern States Mission for twenty-five years, told me this story. He said that he had a missionary in the southern [United States] who came in to get his release at the conclusion of his mission. His mission president said to him, 'Have you had a good mission?' "He said, 'No.' " 'How is that?' " 'Well, I haven't had any results from my work. I have wasted my time and my father's money. It's been a waste of time.' "Brother Callis said, 'Haven't you baptized anyone?' "He said, 'I baptized only one person during the two years that I have been here. That was a twelve-year-old boy up in the back hollows of Tennessee.' "He went home with a sense of failure. Brother Callis said, 'I decided to follow that boy who had been baptized. I wanted to know what became of him. "I followed him through the years. He became the Sunday School Superintendent, and he eventually became the branch president. He married. He moved off the little tenant farm on which he and his parents before him had lived and got a piece of ground of his own and made it fruitful. He became the district president. He sold that piece of ground in Tennessee and moved to Idaho and bought a farm along the Snake River and prospered there. His children grew. They went on missions. They came home. They had children of their own who went on missions.' "Brother Callis continued, 'I've just spent a week up in Idaho looking up every member of that family that I could find and talking to them about their missionary service. I discovered that, as the result of the baptism of that one little boy in the back hollows of Tennessee by a missionary who thought he had failed, more than 1,100 people have come into the Church.' "You never can foretell the consequences of your work, my beloved brethren and sisters, when you serve as missionaries"* (Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley [1997], 360-61).

"None Could Deliver Them but the Lord"

Lesson 19 - Mosiah 18-24

Introduction

Think about some of the most beautiful places you have ever seen and determine what makes those places so beautiful for you. What made the waters of Mormon beautiful for Alma's people? Read **Mosiah 18:30**. In this lesson we will review a covenant that Alma's people made at *"the place of Mormon."*

Alma taught the baptismal covenant and baptized many people.

Alma, one of King Noah's priests, believed the teachings of Abinadi. He fled from Noah's servants and hid in the wilderness, where he wrote *"all the words which Abinadi had spoken"* (Mosiah 17:2-4). He then *"repented of his sins...and began to teach the words of Abinadi"* (Mosiah 18:1-3). The people who believed Alma went to hear him teach in a place called Mormon (Mosiah 18:4-6).

Mosiah 18:7 At *"the place of Mormon"* Alma taught repentance, redemption, and faith on the Lord.

Mosiah 18:8 The people desired to come into the fold of God, be called his people, and to be one with the other saints after Alma taught them.

Mosiah 18:16-17; see also Hebrews 8:10; Alma 5:60 To *"come into the fold of God, and ...be called his people"* means to join the Church, make a covenant with God, and become one of Christ's followers.

Mosiah 18:8-9 As members of *"the fold of God"* the people were willing to covenant to do the following:

-*"Bear one another's burdens"* (**Mosiah 18:8**). We "bear one another's burdens" by performing service for other members as we carry out our quorum and auxiliary callings, especially in the roles of home and visiting teachers. Bearing one another's burdens makes those burdens light not only because tasks are shared, but also because of the Spirit that comforts and strengthens all who help one another. Ponder how you have been blessed as others have helped bear your burdens over the years.

-*"Mourn with those that mourn"* (**Mosiah 18:9**). It is helpful to *"mourn with those that mourn"* to overcome feelings of despair and loneliness that often accompany grief and mourning. Emotional support for those who mourn allows them to share their feelings and lets them talk through the difficult times.

-*"Comfort those that stand in need of comfort"* (**Mosiah 18:9**). We can appropriately offer comfort to others if we seek the Spirit and follow its guidance.

-*Stand as witnesses of God"* (**Mosiah 18:9**). *"To stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places"* is to live a Christlike life, set a consistent example of a faithful saint, and to appropriately bear testimony in both word and deed to one's family and associates wherever we may be.

Mosiah 18:10 After Alma preached to the people, he invited them to be baptized and enter into a covenant with the Lord. What is a covenant? **President Joseph Fielding Smith** taught: *"A covenant is a contract and an agreement between at least two parties. In the case of gospel covenants, the parties are the Lord in heaven and men on earth. Men agree to keep the commandments and the Lord promises to reward them accordingly"* (Improvement Era, Dec. 1970, 26).

Referring to Mosiah 18:8-13, **President Marion G. Romney** said, *"I know of no better explanation of the baptismal covenant"* (Ensign, Nov. 1975, 73).

According to Mosiah 18:8-13, when we are baptized, we covenant to enter the fold of God, be his people, bear one another's burdens, mourn with those that mourn, comfort others, stand as a witness of God, merit eternal life, serve God and keep his commandments, and be worthy of the companionship of the Spirit. (See also Moroni 6:2-3; D&C 20:37.)

Mosiah 18:10, 12-13; see also 2 Nephi 31:17 When we are baptized and keep our baptismal covenant, the Lord promises to pour out his Spirit upon us and give us eternal life when we endure to the end in righteousness.

Mosiah 18:11 The people responded to Alma's invitation to be baptized with rejoicing.

Consider carefully what you can do to help others receive this great joy.

Mosiah 18:21 After the people were baptized, Alma commanded them to have *"their hearts knit together in unity and in love"* and avoid all contention.

Mosiah 18:19-21 We can follow this command at home and in our ward or branch by staying worthy and listening to the Holy Ghost as our companion and guide.

King Noah betrayed his people and suffered death by fire.

Mosiah 19:2-3 Some of King Noah's people began to turn against him.

Mosiah 19:4-6 One of those people, Gideon, was about to kill Noah when Noah saw an army of Lamanites advancing toward them.

Mosiah 19:7 When he saw the advancing Lamanites, King Noah asked that his life be spared for the sake of his people.

Mosiah 19:8 Of course, Noah was most concerned about himself.

People today who, like Noah, try to lead us away from the Lord and His prophets are typically motivated by selfish interests for worldly fame and/or fortune.

Mosiah 12:3 Abinadi had prophesied that King Noah's death would be by fire.

Mosiah 19:18-20 This prophecy was literally fulfilled as his men put the king to death by fire.

As shown in **Mosiah 11:29**, the people who eventually valued Noah's life "*as a garment in a hot furnace*" had at one time been blind to his wickedness.

Limhi's people were chastened and eventually delivered by the Lord.

Mosiah 20:22 contains the account of Ammon and his brethren finding Limhi's people, as discussed in lesson 17. After Noah was killed, his son Limhi became king. Limhi made an oath that he and his people would pay one-half of all they possessed to the king of the Lamanites in exchange for a promise that the Lamanites would not slay them (see Mosiah 19:25-26).

Mosiah 20:7-10 After two years of peace, the Lamanites waged war against Limhi's people.

Mosiah 20:1-6 The Lamanites sought to destroy Limhi's people because they mistakenly thought Limhi's people had kidnapped their 24 missing daughters.

Mosiah 20:17-26 When the Lamanites learned that they had misjudged Limhi's people, they returned to their own land in peace. However, "*after many days the Lamanites began again to be stirred up in anger against the Nephites*" (Mosiah 21:2).

Mosiah 21:3 Rather than break their king's oath that they would not kill Limhi's people, the Lamanites physically abused and burdened them.

Compare Mosiah 21:3-5, Mosiah 21:14-15 with Mosiah 11:20-25 and Mosiah 12:2, 4-5. Here we see how literally the bondage of Limhi's people fulfilled prophecies made by Abinadi.

Mosiah 7:25-32; Mosiah 20:21 Limhi's people were brought into bondage because they had rejected Abinadi's teachings and his warnings about the consequences of their sinfulness.

It is important to remember that sin brings consequences so that we do not have to endure punishment that could be avoided by making righteous choices.

Mosiah 21:13-14 After failing three times to defeat the Lamanites in battle, Limhi's people finally repented and sought God's help in fervent prayer.

Mosiah 21:15; see also D&C 101:1-9 The Lord was slow to respond to their cries. He had warned them that such would be the case because they had been slow to hearken to his counsel.

Mosiah 21:15-16 Although the Lord did not deliver them immediately, He did soften the hearts of the Lamanites to ease the burdens and then He blessed them with abundant crops and flocks so that they were not hungry.

As shown here, the Lord sometimes permits us to "*prosper by degrees*" to be reminded that conditions improve in our lives as we are faithful on a daily basis in living up to our covenants.

Mosiah 22:3-12 Limhi's people escaped from the Lamanites by paying tribute in wine and then fleeing into the wilderness when the Lamanite guards fell into a drunken sleep.

Mosiah 22:13-14 They were received with joy by the people in Zarahemla.

The Lord delivered Alma's people from bondage.

As we review selected verses from Mosiah 23-24, look for the difference between the way the Lord blessed Limhi's people, who attempted three times to deliver themselves before they turned to Him, and the way He blessed Alma's people, who had turned to Him completely.

Mosiah 18:33 When Alma and his people were in the place of Mormon, King Noah "*sent his army to destroy them*".

Mosiah 18:34-35; Mosiah 23:1-5 The Lord warned Alma's people and strengthened them so they could escape.

Mosiah 19:6 This was different from the experience of Limhi's people. The first time the Lamanites attacked these people, when Noah was still their king, the people received no warning.

Mosiah 23:6-7 When the people asked Alma to be king, he declined and counseled them against establishing a monarchy.

Mosiah 23:8-14 Alma had learned the danger of "*one man think[ing] himself above another*" through his experience as one of King Noah's priests.

Mosiah 23:15 We learn from Alma and his people to avoid the error of one person being elevated above another by loving one another as equals and avoiding contention by serving one another.

Mosiah 23:15-20; Mosiah 23:23-29 Under Alma's leadership, his people lived righteously and prospered. Nevertheless, the Lord allowed them to be brought into bondage under Amulon, who had been one of King Noah's priests.

Mosiah 12:2, 4-5 The bondage of Alma's people fulfilled prophecies made by Abinadi. Even after we have been forgiven of our sins, our poor choices can bring lingering consequences as taught by Elder Ashton.

Elder Marvin J. Ashton said: "*Our freedom to choose our course of conduct does not provide personal freedom from the consequences of our performances. God's love for us is constant and will not diminish, but he cannot rescue us from the painful results that are caused by wrong choices*" (Ensign, Nov. 1990, 20).

Although the Lord could not prevent Alma's people from suffering the consequences of their past sins, He comforted and strengthened them in their afflictions. The rest of this lesson discusses how He delivered them from bondage.

Mosiah 23:21 Referring to the bondage of Alma's people, Mormon said, "*The Lord seeth fit to chasten his people*".

Mosiah 23:21; D&C 95:1-2 The Lord chastens His people to try their patience and their faith.

Mosiah 23:22 We should respond with enduring faith when the Lord chastens us.

Mosiah 24:10-12 When Amulon threatened to kill them if they prayed, Alma's people kept a prayer in their hearts.

Mosiah 24:13-16 The Lord answered their silent prayers by strengthening them so that their burdens felt lighter.

Mosiah 24:14 This helped them *"stand as witnesses"* for the Lord, as they had covenanted in the waters of Mormon because they could attest to the fact that the Lord was with them and His power was exercised in their behalf.

Mosiah 24:15 Our burdens are easier to bear when we *"submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord"* and use those challenging times as reminders to be humble.

Ponder ways in which the Lord has strengthened you to help you *"bear up [your] burdens with ease"* and how this has helped you stand as a witness of God.

Mosiah 21:5-15 with Mosiah 23:26-27; Mosiah 24:10-16 Use these verses to compare how and why the Lord blessed Alma's people while they were in bondage more quickly and abundantly than He blessed Limhi's people.

Mosiah 23:12 Before the Lord delivered them, both Alma's people and Limhi's people were in bondage to wicked rulers. Alma observed that in the days of King Noah, the people had also been *"bound with the bands of iniquity"*.

Mosiah 7:33; Mosiah 21:14; Mosiah 23:23; Mosiah 29:18-20 ; see also D&C 84:49-51 Iniquity, or sin, is a kind of bondage. We learn from Limhi's people and Alma's people about receiving deliverance from the bondage of sin and find that only the Lord can deliver us from the bondage of sin. We must turn to Him through repentance, faith, humility, and enduring obedience.

Conclusion

Briefly review the Lord's promises in the baptismal covenant in **Mosiah 18:10, 13**. In light of the blessings the Lord has promised to us, it should not be difficult to keep our covenant to *"serve him and keep his commandments"* (Mosiah 18:10). When we receive the ordinance of baptism and continue in repentance, faith in Jesus Christ, humility, and obedience, we are delivered from the bondage of sin and are on the path to eternal life (2 Nephi 31:17-20). Today, as we leave this class, we should renew our determination to honor our baptismal covenants and trust in the Lord.

Additional Teachings

***"Both Alma and Helam were buried in the water"* (Mosiah 18:14)**

Alma had the authority to baptize. Alma did not baptize himself when he baptized Helam. **President Joseph Fielding Smith** taught, *"Alma was baptized and held the priesthood before the coming of Abinadi, but he became involved with other priests under the reign of the wicked King Noah, and when he baptized Helam, he felt he needed a cleansing himself so he buried himself in the water as a token of full repentance"* (Doctrines of Salvation, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954-56], 2:336-37).

Serving the Lord humbly

Before Alma began baptizing the people, he prayed, "O Lord, pour out thy Spirit upon thy servant, that he may do this work with holiness of heart" (Mosiah 18:12). We will be blessed as we approach our service to the Lord in this spirit, seeking to do all that we do in the name of Christ.

"My Soul Is Pained No More"

Lesson 20 - Mosiah 25-28; Alma 36

Introduction

Are you a convert? We often use the term "convert" to refer to a person who was baptized into the Church after the age of eight. In another sense, however, each of us should be a convert. Each of us, no matter when we are baptized, must acquire his or her own testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ. For some people this conversion is sudden and dramatic, but for most it is a subtle, gradual process. Some people become converted easily, while others must struggle to develop this testimony and commitment. Lesson 22 further discusses the process of becoming converted. This lesson discusses five young men who, despite being the sons of strong and faithful Church leaders, had to experience their own conversions to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Limhi's and Alma's people joined Mosiah's people in the land of Zarahemla.

Mosiah 22:11-14; Mosiah 24:20, 23-25 Limhi's people and Alma's people joined the people of King Mosiah in Zarahemla. There were now four groups united in Zarahemla under King Mosiah:

- Limhi's people, who were descended from Zeniff and the others who returned from Zarahemla to the land of Nephi.
- Alma's people, who had broken away from the group descended from Zeniff during the reign of Noah.
- The Nephites who had remained in Zarahemla.
- The Mulekites, the original residents of Zarahemla.

All these people now called themselves Nephites (Mosiah 25:12-13).

Mosiah 25:5-6 Mosiah assembled the people in Zarahemla and read the records of Limhi's people and Alma's people to them.

Mosiah 25:7-11 The people of Zarahemla responded in a variety of ways to these records. They were filled with wonder and amazement, rejoiced that their brethren were free, sorrowed for their slain brethren, gave thanks to God for delivering Alma's people from bondage, and anguished over the sinful state of their Lamanite brethren. Their responses demonstrated their charity because they felt such sorrow for their sinful brethren and such gratitude for God's blessings.

Mosiah 25:14 After Mosiah finished reading the records, he invited Alma to speak.

Mosiah 25:15-16 Alma spoke about repentance and faith in the Lord, reminding those who had been freed from bondage that it was the Lord who rescued them.

It was important that the people remember who had delivered them out of bondage so that they could express their continuing gratitude and strengthen their testimonies.

Mosiah 25:17-18 Alma's teachings had an immediate effect on Limhi and his people as they accepted Alma's teachings and desired to enter into the baptismal covenants.

Mosiah 25:19-20 Mosiah authorized Alma to *"establish churches throughout all the land of Zarahemla"*.

Mosiah 25:21-24 The people were able to remain *"one church"* after being assembled into different congregations by teaching the same doctrine of repentance and faith in God in all churches, following the prophet Alma, and being led by the same spirit.

Think of how their example can help us today as we face the challenges of remaining *"one"* in a worldwide Church.

Many Church members were led into sin by unbelievers.

Mosiah 26:1-4 Many of the *"rising generation"* refused to join the Church because they did not believe the tradition of their fathers, they were unacquainted with the teachings of King Benjamin, they did not believe in the resurrection or the coming of Christ, they hardened their hearts, and they lived as a separate people indulging in sin and carnal pursuits.

Older generations can help youth gain testimonies of Jesus Christ and His gospel by teaching gospel principles early, living an exemplary life, and bearing sincere testimony as moved upon by the Spirit.

Pause a moment and consider carefully how older generations can help youth feel God's love and understand their relationship to Him.

The unbelievers led many members of the Church into sin.

Mosiah 26:6-8 Alma's responsibility was to speak for the Church in admonishing the Church members who had sinned.

The Lord has placed that same responsibility on Church leaders today to help members who have committed serious sins and get them on the road to full repentance and forgiveness.

Mosiah 26:10-14 Alma consulted the Lord when Mosiah declined to judge the people who had sinned.

Ponder how you have received guidance in your responsibilities when you have turned to God in prayer.

Mosiah 26:29-30, 32 The Lord told Alma to forgive the people who had sinned if they confessed and repented, but that those who refused to confess and repent should be excommunicated from the Church.

Confession is an important step in the process of repentance because we cannot feel godly sorrow, ask forgiveness, make restitution, or choose to live righteously if we refuse to admit our mistakes or evil choices.

Mosiah 26:31 This scripture reminds us that it is important to "forgive one another" because all of us have sinned or transgressed at one time or another, so we all need forgiveness for sin.

Ponder how you have been blessed by forgiving someone or by having someone forgive you.

Mosiah 26:37-38; Mosiah 27:1 Although the Church "began again to have peace and to prosper," members of the Church were often persecuted by unbelievers.

Mosiah 27:1-5 When Church members complained about persecution to King Mosiah, he issued a proclamation that religious or class-conscious persecution should stop and all should live in harmony, each working to provide for their own support unless sick or afflicted.

Some Church members are persecuted today by bigots and intolerant individuals and groups who disagree with our beliefs and write, publish, or speak defamatory words and demonstrate hateful behavior.

There are some productive ways to deal with persecution and all of those ways involve demonstrating tolerance, forgiveness, and love to our persecutors.

Alma the Younger and the sons of Mosiah were visited by an angel.

Even after Mosiah had issued a proclamation forbidding persecution, some unbelievers continued to try to destroy the Church. These unbelievers included Mosiah's own four sons and one of Alma's sons (Mosiah 27:8-9).

Mosiah 27:8-24 details the events that led to the conversion of Alma the Younger and the sons of Mosiah.

Mosiah 27:14 The Lord sent an angel to speak to Alma the Younger and his companions in answer to the prayers of members and Alma's father.

Consider how prayer can help us when a loved one strays from the gospel as you read the following:

When he was Church Commissioner of Education, **Jeffrey R. Holland** said: *"Perhaps no anguish of the human spirit matches the anguish of a mother or father who fears for the soul of a child. ... [But] parents can never give up hoping or caring or believing. Surely they can never give up praying. At times prayer may be the only course of action remaining...but it is the most powerful of them all"* ("Alma, Son of Alma," Ensign, Mar. 1977, 80-81).

There are many ways the Lord sends help in response to the prayers of the righteous for loved ones who have strayed. The Lord will not always send an angel, as He did to Alma, but He sends help in countless other ways. He may send a sensitive leader or friend, dedicated home teachers or visiting teachers, or an inspired sermon to affect the lives of those for whom we pray.

Ponder this: Have you seen the power of prayer help in a situation that appeared to be beyond remedy?

Mosiah 27:13-17 The angel told Alma the Younger that he was persecuting the church that God had established, that the Lord was answering the prayers of the righteous to bring Alma the Younger to a knowledge of the truth, that he was there to convince Alma the Younger of the power and authority of God, that the power of God could not be disputed, that he should remember God's blessings and protections to his predecessors, and that if he did not cease persecuting the Church he would be cast off.

Mosiah 27:18-19 Alma the Younger was unable to speak or move after the angel departed.

Mosiah 27:20 Alma responded with rejoicing when he heard about his son's experience with the angel because he knew that the experience was in answer to his prayers and that God had sent a strong message to his wayward son.

Alma 36:6-24 Years after his conversion, Alma told his son Helaman about the experience.

If we examine the accounts in Mosiah 27 and Alma 36, we can contrast Alma's feelings before and after he was forgiven.

BEFORE	AFTER
Carnal and fallen, to be cast off (Mosiah 27:25-27; Alma 36:11)	Redeemed of God, born of the Spirit (Mosiah 27:24-25; Alma 36:23)
Wading through much tribulation (Mosiah 27:28)	Snatched out of an everlasting burning (Mosiah 27:28)
In the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity (Mosiah 27:29)	Redeemed from the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity (Mosiah 27:29)
In the darkest abyss (Mosiah 27:29)	Beheld the marvelous light of God (Mosiah 27:29)
Racked with eternal torment (Mosiah 27:29)	Soul pained no more (Mosiah 27:29)
Harrowed up by the memory of his many sins (Alma 36:17)	No longer harrowed up by the memory of his sins (Alma 36:19)
Felt exquisite and exceeding pain (Alma 36:20-21)	Felt exquisite and exceeding joy (Alma 36:20-21)
Soul racked with horror at the thought of being in the presence of God (Alma 36:14-15)	Soul longed to be in the presence of God (Alma 36:22)

Alma 36:17-18 Remembering the teachings of his father and asking for God's mercy led Alma to be delivered from his suffering. In considering how Alma's experiences can be compared to our own experiences in becoming converted, **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** said: *"Alma serves as a pattern. The horror for sin that engulfed him should be felt by every wayward member of the kingdom; then repentance would be forthcoming, as it was with our Nephite friend"* (A New Witness for the Articles of Faith [1985], 229).

Alma and the sons of Mosiah dedicated themselves to preaching the gospel.

Mosiah 27:32-37 After their conversion, Alma the Younger and the sons of Mosiah demonstrated that they were truly converted by enduring persecution from unbelievers, seeking to repair the harm they had done to the Church, confessing their sins, publishing the things they had seen and heard, explaining the prophecies to all who desired to hear them, consoling the Church, confirming their faith, and exhorting others to keep the commandments. As we repent, our actions reflect the sincerity and depth of our conversion.

Mosiah 28:1-3 The sons of Mosiah and their companions wanted to preach the gospel among the Lamanites to impart the word of God, bring them to a knowledge of God, convince them of their fathers' iniquity, help the Lamanites overcome their hatred of the Nephites, promote peace, and declare salvation to them that they might not perish.

Mosiah 28:6-7 Promises the Lord gave King Mosiah regarding his sons' missionary efforts included success in having their contacts believe their teachings, and protection from their enemies.

Elder L. Tom Perry said: *"After conversion comes the desire to share...not so much out of a sense of duty, even though that responsibility falls on the priesthood, but out of a sincere love and appreciation for that which has been received. When such a 'pearl of great price' comes into our lives, we cannot be content just to admire it by ourselves. It must be shared!"* (Ensign, May 1984, 79).

Consider how, once you have been converted, you can increase your commitment to sharing the gospel.

Conclusion

Each of us must experience his or her own conversion. Though it may be more subtle and gradual than the conversion experienced by Alma and the sons of Mosiah, it will have the same results. Read Mosiah 27:29. Through repentance and the Atonement of Jesus Christ, we can receive forgiveness so our souls will be *"pained no more."* Then we can become instruments in the Lord's hands to bless the lives of others. Remember to continually apply the principle of repentance, become converted, and share the gospel.

Additional Teaching

"They did deceive many with their flattering words" (Mosiah 26:6)

Alma the Younger and the sons of Mosiah, along with other unbelievers, were able to lead many members of the Church into sin using flattery. (See Mosiah 26:6; Mosiah 27:8-9.) Flattery can deceive us and lead us astray, so it is important that we be careful about whom we allow to influence us. We also need to remember that a foundation of faith in Jesus Christ can help us avoid being influenced by the flattery of unbelievers.

Elder Ezra Taft Benson said: *"Seeking the applause of the world, we like to be honored by the men the world honors. But therein lies real danger, for oftentimes, in order to receive those honors, we must join forces with and follow those same devilish influences and policies which brought some of those men to positions of prominence. ... Today we are being plagued within by the flattery of prominent men in the world"* (Improvement Era, Dec. 1964, 1067).

"Alma...Did Judge Righteous Judgments"

Lesson 21 - Mosiah 29; Alma 1-4

Introduction

Monarchy, Republic, Democracy, Theocracy What do these words mean? *Monarchy* is government under the leadership of one ruler, such as a king; sometimes characterized by absolute rule. *Republic*: rule by a group of elected representatives. *Democracy*: government by the people, with majority rule. *Theocracy*: government guided by God through revelation to a prophet. Consider the type of government the Nephites had under Mosiah. For many years Mosiah served as a king and a prophet who received revelation from God to lead the people. Under his leadership, the government had characteristics of both a monarchy and a theocracy. After the reign of King Mosiah, Alma the Younger was appointed chief judge over the people of Nephi, thus beginning a time period known as "*the reign of the judges*" (Mosiah 29:44), with a new form of government that included elements of a republic, a democracy, and a theocracy. This lesson explains how the system of judges was organized to provide righteous leadership and describes some of the challenges Alma faced as chief judge and as the presiding high priest over the people.

Mosiah taught principles of good government.

When all of King Mosiah's sons refused to succeed him as king, Mosiah sent a written proclamation among the people, recommending a system of government to replace the rule of kings after his death.

Mosiah 29:13, 16. Mosiah counseled his people that having kings is either good or bad depending on the character of the king.

Mosiah 29:13, 18 The two men Mosiah described as different examples of kings were King Benjamin and King Noah.

Mosiah 29:16-18, 21-23 Mosiah described the consequences of having a wicked leader. He cited abuse of power, promotion of iniquity, disregard of law, unjust and immoral practices, and possible perversions of justice as possible or probable consequences. So, Mosiah suggested that the people establish a system of judges to replace the rule of kings.

Mosiah 29:11; see also D&C 98:10 Qualities Mosiah said that these judges should have included wisdom and respect for God's commandments. These qualities are important in leaders today because they promote respect of the people for the judge and assure righteous judgment for the people.

Mosiah 29:11-14 The foundation of the laws that the people would be judged by were the commandments of God. People enjoy numerous blessings of peace, justice, and harmony when they live by laws that are based on righteous principles.

Mosiah 29:24-26, 28-29 Mosiah proposed to limit the power that could be obtained by wicked individuals or groups. He proposed that they do all things by the voice of the people, appoint judges and make the judges accountable to the people, and have a system of appeals against judges who did not judge by the law.

Mosiah 29:27 Mosiah proclaim that if the majority of the people chose wickedness, the judgments of God would visit them with great destruction.

Think about some ways you can help others understand and choose righteousness.

Alma the Younger served as chief judge and combated priestcraft.

The people had followed Mosiah's counsel and appointed judges throughout the land, with Alma the Younger as chief judge.

Alma 1:1-2, 15 In the first year of the reign of the judges, a man named Nehor was brought before Alma to be judged.

Alma 1:3-4 Nehor been teaching the people that the church was wrong, that priests should be popular and should be supported by the people instead of laboring for their own support, and he taught that all mankind would be given eternal life.

Alma 1:5-6 The effect of his teaching was that he won a certain following who paid him to preach and joined the church he established.

Nehor's teachings were appealing to so many people because they lower the standards that people have to meet and make salvation seem easy. Of course, these same teachings have been heard in our day from pulpits and TV screens.

Alma 1:7-8 While Nehor was preaching to the people, he was met by Gideon, a member of the Church who served as a teacher and had served faithfully as a captain for King Limhi.

Alma 1:7 Gideon responded to Nehor's false teachings by admonishing him with the words of God. Knowing and testifying of the word of God helps us withstand false teachings as we refer to the true doctrines as contained in the scriptures.

Alma 1:9 Nehor became angry with Gideon and slew him with a sword.

Alma 1:10-13 When the people took Nehor before Alma, the two crimes Alma found him guilty of were priestcraft and murder.

Alma 1:16; see also 2 Nephi 26:29 Priestcraft is teaching false doctrine for fame and fortune.

Alma 1:12 Alma gave the people fair warning regarding priestcraft--that if it were enforced on the people, it would prove their destruction.

Alma 1:15-16 Although Nehor was put to death for his crimes, priestcraft and other wickedness continued to spread throughout the land.

Alma 1:19-22 Angry words progressed into actual fistfights between those who belonged to the Church and those who did not.

D&C 38:41 We should treat people who disagree with our beliefs with mildness and meekness as we warn them of the consequences of sin and transgression.

Alma 1:23-24 This contention affected some members of the Church to the point of excommunication while some others withdrew from the Church and became inactive.

Alma 1:25 We learn from those who remained in the Church of God that we can endure trials with patience and faith. We can remain "*steadfast and immovable*" in keeping the commandments of God if we pray faithfully and live by God's commandments.

Alma 1:26-30 describes a time of peace and prosperity among the people of the Church.

Alma 1:26 The priests regarded those whom they taught as equals and fellow members, not lesser beings. This attitude is important when we are teaching others because it demonstrates a Christlike example.

Alma 1:27 Alma described the way the members of the Church treated those in need, willingly giving of their substance. Following their example can bring peace to our lives.

Amlici sought to be king but was rejected by the voice of the people.

Alma 2:1-2 In the fifth year of the reign of the judges, a cunning man named Amlici was joined by many followers who wanted to make him king over the land.

Alma 2:4 Amlici wanted to be king so that he could destroy the church of God.

Alma 2:7-10 When the majority of the people voted against him, Amlici gathered his followers, had himself crowned as king, and admonished his followers to subjugate their brethren.

Alma 2:16-19 The first battle between the Nephites and the Amlicites was won by the Nephites at a cost of 6,562 lives while the Amlicites lost 12,532 of their number.

Alma 2:23-25 When Alma sent spies to follow the remainder of the Amlicites, the spies observed the Amlicites joining with a large host of Lamanites.

Alma 2:27-28 Even though they were fewer in number, the Nephites were able to defeat the combined army of the Amlicites and Lamanites because their prayers were answered and the hand of the Lord strengthened them.

Alma 3:4, 13 To distinguish themselves from the Nephites, the Amlicites marked their foreheads in red.

Alma 3:14-19 These markings were a fulfillment of prophecy that the Lamanites and those who fought against the seed of Nephi would be marked in their foreheads.

It is important for us to "*see that they brought upon themselves the curse*" (Alma 3:19) because it illustrates that condemnation from God is through our choice, not his.

The Church prospered but became prideful. Alma resigned the judgment seat to devote himself to the ministry.

Alma 4:1-2 Even though the Nephites had been victorious in battle over the Amlicites and the Lamanites, many Nephites had died, and those who remained had suffered great losses among their flocks and their grain.

Alma 4:3-5 Some results of these afflictions were that the people realized that they had failed to make righteous choices and had therefore, suffered the punishments of God. They returned to the Church and added thousands of members to the rolls.

Alma 4:5-6 As we see here, it took the members of the Church all of **one year** to return from great righteousness to pride and worldliness.

Alma 4:8-12 Pride affected the way the people of the Church treated others, both in and out of the Church as church members treated others with scorn and persecution, setting a terrible example for non-members.

Alma 4:10 This evil influence of proud members caused nonmembers to view the Church unfavorably and therefore, they declined to join with the Church.

The example of Church members is important to the missionary work of the Church because that example speaks louder than the teachings and precepts from the pulpit.

Alma 4:15-18 In response to the increasing pride and iniquity of the people, Alma placed Nephihah in the judgment seat by the voice of the people and then limited his activity to teaching and preaching.

Alma 4:19 He did this so that he could combat the evil that had crept into the Church. Preaching the word of God can "*stir [people] up in remembrance of their duty*" by reminding them of their sacred covenants.

Ponder the concept that preaching the word of God can "*pull down*" pride, craftiness, and contention.

Alma 4:19 The phrase "*bearing down in pure testimony*" suggests that Alma would teach with the power of God, relying on simplicity and the witness of the Spirit. Consider how your life has been changed by hearing others bear pure testimony of the gospel. Problems of war and conflict, hunger and famine, injustice and inequality in the world today could be solved by preaching and living the gospel.

Conclusion

Ponder how the challenges Alma faced are similar to problems we face today and how many of the solutions to these problems are similar. In the coming weeks, we will study Alma's responses to other challenges he faced as the high priest over the people. We will observe how Alma preached the word of God to deal with each situation he faced.

"Have Ye Received His Image in Your Countenances?"

Lesson 22 - Alma 5-7

Introduction

The heart is often used as a symbol of our desires and affections. Think about what proud people set their hearts on. According to Alma 4:8 and Alma 5:53, they desire riches and "*vain things of the world*". Now think about what humble people desire. When we humble ourselves before God, we are prepared to be "*born of God*" and experience a "*mighty change in [our] hearts*" (Alma 5:14). This lesson discusses the conditions under which the Lord can change our hearts.

Alma taught the people how they could experience a "*mighty change*" of heart.

Alma was the chief judge in the people's government. As chief judge, he had the authority to enforce the laws of the land. He was also the presiding high priest in the Church. As high priest, he had the responsibility to preach the word of God. When he saw the wickedness of the members of the Church, he resigned as chief judge and "*confined himself wholly to the high priesthood,...to the testimony of the word*" (Alma 4:11-20).

President Ezra Taft Benson taught why it became important for Alma to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ rather than serve as chief judge: "*The Lord works from the inside out. The world works from the outside in. The world would mold men by changing their environment. Christ changes men, who then change their environment. The world would shape human behavior, but Christ can change human nature*" (Ensign, Nov. 1985, 6).

Alma 5:3-9 At the beginning of his address, Alma spoke of the previous generation, who had been delivered from physical and spiritual bondage.

Alma 5:5-7 Alma thought that it was important for the people to remember their fathers' captivity and deliverance.

Alma 5:7-9 Alma described their fathers after the Lord "*changed their hearts*" as being awakened to God, illuminated by the light of the everlasting word, and expanded in their souls after their release from bondage.

Alma 5:10 asks three questions. 1) On what conditions are they saved? 2) What are the grounds for their hope for salvation? and 3) What is the cause for their being loosed from the bands of death and hell?

Alma 5:11-13 answers the questions, teaching that they gained hope and were saved by believing the word of God as delivered by the prophets, humbling themselves and putting their trust in God, and enduring to the end.

Mosiah 16:13-15 The message that led to "*a mighty change [being] wrought*" in the heart of Alma's father was that redemption would come for the repentant through Christ.

Alma 5:13; see also Mosiah 18:1-11 The people who believed Alma the Elder when he taught them the gospel were changed, humbled, and put their trust in God. Others' testimonies of the Savior help us experience a change of heart if we ponder the testimony and pray to receive a witness through the Spirit of the truths in those testimonies.

Alma 5:14 Throughout his address to the people in Zarahemla, Alma spoke of experiencing a "*mighty change*" of heart and being "*born of God*". We often use the word conversion when we speak of this experience.

Mosiah 5:2; Mosiah 27:24-26 The meaning of being converted includes having no desire to do evil but having a great desire to do good.

Is conversion a single event or a process? **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** taught: "*Except in...unusual circumstances, as with Alma (Mosiah 27), spiritual rebirth is a process. It does not occur instantaneously. It comes to pass by degrees. Repentant persons become alive to one spiritual reality after another, until they are wholly alive in Christ and are qualified to dwell in his presence forever*" (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 3 vols. [1966-73], 3:401).

Alma 5:45-46 Even Alma, who had experienced a miraculous conversion, had "*fasted and prayed many days that [he] might know these things.*"

As Alma preached to the people in Zarahemla, he asked them a series of questions. We can use these questions to examine ourselves as we continue in the conversion process.

Alma 5:14-21, 26-31 provide guidance in how to continue in the conversion process:

Alma 5:19 Alma spoke of having "*the image of God engraven upon [our] countenances*". The word *countenance* refers to a person's behavior or to the way a person's face expresses his or her character. Consider how you would answer Alma's question: "*Have ye received his image in your countenances?*"

Alma 5:15-19 It can be helpful to imagine ourselves being judged by the Lord so that we always remember our responsibility to live up to our covenants.

Alma 5:26 here Alma asked, "*If ye have experienced a change of heart, and if ye have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, ...can ye feel so now?*". Consider how you would answer this question. Once a person has "*felt to sing the song of redeeming love,*" involving yourself in sin and transgression will cause that feeling to diminish. To continue in the process of conversion, we need to avoid sin and concentrate on keeping the commandments.

Alma 5:27, 50-51 We keep ourselves "*blameless before God*" by developing and maintaining humility and repenting of all our sins.

Alma 5:28-29 Here, we are reminded that pride and envy make us unprepared to meet God. We are also unprepared to meet God if we mock or persecute others, as recorded in verses 30 and 31. We must always remember that we are all children of God and we are here to help each other regain entrance into our Father's realm.

Alma 5:31-32 After Alma asked his questions, he urged the people to repent of their sins.

Alma 5:33-35 Then he reassured them that they could be forgiven through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Alma 5:33-35 The invitation the Savior extends to us is to repent (free ourselves of sins of commission), come unto him, and bring forth good works (overcoming our sins of omission). Ponder how this invitation can give you hope.

Alma 5:37 To the unrighteous people in Zarahemla, Alma said, *"A shepherd hath called after you and is still calling after you, but ye will not hearken unto his voice!"*

Alma 5:38 The shepherd Alma referred to is Christ. The Savior calls after us through our Church leaders and fellow members as they teach us, give us opportunities for service in the kingdom, and serve us as home and visiting teachers. He also calls us through the promptings of the Holy Ghost in our daily lives. Ponder what you can do to hearken to His voice.

Alma 5:43-49 These verses teach us about the calling of a prophet: 1) they speak plainly so that we cannot err, 2) they speak as inspired by the Spirit, 3) they speak of prophecies to be fulfilled, 4) their knowledge comes from God after fasting and prayer, 5) they receive revelation, 6) they know that the prophecies are true, 7) they have a testimony of Christ as the Redeemer of those who will follow him, and 8) their message to everyone is simple--repent and be baptized.

Alma 5:53-56 Alma warned the people that they should not persist, or continue, in their wickedness. Note that Alma asked the question *"Will ye persist?"* four times.

Alma 5:56; see also Mosiah 16:5; D&C 58:42-43 Forsaking sin is a necessary part of repenting because choosing to sin is rebelling against God and we cannot be forgiven while we are still indulging in sin.

Alma 5:57 Alma commanded his people, *"Come ye out from the wicked, and be ye separate"*. We separate ourselves from wickedness while living in the world by setting an example of righteousness and avoiding places and situations that offer temptation or opportunity for sin.

Alma and the people established the order of the Church in Zarahemla.

Alma 6:1-2 After Alma's discourse, many people repented of their sins and humbled themselves before God.

Alma 6:3 Why were other people unwilling to repent of their sins? Because they were *"lifted up in the pride of their hearts."* Pride prevents people from repenting because repentance requires sincere humility.

How can we overcome pride in our hearts? **President Ezra Taft Benson** said: *"The antidote for pride is humility,... meekness, submissiveness (see Alma 7:23). Let us choose to be humble. We can choose to humble ourselves by conquering enmity toward our brothers and sisters, esteeming them as ourselves, and lifting them as high or higher than we are. We can choose to humble ourselves by receiving counsel and chastisement. We can choose to humble ourselves by forgiving those who have offended us. We can choose to humble ourselves by rendering selfless service. We can choose to humble ourselves by going on missions and preaching the word that can humble others. We can choose to humble ourselves by getting to the temple more frequently. We can choose to humble ourselves by confessing and forsaking our sins and being born of God. We can choose to humble ourselves by loving God, submitting our will to His, and putting Him first in our lives"* (Ensign, May 1989, 6-7).

Alma 6:1-6 Alma and the people in Zarahemla *"began to establish the order of the church"* by ordaining priests and elders, baptizing new converts, and gathering together often in fasting and prayer. Order in the Church helps us continue in the conversion process as those called to serve teach and encourage us and help us back onto the strait and narrow path if we commit sins and need help to repent and obtain forgiveness.

Alma testified of Jesus Christ. He encouraged the people in Gideon to follow the Savior.

Alma 6:8 After Alma taught in Zarahemla, he went to preach to the people in the valley of Gideon.

Alma 7:7 Alma told the people in Gideon that there were *"many things to come"* but that the coming of Jesus Christ was of the greatest importance.

Alma 7:10-13 About the Savior's mission on earth, Alma taught that he would be the Begotten Son of God; suffer pain, afflictions, and temptations; take upon himself the sins of others; overcome death; know how to succor his people; and that He would deliver his people from their sins.

Alma 7:11-14 The Savior took upon Himself our pains, afflictions, sicknesses, and sins so that we may be forgiven and saved.

Alma 7:9, 14-16, 22, 26 Alma's message to the people in Gideon was different from his message in Zarahemla, but in some ways the messages were similar because Alma preached repentance to the people in Gideon even though they were striving to live righteously.

Conclusion

Alma 7:23-25. These verses describe a person who has experienced the change of heart spoken of by Alma and who continues to *"sing the song of redeeming love"* (Alma 5:26). As we continue in the conversion process, we will be able to look forward to the day when we are received *"in the kingdom of heaven to go no more out"* (Alma 7:25).

"More Than One Witness"

Lesson 23 - Alma 8-12

Introduction

What if I show you a box and tell you what item is inside the box, but I do not show you the object. Would you believe that such an item is really in the box? What if one of your friends is invited to look inside the box and then tells you what is inside the box. Would you then believe the item is in the box? Why would it be easier to believe that the object was in the box after someone else came and looked at it? As Alma preached repentance to the people of Ammonihah, he was joined by Amulek. This lesson discusses how Alma's teaching was strengthened through Amulek's witness.

Alma called the people of Ammonihah to repentance, but they rejected him.

Alma delivered up the judgment seat to Nephiah and began his missionary journeys. These included a journey to the wicked city of Ammonihah. After he established the order of the Church among the people in Gideon and Melek, Alma went to preach in the land of Ammonihah.

Alma 8:8-9 We find that Alma's challenge in Ammonihah was a population who had allowed Satan great hold on their hearts, so they would not hearken to Alma's teachings.

The words in **Alma 8:10** describe the intensity of Alma's efforts in Ammonihah as he "*labored much*" and *wrestled* "with God in mighty prayer".

Alma 8:11-13 The people of Ammonihah responded to Alma's preaching by hardening their hearts, withstanding all his words, reviling him, spitting on him, and casting him out of the city.

Alma 8:14-17 As Alma left Ammonihah and traveled toward the city of Aaron, an angel of the Lord appeared, told Alma to rejoice, introduced himself to Alma as the angel who had delivered the Lord's first message to Alma, and commanded him to return and warn the people of the city again.

Alma 8:15 According to the angel, the reason Alma should rejoice was because the Lord knew that he was faithful in keeping the commandments.

Alma 8:18 Alma responded to the angel's instructions by returning to Ammonihah "speedily". Think about what you can learn from his response--to do what the Lord commands and Do It Now!

Alma 8:19-32 tells us about how Alma and Amulek met. As Alma reentered the city, he approached Amulek and asked for food since Alma had fasted for many days. Amulek told him that an angel had instructed him in a vision to give food and shelter to the Lord's prophet, which he promptly did.

Alma 8:20, 27; Alma 10:7-11 The Lord prepared Amulek to preach with Alma by witnessing of Alma's holy calling through an angel who visited Amulek while Alma stayed with him. The angel showed Amulek that Alma's words were true. He had also spent time with Alma for "*many days*" before they began preaching together. Some ways individuals are prepared to do the Lord's work include: by association with the Lord's servants, by promptings from the Holy Ghost, by answers to prayers and personal inspiration, by studying the scriptures, and by living a righteous, honest life.

Alma 9:5 The people of Ammonihah continued to reject Alma's warnings because they were hardhearted and proud.

Alma 9:2, 6 They argued that God would not send just one man with an important message and used that excuse to reject his message.

Alma 9:8-11 Alma said that the wicked people in Ammonihah had forgotten the righteous tradition of their fathers, the commandments of God, and the Lord's deliverance of their fathers. Their forgetfulness led to wickedness. Some reasons people forget what the Lord has done for them and others include being proud, seeking worldly pleasures, being selfish, and seeking riches, power, or ease. Consider effective ways you have found for remembering the Lord's blessings to you.

Alma 9:15 Alma warned that if the wicked Nephites of Ammonihah did not repent, the day of judgment would be "*more tolerable*" for the Lamanites than for them.

Why would this be so? **Alma 9:14-24; see also Luke 12:47-48; D&C 82:3** Because the Lamanites were taught false traditions of their fathers and the Lord had promised to be merciful to them and that He would eventually bring them to repentance and faithfulness. On the other hand, these people had had light and knowledge and then rejected it. They had had too many spiritual experiences and heavenly blessings to be excused easily, so the Lord had sworn that if they sinned against the greater light, they would be utterly destroyed. Think seriously about what the Lord requires of those who have received greater light.

Alma 9:16-17 Alma taught about the "*promises which are extended to the Lamanites*"--that one day they would be saved after learning of the false traditions of their fathers. Ponder how these promises are being fulfilled today.

Amulek preached to the people of Ammonihah.

After Alma had spoken to the people, Amulek stood up and began to preach to them. Amulek was a descendant of Lehi and was a wealthy man "*of no small reputation*" in the community (Alma 10:2-4).

Alma 10:6 Amulek said that he had been "*called many times*" but "*would not hear*" and that he "*knew concerning these things*" but "*would not know*". Think about some of the ways the Lord calls to us and why we are sometimes slow to respond to Him. On a personal basis, how can you be more receptive to Him?

Alma 10:7-11 records that Amulek was finally converted when the angel visited him and testified of the truth of Alma's message.

Alma 10:13-16, 31-32 The intent of the lawyers who questioned Amulek was to find some way to twist his words and find fault with him, and, in the end, get gain through their employment.

Alma 10:17 They were unable to deceive him because the inspired prophet could literally perceive their thoughts.

Alma 10:17-21, 27 Amulek rebuked the lawyers and warned that they were laying the foundation of the destruction of the people. How were they laying this foundation? By perverting the legal system and corrupting judges.

Alma 10:22-23 We see here that only the prayers of the righteous among them had kept the people from being destroyed already. Consider this: Do you think the prayers of the righteous help counter the effects of wickedness today?

Alma 10:12 The people were astonished by Amulek's words because he furnished a second witness to both their sins and the prophecies that Alma had delivered.

Think about the benefits of having more than one witness when sharing the gospel. We sustain each other in these endeavors when we teach in pairs, such as full-time missionaries, home teachers, visiting teachers, and parents. Observe through the remainder of the lesson how Alma and Amulek continued to support each other's efforts by preaching the same doctrines. Doctrines and references are summarized in the following chart.

DOCTRINE	AMULEK'S WITNESS	ALMA'S WITNESS
The Atonement	Alma 11:40	Alma 12:33-34
Repentance	Alma 11:40	Alma 12:24
Judgment	Alma 11:41	Alma 12:14
Resurrection	Alma 11:41-42	Alma 12:24-25

Amulek contended with Zeezrom and testified of Christ.

Chapter 11 begins with a description of the Nephites' monetary system. Beginning in Alma 11:20 is the account of Amulek being questioned by Zeezrom, one of the most cunning lawyers in the land of Ammonihah.

Alma 11:1, 20 The judges in Ammonihah earned money by having their services required, so they stirred up the people to get more employment as judges.

Alma 11:20 They wanted to contend with Alma and Amulek to get gain.

Alma 11:21-40 contains the dialogue between Amulek and Zeezrom.

Alma 11:21-22 Amulek responded to Zeezrom's first question by saying that he would only answer questions as directed by the Spirit. (That's a good example to follow, so think about how you can keep your words and teachings in harmony with the Spirit of the Lord.)

Alma 11:34 Zeezrom asked Amulek if Jesus would save people in their sins.

Alma 11:34, 37 Amulek said that we cannot be saved in our sins because no unclean thing can enter into heaven.

There is a difference between the false idea of being saved in our sins and the truth that we can be saved from our sins. If we are unrepentant and remain in a state of sin, we cannot be saved. If we repent, Jesus Christ can save us from our sins.

Alma 11:42-43 Overcoming the physical death and having a resurrection is a blessing of Christ's Atonement that comes to all people.

Alma 11:40-41 The blessing of forgiveness for sin and the gift of eternal life comes only to those who have faith in Him and keep His commandments.

Alma 11:43-45 Amulek taught about the resurrection and spoke of the reuniting of the body and spirit, never to be separated again, and that all will stand before God to be judged of their works. These truths are important for us to know because they help us understand the reward for faithfulness and obedience.

Alma further explained Amulek's words and warned against hard-heartedness.

Alma 11:46 After Amulek had answered Zeezrom's contentions, Zeezrom "*began to tremble*". Seeing this, Alma began to speak to "*establish the words of Amulek, ...to unfold the scriptures beyond that which Amulek had done*" (Alma 12:1).

Alma 12:3-6 From Alma's words in these verses to Zeezrom, we learn about what Satan desires and how he works. Satan often tries to deceive one person in order to bring many people to destruction. Consider how you can protect yourself against Satan's subtle devices.

Alma 12:9-11 Alma taught that the condition of our hearts affects our understanding of God's word. If we are humble and hearken, we will be able to understand the mysteries. If we harden our hearts, understanding and light and knowledge will be withheld from us.

Alma 12:10 The blessing that comes to those who do not harden their hearts includes growing knowledge until we know the mysteries of God in their fulness.

1 Nephi 2:16; 1 Nephi 15:11 We develop hearts that recognize, understand, and accept the word of God by obeying the commandments and desiring to know of God.

Alma 12:13-14 Alma taught that people who harden their hearts against the word of God will be condemned by their words, works, and thoughts. The Lord judges according to our thoughts as well as our words and actions because thought is the mother of action. If our thoughts are impure, our actions will eventually follow.

Alma 12:14-18 Alma described the awful state of those who do not repent and thus die in their sins and the torment and punishment that waits for them after the judgment.

D&C 19:16-18 These people will *"be as though there had been no redemption made"* because the redemption and forgiveness for sin only comes to those who repent and accept Christ.

Alma 12:22-34 contains Alma's description of the Fall of Adam and the plan of redemption.

Alma 12:24 Alma taught that the purpose of mortality is for us to prepare to meet God. An understanding of this principle can help us live more righteously if we view this life as a test that we want to pass.

Alma 12:32 It is significant that *"God gave [Adam and Eve] commandments, after having made known unto them the plan of redemption"* because it shows that our first parents knew the challenge before them and how to succeed in this life. An understanding of the plan of redemption helps us keep the commandments because we can understand the reason for the commandments--to help us become like our Father. For us to have a reason to overcome our mistakes and have hope of eternal life, it is necessary for us to know that God has prepared a plan for our redemption. The plan of redemption teaches us that God's justice and mercy are fair and balanced and that keeping the commandments will be rewarded while penalties for sin will be tempered with mercy as appropriate to our circumstances.

Conclusion

As Alma and Amulek worked together as witnesses of the gospel of Jesus Christ, they strengthened each other and delivered powerful teachings about the plan of redemption. Look for opportunities to strengthen one another in bearing witness of the gospel.

"Give Us Strength According to Our Faith...in Christ"

Lesson 24 - Alma 13-16

Introduction

One of the most important questions we can ask is "*How?*" This question is important when it relates to our personal conduct. To illustrate this, imagine the following:

- A young man knows that he needs to be at a certain place at a certain time, but he does not know how to get there.
- A woman knows that she needs to be baptized, but she does not know how to go about it.
- A man knows that Jesus is the Savior, but he does not know how to come unto Him. (read 1 Nephi 15:14.)

When Alma taught the people in Ammonihah, he talked about one way we can know how to come unto Christ. Rather than using the word *how*, he used the phrase "*in what manner.*" Read Alma 13:1-2. A portion of this lesson discusses how the order of the priesthood helps us "*know in what manner to look forward to [the] Son for redemption*" (Alma 13:2).

Alma gave a powerful discourse on the priesthood and foreordination.

After Alma taught Zeezrom and others in Ammonihah about the plan of redemption, he testified of the priesthood and the doctrine of foreordination. The priests of whom Alma spoke in this discourse were high priests in the Melchizedek Priesthood (Alma 13:10).

Alma 13:3 Men were first "called and prepared" to be ordained to the priesthood from the foundation of the world.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, "*Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was*" (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 365).

President Ezra Taft Benson said this about your foreordination: "*God has held you in reserve to make your appearance in the final days before the second coming of the Lord. ...God has saved for the [final days] some of His strongest children, who will help bear off the kingdom triumphantly. That is where you come in, for you are the generation that must be prepared to meet your God. In all ages prophets have looked down through the corridors of time to our day. Billions of the deceased and those yet to be born have their eyes on us. Make no mistake about it...you are a marked generation. There has never been more expected of the faithful in such a short period of time than there is of us*" (The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson [1988], 104-5).

Alma 13:3-5 Men demonstrated by their exceeding faith and good works in premortal life that they were worthy to be foreordained to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Alma 13:8-10 teaches us that men must repent and work righteousness in this life to remain worthy of their foreordination. Alma's teachings about foreordination should affect the way we sustain those who are called to preside over us because we know that they are called to that position by God. These teachings should affect our response when priesthood leaders extend callings or other assignments to us because they are assisting us in living up to our foreordained callings.

President Spencer W. Kimball taught: "*Before we came here, faithful women were given certain assignments while faithful men were foreordained to certain priesthood tasks. While we do not now remember the particulars, this does not alter the glorious reality of what we once agreed to. You are accountable for those things which long ago were expected of you just as are those we sustain as prophets and apostles!*" ("The Role of Righteous Women," Ensign, Nov. 1979, 102).

Alma said that men receive the Melchizedek Priesthood so they can "*teach [God's] commandments unto the children of men, that they also might enter into his rest*" (Alma 13:6; see also verse Alma 13:1). Melchizedek Priesthood holders have opportunities to teach the gospel as missionaries, husbands, and fathers.

To explain what entering into the rest of the Lord is, **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** taught: "*The rest of the Lord, where mortals are concerned, is to gain a perfect knowledge of the divinity of the great latter-day work. [President Joseph F. Smith said.] 'It means entering into the knowledge and love of God, having faith in his purpose and in his plan, to such an extent that we know we are right, and that we are not hunting for something else; we are not disturbed by every wind of doctrine, or by the cunning and craftiness of men who lie in wait to deceive.' It is 'rest from the religious turmoil of the world; from the cry that is going forth, here and there...lo, here is Christ; lo, there is Christ.'* (Gospel Doctrine, 5th ed., pp. 58, 125-126.) *The rest of the Lord, in eternity, is to inherit eternal life, to gain the fulness of the Lord's glory (D. & C. 84:24.)*" (Mormon Doctrine, 2nd ed. [1966], 633).

Alma 13:11-12 We become pure through repentance and the atonement of Christ so that we can be permitted to enter into the rest of the Lord.

Alma 13:12-13, 16, 27-29; 3 Nephi 27:19-20 To live so that we can be sanctified through the blood of the Lamb and by the Holy Ghost, we must abhor sin, humble ourselves, repent, do good works, obey the commandments, look forward to Christ's coming, hearken to the prophets, pray daily, be guided by the Spirit, develop Christian virtues, and have the love of God in our hearts.

Alma 13:2, 16 and review the following verses. Look for some ways in which the order of the priesthood can help us know how to look to the Savior for redemption.

- **Alma 13:3-4.** Those foreordained to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood were "*called and prepared...on account of their exceeding faith and good works.*"
- **Alma 13:6.** They were "*ordained [foreordained] ...to teach [God's] commandments unto the children of men, that they also might enter into his rest.*"
- **Alma 13:8.** In this life, they are "*ordained with a holy ordinance.*"

- **Alma 13:10.** They show that they are worthy of their foreordination through continued faith and good works and through repentance.

Consider how faith and repentance help us look to Jesus Christ for redemption; how good works and obedience to the commandments help us look to Him; and how priesthood ordinances help us look to Him.

Alma 13:14-15 Alma spoke of Melchizedek as an example of a great high priest.

Alma 13:17-18; see also Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 14:25-40 We learn from Melchizedek's example that having exceeding faith is necessary to accomplish God's purposes in leading others to Him.

From Alma 13:27 we note that Alma's love for the people of Ammonihah was so sincere that he was anxious to the point of pain that they heed his words and repent quickly.

Alma 13:27-29 records Alma's plea to the people.

Alma 34:32-36 Obviously, it is important not to procrastinate repentance because if we continue in sin, we become subject to the devil and we may lose the opportunity and/or the ability to repent during our lifetime.

Alma 13:28 One blessing we receive as we "*watch and pray continually*" is the promise that we will not be tempted beyond our ability to resist.

Alma 13:29; Moroni 7:41 We can have "*a hope that [we] shall receive eternal life*" if we exercise faith in the Lord's promises.

Alma, Amulek, and other believers were persecuted for their righteousness.

Alma 14:1-5 Many people in Ammonihah believed Alma and Amulek's teachings and began to repent and search the scriptures. The majority of the people, however, became angry and persecuted Alma and Amulek.

1 Nephi 16:1-3 Some people become angry when they are called to repentance because the guilty take the truth to be hard.

Alma 14:6-7 When he saw what "*he had caused among the people*" Zeezrom confessed his guilt, testified that Alma and Amulek were guiltless, and began to plead with the people for them.

Alma 14:7 The people responded when Zeezrom confessed his guilt and defended Alma and Amulek by reviling him, spitting on him, casting him out, and sending men to stone him.

Alma 14:7-9 The wicked people in Ammonihah took the people who believed in the word of God and cast them and their scriptures into a fire to be consumed in a painful death.

Alma 14:10-11; Alma 60:13 The Lord allowed this to happen so that the martyrs could come to him in glory and the wicked could receive just punishment.

Alma 14:12-13 It was the will of the Lord that the lives of Alma and Amulek be spared because their work was not yet finished.

Alma 14:26-29; Ether 12:12-13 After being persecuted in prison for many days, Alma and Amulek were finally delivered by the power of God, who brought about an earthquake to destroy the prison and the prophets' persecutors. They were given strength and power "*according to their faith which was in Christ.*"

Mosiah 3:17; Moroni 7:33 Our faith must be centered in Christ to lead us to deliverance.

Zeezrom was healed and baptized.

After the Lord delivered them from prison, Alma and Amulek went to the land of Sidom. There they met the men who had been cast out of Ammonihah and stoned because of their belief in the word of God (Alma 15:1; see also Alma 14:7).

Zeezrom was one of these men (Alma 15:3). Zeezrom was suffering both spiritually and physically because of his wickedness, but "*his heart began to take courage*" when he heard that Alma and Amulek were in Sidom (Alma 15:3-4).

Alma 15:5 Zeezrom asked to be healed by Alma and Amulek. This reveals his deep trust and confidence in them.

Alma 15:6-10 Zeezrom needed to place his trust in Christ in order to be healed.

Alma 15:11-12 We learn from Zeezrom's actions after he was healed that those who receive the Lord's blessings need to testify to others of God's mercy and love.

Alma 15:12-15 Unlike the people who remained in Ammonihah, the people in Sidom believed the message taught by Alma and Amulek and were baptized. Alma saw that they "*were checked as to the pride of their hearts*" (Alma 15:17; Note: the word *check* means to slow or stop).

Alma 15:17 As they became more humble, the people gathered to worship God and pray to Him for protection and deliverance. It is necessary to humble ourselves before God in order to truly worship Him.

Alma 15:16 By choosing to live the gospel and serve as a missionary, Amulek gave up great material wealth and the affection of his family and friends.

Alma 8:30; Alma 34:1, 8; Ether 12:12-13 Amulek gained the companionship of the Holy Ghost, a testimony of Christ and his mission, and an abiding faith in the Lord.

Consider the sacrifices you have made in choosing to live and teach the gospel and how you have been blessed for this choice.

Alma 15:18 Once the Church was established in Sidom, Alma took Amulek into his home and cared for his temporal and spiritual needs. This act reveals how charitable and humble Alma was. Consider how you personally can administer to others and strengthen them in the Lord.

The words of Alma were fulfilled as the Lamanites destroyed Ammonihah.

Alma 16:1-2 About one year after Alma and Amulek preached in Ammonihah, the Lamanites invaded Nephite lands.

Alma 16:2-3, 9-11 The Nephites in Ammonihah were slain--every living soul of that great city--and their carcasses were torn asunder by wild animals.

Alma 9:4-5, 12, 18 This one-day desolation as a judgment of God was a fulfillment of Alma's prophecies.

Alma 16:4-8 Zoram and his followers were able to scatter the Lamanites and rescue their brethren who had been taken captive because they requested and followed the guidance of the Lord's chosen prophet.

Compare Alma 9:1-8 and Alma 15:15 with Alma 16:4-6; see also 2 Nephi 4:34 By comparing the destruction of Ammonihah to the success of Zoram's armies, we should learn to trust in God and His prophets rather than in worldly knowledge, power, or possessions.

Alma 16:13-21 After the destruction of Ammonihah, the Lord prepared people's hearts to receive the word preached by Alma, Amulek, and others who were chosen for the work.

Alma 16:16 The Lord prepares people's hearts to receive His word by giving them His Spirit to teach and guide them.

Alma 16:21; see also Mosiah 18:18-20; D&C 52:9 We ensure that we preach the word of God "*in its purity*" by teaching only doctrine that is taught by the prophet and by teaching repentance and faith in Christ.

Conclusion

Read **Matthew 11:28-30** and **Alma 13:27-29**. In a world filled with doubt and confusion, it is comforting to know that through the priesthood we can "*know in what manner to look forward to [the] Son for redemption*" (Alma 13:2). As we look to the Lord, trust in Him, and follow the counsel of His prophets, we can enter into His rest.

"They Taught with Power and Authority of God"

Lesson 25 - Alma 17-22

Introduction

To Know, To Feel, To Do. How could these phrases relate to missionary work? **Elder Carlos E. Asay** related the following experience: *"Not too long ago, I heard the testimony of a new convert...a young man obviously touched by the Spirit. Among other things, he indicated that it was his great desire to share the restored gospel with his family and friends. With tears in his eyes and a quiver in his voice, he said: 'I want them to know what I know. 'I want them to feel what I feel. 'I want them to do what I have done.' There is a missionary spirit...a spirit which urges us to live outside ourselves and to be concerned for the welfare of others. And anyone who has ever served an honorable mission, assisted in the conversion of a friend, supported a son or daughter in the mission field, or enjoyed close associations with missionaries will testify of its reality"* (Ensign, Nov. 1976, 42).

After the sons of Mosiah were converted, they felt a great desire to share the gospel with others. Their experiences provide some of the greatest examples of missionary service in the scriptures. This lesson discusses how they were able to become instruments in the hands of God in bringing the Lamanites to a knowledge of the truth.

The sons of Mosiah preached the gospel to the Lamanites.

As Alma traveled to Manti, he met the sons of King Mosiah, who were returning from their 14-year mission to the Lamanites. Alma 17-26 records the experiences and preaching of the sons of Mosiah during their mission.

Alma 29:10-13 We see that the sons of Mosiah were such powerful and effective teachers because they loved the Lord and remembered the mercy and care He had provided to them and their fathers.

Alma 17:2-4. Keys to successful missionary work include study, fasting, and prayer. Our personal worthiness and preparation affects our ability to be effective instruments for the Lord--the better prepared, the more successful. Think about how you have seen a missionary or someone else be blessed because of personal preparation.

Alma 17:5-6 Sacrifices the sons of Mosiah made to perform their missionary work included giving up succession to their father's throne; physical discomfort as they faced trials of hunger, thirst, and fatigue; and spiritual struggles as they labored mightily in the spirit.

Alma 17:9, 16; see also Mosiah 28:1-3 Why were they willing to do this? Because they loved God and others.

Consider how you can develop the same kind of love and concern for others that was demonstrated by the sons of Mosiah.

The sons of Mosiah went to preach to *"a hardened and a ferocious people"* (Alma 17:14).

Alma 17:10-11 The Lord helped prepare them for their mission as he comforted them and counseled them to be good examples in patience and long-suffering in afflictions. If they would do this, he would bless their efforts with success.

Alma 17:12 The sons of Mosiah took courage after receiving comfort and direction from the Lord. Those same promises can be applied to our righteous efforts and help us as we face challenges in our callings.

Ammon served and taught King Lamoni, and many of the people were converted.

Alma 17:29 Ammon's heart become *"swollen...with joy"* when the king's flocks were scattered because he saw it as an opportunity to restore the king's flocks by the power in him and gain credibility for his teachings by his service.

Alma 17:30-39 Ammon turned this adversity into a positive experience by having confidence in the Lord's promises, standing up to those who desired the destruction of others, and having courage in battle with those who sought to slay him.

Alma 18:2-5 The king respond with astonishment when his servants told him how Ammon had defended his flocks. Lamoni thought that Ammon must be more than a mortal.

Alma 18:8-9 When the king asked where he was, Ammon was giving service by feeding the king's horses. He was once again demonstrating humility and developing trust.

Alma 18:10-11 This helped prepare King Lamoni to be taught by impressing him with faithfulness and diligence.

Alma 18:13 The king's servant addressed Ammon as a great and powerful king in his own right when he came to see the king.

Alma 18:14-17 Ammon's words to King Lamoni, asking what he could do to serve the king, show that Ammon was still a humble servant.

Consider why it was important for Ammon to serve the king before trying to teach him and further, how serving and developing a relationship of trust with others helps us present the gospel message to them. Consider the ways in which we can serve those we teach.

Alma 18:24-33 As Ammon began teaching King Lamoni, he helped him gain an understanding about God and heaven by teaching in a way that the king could understand. Consider how you can follow this example when teaching the gospel.

Alma 18:34-39 After establishing a level of understanding with King Lamoni, Ammon taught essential doctrines of the plan of redemption from the scriptures.

Alma 18:40-41 After hearing and believing Ammon's words, King Lamoni asked God for mercy upon him and his people.

Alma 19:1-5, 8-9 After praying, King Lamoni fell to the earth. The queen demonstrated her faith when Lamoni appeared to be dead by calling for Ammon and believing his assurance that the king was only asleep in God and would soon awaken.

Alma 19:12-13 When Lamoni spoke to the queen after his conversion, he emphasized the blessing of the coming of a Redeemer.

Alma 19:13, 15-16 After speaking to the queen, Lamoni again fell to the earth, as did the queen and all of the servants except Abish.

Alma 19:16-17 Abish was converted to the Lord years before this event. She can serve as an example of remaining converted to the Lord even when those around us are not.

Alma 19:17 When she understood what had happened, Abish went to tell others of this example of the power of God. Ponder how you can better recognize and use opportunities to share the gospel.

Alma 19:18-28 When the people arrived at the house of the king, some thought his household was being punished for harboring a Nephite, others thought it punishment for slaying his shepherds who had allowed his sheep to be scattered, others saw it as an opportunity to rebuke Ammon for defending the king's flocks, some thought he was the Great Spirit, and others thought him a monster sent to torment them.

Alma 19:28-29 Abish tried to resolve the contention among the people by raising the queen.

Alma 19:29-31, 33 The king and queen demonstrated their conversion after they arose by praising God, giving thanks for God's mercy, teaching their people what Ammon had taught them, and bearing testimony that they no longer wanted to do evil.

Alma 19:36 Perhaps Mormon wanted us to learn from the experiences of Ammon and King Lamoni and his people that the arm of the Lord is *"extended to all people who will repent and believe on his name."*

Ammon was led by the Spirit to deliver his brethren. Lamoni's father was converted.

Alma 20:1 After the Church was established in his kingdom, Lamoni wanted to have his father meet Ammon and hear Lamoni's testimony. It is important for new converts to share their testimonies with others because of their enthusiasm and the spirit that accompanies their testimony.

Alma 20:13-15 This conversation between Lamoni and his father demonstrated the depth of Lamoni's conversion and his faith in God and his servants.

Alma 20:26-27 King Lamoni's father was astonished at the humility and love for others shown by Ammon. Love and testimony are so powerful in softening a person's heart.

Alma 21 begins the account of Ammon's brother Aaron and his fellow servants. They preached the gospel to the Amalekites and Amulonites in Jerusalem, but these apostate Nephites were extremely hard-hearted and refused to listen. Aaron and his brethren left and began preaching in the land of Middoni, where they were thrown into prison and mistreated.

Alma 21:14-15 When Aaron and his brethren were released from prison and fed and clothed, they went forth on their mission again despite tribulation.

Alma 21:16 Aaron and his brethren knew where they should go to teach the gospel because they were led by the Spirit.

Alma 21:17 They were blessed with missionary success by heeding the promptings of the Spirit.

Alma 22:1 Aaron was led by the Spirit to the house of King Lamoni's father.

Alma 22:2-3 Ammon's example helped prepare Lamoni's father to be taught. Obviously, we need to be a good example. Think about how you have seen the examples of Church members influence others for good.

Compare Alma 18:24-39 with Alma 22:7-14 to see how Aaron's teaching of Lamoni's father was similar to Ammon's teaching of Lamoni.

Alma 22:16 When Lamoni's father asked what he should do to obtain a hope of redemption, Aaron replied with these simple steps:

- *"Bow down before God."*
- *"Repent of all thy sins."*
- *"Call on [God's] name in faith."*

Alma 22:15, 17-18 The king was willing to forsake his kingdom and give away his sins to know God.

Referring to Alma 22:15, 18, **President Ezra Taft Benson** said: *"Each of us must surrender our sins if we are to really know Christ. For we do not know Him until we become like Him. There are some, like this king, who must pray until they, too, have 'a wicked spirit rooted' from them so they can find the same joy"* (Ensign, Nov. 1983, 43).

Alma 22:18-26 Like his son Lamoni, the king was physically overcome by the Spirit. After the king had risen, he declared his testimony, and many were converted through this experience.

Alma 22:26; Alma 23:1-6 Following his conversion, the king helped the missionaries bring thousands to a knowledge of the Lord by proclaiming that they could preach and teach throughout the land and that there should be no opposition from his people toward them.

Consider experiences you may have had or known of where the conversion of one person had a positive effect on many others.

Conclusion

Our present approach to missionary work is similar to that of Ammon and Aaron: missionaries are encouraged to build relationships of trust, follow the Spirit, and teach the plan of redemption from the scriptures.

"Converted unto the Lord"

Lesson 26 - Alma 23-29

Introduction

What characteristics or behaviors distinguish people who are truly converted to Christ and his gospel? This lesson discusses a group of people who were so deeply converted to the Lord that the scriptures record that they *"never did fall away"* (Alma 23:6).

The Anti-Nephi-Lehies were converted to the Lord.

As we noted in our study of Alma 22, Lamoni's father, who was king of all the Lamanites, was converted through the teachings of Aaron.

Alma 23:1-2 The king of the Lamanites sent out a proclamation supporting the missionary work of Ammon and his brethren after he became converted.

Alma 23:3 He did this so that the word of God might go forth and that his people might be converted and change their lives for the better.

Alma 23:4-7 Results from this proclamation and the subsequent actions of Aaron and his brethren included the establishment and spread of the Church, calling and ordinations of priesthood, false Lamanite traditions were overcome and Nephite traditions were accepted, thousands came to know the Lord, records and prophecies were taught, miracles followed, conversions were sincere and lasting, people became righteous, weapons were laid aside, and the converts were at peace with their brethren and their God.

Actions of the converted Lamanites that confirm that their conversion was true and sincere include:

a. Alma 23:6 They *"were converted unto the Lord"*. It is essential that Jesus Christ be at the center of our conversion because joining the Church for other reasons--the personalities of missionaries, the influence of friends, or the appeal of social programs--will fail to bring about true conversion if not accompanied by and based in the believer's sincere commitment to follow Christ and live according to His commandments.

b. Alma 23:16 They *"were desirous...that they might be distinguished from their brethren"*.

Alma 23:16-18; Alma 27:27-30 The converted Lamanites chose to distinguish themselves from their brethren who remained wicked by changing their name from Lamanites to "Anti-Nephi-Lehies" and becoming very industrious. Ponder how you are distinguished from the world because of your conversion and why it is important to distinguish yourself in such ways.

c. Alma 24:6-10, 23 They expressed gratitude to God even in times of trial and affliction.

Alma 24:1-2, 20-22; Alma 27:1-3 Afflictions the Anti-Nephi-Lehies faced as a result of their conversion included the hatred and armed opposition of their unconverted Lamanite brethren, and death when they failed to fight in the subsequent battle.

Alma 24:7-10 Despite these afflictions, they were grateful for the missionaries who had taught them the truth, the companionship of the Spirit that softened their hearts, the opportunity to repent and the forgiveness they had received.

d. "They took their swords...and they did bury them up deep in the earth" (Alma 24:15-17).

Alma 23:7; Alma 24:11-13, 18-19 The Anti-Nephi-Lehies buried their swords and other weapons as a sign of their true conversion, fearing that they might not be forgiven again if they ever shed the blood of their brethren again, as a testimony to God and men that they would rather die than harm their brethren, and as a sign that they were committed to peace.

It was significant that they buried their weapons rather than simply promising not to use them.

Consider how we sometimes *"rebel against God"* and what we can do to bury our *"weapons of rebellion"*.

e. They showed "great love" for their brethren (Alma 26:31).

Alma 24:18; Alma 26:32-34 The Anti-Nephi-Lehies' decision to bury their weapons showed their love for their fellowmen as well as for God.

Think about the ways in which conversion increases a person's love for others.

Alma 24:20-27 When they saw that the Anti-Nephi-Lehies would not take up arms against them, the unconverted Lamanites stopped the slaughter, felt their hearts touched, repented and were converted.

Alma 24:27; note Mormon's observation beginning with the phrase "thus we see." According to Mormon, we learn from this account that the Lord works in many ways to bring about the salvation of his people.

The Anti-Nephi-Lehies sought safety among the Nephites.

Alma 27:1-5 Ammon and his brethren urged the Anti-Nephi-Lehies to go to the land of Zarahemla, where the Nephites lived, so that they would not be destroyed by their enemies.

Alma 27:6 The king was reluctant to take his people to Zarahemla because of his fear that the Nephites would slay them due to their past history of murders and sins.

Alma 27:7-14 The Lord's answer to Ammon's prayer persuaded the king to go to Zarahemla.

Ponder how your faith in the Lord helps you when you face frightening situations.

Alma 27:20-26 When Ammon asked the Nephites to admit the Anti-Nephi-Lehies into their land, Alma asked for the voice of the people. The people decided to welcome their brethren, give them an inheritance in the land of Jershon, and vowed to protect them with their armies if the new settlers would pay the expense of the army.

The Nephites helped the Anti-Nephi-Lehies keep their covenant with the Lord by providing defense forces. We can help others stay converted to the Lord by setting a good example and serving them in the unique ways that may assist them in keeping their covenants.

From the time the Anti-Nephi-Lehies settled in Jershon, they were known as *the people of Ammon* (Alma 27:26).

Throughout the rest of the Book of Mormon, they are referred to as either *the people of Ammon* or *the Ammonites*.

Alma 28:1-3 After the people of Ammon were settled in the land of Jershon, the Lamanites came in war against the Nephites and slew thousands of the Nephites in the worst battle ever fought until that time.

Alma 28:4-6 After this great battle, many people mourned for those killed in battle.

Alma 28:11-12 Some mourners feared while others rejoiced because those who sorrowed knew the promises of the Lord and had reason to fear for the eternal state of their sinful dead.

Alma 28:13-14 From these responses we can appreciate what a difference there is in knowing that you live according to the commandments and therefore have no need to fear the judgment of God.

Ammon and Alma rejoiced in the accomplishment of the Lord's work.

Alma 26 records Ammon's feelings about the success he and his brothers experienced in bringing the gospel to the Lamanites. Alma 29 records Alma's feelings about the success of Ammon and his brothers and expresses Alma's desire that all people might have the opportunity to hear and accept the gospel.

Alma 26:1-9 The "*great blessings*" the Lord gave Ammon and his brethren included being instruments in the Lord's hands, seeing thousands rejoicing because of being brought to the Lord, and knowing that their brethren would be saved in the last day.

Alma 26:22 teaches us that we can become effective "*instruments in the hands of God to bring about [his] great work*" if we repent, have faith in Christ, pray continually, and bring forth good works.

Alma 26:10-16, 35-37 When Aaron rebuked Ammon for boasting, Ammon responded that he did not boast of his own strength or wisdom, but he was boasting of his God.

Consider how we can "*boast of [our] God*" and "*glory in the Lord*" and count the ways the Lord has blessed you with strength beyond your own to help accomplish His work.

Alma 26:23-25 When Aaron and his brothers first announced their mission to the Lamanites, the people of Zarahemla responded by laughing them to scorn and talking of destroying the Lamanites rather than teaching them.

We learn from this situation that prejudging people's responses to the gospel instead of allowing them to accept or reject it on their own is not the Lord's way. To overcome this tendency to prejudge others, we need to repent and seek humility.

Alma 26:27-30 Here, we learn from Ammon and his brethren that we should respond to afflictions with patience, faith, long-suffering, diligence and hard work, reliance on the mercy of God, and steadfastly keeping our eyes on the goal of saving others by teaching the word of the Lord.

Ponder how patience and trust in the Lord have helped you experience a good outcome from a difficult situation.

Alma 29:1 Alma wished to be an angel to cry repentance unto every people.

Alma 29:2; see also Alma 28:14 Alma said that the result, if "*every soul*" repented and came unto God would be relief from sorrow and rejoicing in God. Ponder experiences in your past that have taught you that living the gospel brings joy into your life.

Alma 29:3, 6-7 Alma felt that he sinned in his desire to be an angel because he should have been content to do the part that the Lord had assigned him to. Consider silently how you can be content with what the Lord has given you while still striving to grow and improve yourself.

Alma said that God "*granteth unto men according to their desire, whether it be unto death or unto life*" (Alma 29:4). To see what this means review **2 Nephi 2:27**.

Alma 29:10-13 Alma rejoiced in what the Lord had done for him and his fathers. Take the opportunity to remember what the Lord has done for you and your family that causes you to rejoice.

Conclusion

Return to section one of this lesson and review the ways the Anti-Nephi-Lehies showed that they were truly converted.

"All Things Denote There Is a God"

Lesson 27 - Alma 30-31

Introduction

Think of a place that exists but that you have never visited. Why do you believe that this place exists? This lesson discusses a man who claimed that we cannot know of things we have not seen. Korihor argued that a person who had not seen God could not know of His existence. But just as we have others' accounts to help us know of places we have not seen, we have the testimony of prophets, the scriptures, and the gift of the Holy Ghost to help us know that God does exist and that His gospel is true. The teachings of Korihor are common in the world today. Understanding how the people responded to his falsehoods can help us when we are faced with similar false philosophies and ideas.

Korihor led away the hearts of many in Zarahemla.

After establishing the people of Ammon in the land of Jershon and driving the warring Lamanites out of the land, the Nephites lived in peace during the 16th year of the reign of the judges and most of the 17th year.

Alma 30:6, 12 Near the end of the 17th year, an anti-Christ name Korihor came to the land of Zarahemla and disrupted the peace of the people.

What is an anti-Christ? In the Bible Dictionary, under "*Antichrist*," 609, we find that an anti-Christ is "*anyone or anything that counterfeits the true gospel or plan of salvation and that openly or secretly is set up in opposition to Christ.*"

Alma 30:12-18 Some of the false teachings Korihor spread among the people of Zarahemla included:

- There will be "*no Christ. ...*" *Ye cannot know of things which ye do not see; therefore ye cannot know that there shall be a Christ*" (Alma 30:12-15).
- "*No man can know of anything which is to come*" (Alma 30:13). It was contradictory for Korihor to say that no one could know of things to come but also to declare that there would be no Christ.
- Belief in the Atonement "*is the effect of a frenzied mind*" (Alma 30:16).
- "*Every man prosper[s] according to his genius, and ...every man conquer[s] according to his strength*" (Alma 30:17).
- "*Whatsoever a man [does is] no crime*" (Alma 30:17).
- "*When a man [is] dead, that [is] the end thereof*" (Alma 30:18).

Alma 30:18 Korihor's teachings encouraged the people who listened to him to sin and commit whoredoms, believing that there was no life after mortality ended and therefore, no punishment for sin.

These teachings lead people to sin because our daily choices are heavily influenced by our knowledge of Jesus Christ, the Atonement, and life after death and the consequences that accompany our choices.

Korihor was taken before Alma, who testified of Christ's coming.

After spreading his false teachings in Zarahemla, Korihor attempted to preach the same things among the people in Jershon and Gideon. Unlike the people in Zarahemla, however, these people provided good examples of how we should respond when we are confronted by people like Korihor.

Dealing with Modern-Day Korihors...

Alma 30:19-21 The people of Ammon refused to listen and physically expelled him from their land when Korihor tried to spread his false teachings among them. Their actions demonstrated that they were "*more wise*" than the Nephites in Zarahemla because the people of Zarahemla listened to Korihor's false teachings; the people of Ammon and the people in Gideon would not. Consider how we can be wise and use discernment in similar situations.

Alma 30:23-24, 27-28, 31. False accusations Korihor made against the Church leaders included: teaching the people foolish traditions, binding them with foolish ordinances and performances, usurping power and authority, keeping the people ignorant, humiliating them, supporting false prophecies, glutting themselves off the labor of the people, and teaching of an unknown God who never has been or will be seen. Ponder what Korihor's reason for these accusations was and further, consider how obeying our Church leaders actually helps make us free rather than bring us into bondage, as Korihor claimed.

Alma 30:32-35 Alma responded to Korihor's accusations against Church leaders, stating plainly that they served without any monetary compensation for Church service and furthermore, their teachings should be judged on the effect on the people because those teachings brought joy to the people. Alma's response was truth. Knowing the truth helps us when we are confronted with false teachings.

Alma 30:39 Alma responded to Korihor's claim that there is no God by bearing personal testimony.

Alma 30:42 Alma was able to discern that Korihor actually believed in God but was possessed by a lying spirit.

Moroni 10:5 teaches us how to discern the truth--by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Alma 30:44 When Korihor asked for a sign of God's existence, the signs Alma put forth as evidence that God lives included citing the testimony of "*all these thy brethren,...the prophets, the scriptures, and ...all things.*". To confront falsehoods, we should remember to teach the truth from the prophets and the scriptures.

Alma 30:45 Even after Alma's testimony, Korihor continued to demand to be shown a sign.

Alma 30:49-50 Korihor received his sign when Alma pronounced that he would be struck dumb and have no utterance--and it was so.

Alma 30:47 This sign was given because it would be preferable to have Korihor lose his soul that to let him continue to use his words to destroy others.

Alma 30:53 After Korihor acknowledged that he had been deceived, he said the reason he had followed the devil was because his teachings were pleasing to the carnal mind.

Alma 30:54-56, 58-59 Korihor was finally trampled to death by the Zoramites while begging for food. Think about why Mormon chose to include the account of Korihor in his abridgment of the plates and what you should learn from it.

Alma 30:60 This account teaches us that the devil will not support his children in the last day and that the fate of those who pervert the ways of the Lord is everlasting punishment.

Alma led a mission to reclaim the apostate Zoramites.

Alma 31:1-6 Alma decided to go on a mission to reclaim the Zoramites because he was grieved by their idol worship. In addition, the Nephites were concerned that the Zoramites would join with the Lamanites.

Alma 31:5 Alma believed that he and his brethren should preach the word of God because it inspires people to choose the right and be just and it was more powerful in changing lives than anything else--including the sword! Ponder how you have seen the word of God bring about change in people's lives.

Alma 31:8-9 The Zoramites had been members of the Church, but they had *"fallen into great errors"* and refused to keep the Law of Moses as they had been commanded to do.

Alma 31:9-11 They fell into apostasy because they were disobedient, unfaithful, and refused to humble themselves in prayer and supplication to God. This should cause us to consider what we can do to guard against individual apostasy.

Alma 31:12-23 Alma and his brethren learned about the Zoramites' manner of worship as they entered their synagogue and saw the prayers on the special tower. In addition to having a perverse form of worship, the Zoramites *"returned to their homes, never speaking of their God again until they had assembled themselves together again."*

Alma 31:19, 24 When they witnessed this false worship, Alma and his brethren were both greatly astonished and grieved. Chapter 31 contains two prayers; one by the Zoramites and one by Alma. Think about the differences between the two prayers as you read them. Some of the main points of each prayer are listed:

Zoramites' Prayer: God was, is, and always will be a spirit (Alma 31:15).

"We do not believe in the tradition of our brethren" (Alma 31:16).

"There shall be no Christ" (Alma 31:16).

"We shall be saved,...but everyone else will be ...cast ...to hell" (Alma 31:17).

Others are bound by *"foolish traditions"* (Alma 31:17).

"We are a chosen and a holy people" (Alma 31:18).

Alma's Prayer: *"Give me strength, that I may bear with mine infirmities"* (Alma 31:30).

"Wilt thou comfort my soul in Christ" (Alma 31:31).

"Give unto me success, and also my fellow laborers" (Alma 31:32).

"Wilt thou comfort [my fellow laborers'] souls in Christ" (Alma 31:32).

"Help us bring the Zoramites 'unto thee'" (Alma 31:34-35).

"[The Zoramites'] souls are precious" (Alma 31:35).

"Give unto us ...power and wisdom" (Alma 31:35).

As we examine these prayers carefully, we find that Alma's prayer differs from the Zoramites' prayer as we contrast the pride, selfishness, and unbelief of the Zoramites with Alma's humility, love for others, and faith.

Alma 31:24-29 The attitudes of the Zoramites were their greatest barriers to having faith in Christ as they were overcome with pride, vanity, and overwhelming worldliness.

Alma 15:17; Alma 34:38; D&C 59:21 Pride affects our worship as it drives away the Spirit, overcomes humility with vanity, and prevents us from being grateful to God for our blessings. Pride is an obstacle to salvation because it prevents us from humbling ourselves in obedience and it prevents us from hearing the still small voice of the Spirit as it seeks to guide us.

Alma 31:24, 34 Alma's *"heart was grieved"* because of the Zoramites' wickedness. He prayed earnestly that he and his brethren might bring them *"again unto...Christ"*.

3 Nephi 18:32 reminds us of the responsibility we have today to help those who have strayed from the teachings of Jesus Christ. We must continue to minister to them.

Alma 31:38 Alma and his brethren were blessed with temporal blessings, spiritual and temporal strength, and the companionship of the Spirit, so that they found joy in serving Christ. We know that the Lord will help us in similar ways if we pray in faith for that which is right.

Conclusion

The philosophies of Korihor and the Zoramites are prevalent today. From the classroom to the workplace, in the media, in books, and sometimes in the home, there are those who preach the false doctrines of Korihor to *"interrupt [our] rejoicings"* (Alma 30:22). Also, like the Zoramites, many today set their hearts on *"the vain things of the world"* (Alma 31:27). Fortify yourself through diligent study of the Book of Mormon, daily prayer, and continued obedience to the commandments of God.

"The Word Is in Christ unto Salvation"

Lesson 28 - Alma 32-35

Introduction

Imagine that someone has given you a seed and told you that it will grow into a tree that will bear delicious fruit. What would you do to find out if the seed will really produce delicious fruit? This lesson begins with a discussion of Alma 32, the chapter that contains Alma's discourse in which the word of God is compared to a seed. Alma exhorts a group of humble Zoramites to "*give place, that [this] seed may be planted*" in their hearts (Alma 32:28). He promises that if they nourish this seed, it will grow until it becomes the tree of life, whose fruit is "*most precious*" and "*sweet above all that is sweet*" (Alma 32:40-42).

Alma taught the humble Zoramites to exercise faith and give place in their hearts for the word of God.

Alma, Amulek, and their brethren had entered one of the Zoramites' synagogues. There they heard the Zoramites declare that "*there [would] be no Christ*" (Alma 31:16-17). After hearing this false teaching, Alma, Amulek, and their brethren separated to preach the word of God and testify of Christ (Alma 31:36-37; Alma 32:1).

As Alma was preaching, a great multitude of Zoramites approached him.

Alma 32:6-8 Alma had great joy when these Zoramites came to him because he saw that they were humbled by their afflictions and were prepared to be taught the gospel.

Alma 32:2-5 To prepare these people to hear the word of God, they had been cast out of the synagogues and treated poorly by society because of their poverty.

Alma 32:12-13 It was a blessing to these Zoramites that they had been compelled to be humble because the humility led to repentance, repentance to mercy, and mercy to enduring to the end, which leads to salvation.

Alma 32:14-16 It is better to humble ourselves because we desire to believe and to be obedient than to be compelled to be humble. The word of God can lead us to humble ourselves if we seek the Spirit and acknowledge our dependence on God.

Alma 32:17-18, 21 Alma taught the Zoramites that to have faith is not to have a perfect knowledge, but to have hope of things which are not seen, but are true.

Alma 32:22 Alma said that the first thing we need to do to develop faith in God is to believe on his word.

Alma 17:2; Alma 32:23; D&C 1:38; D&C 18:33-36 We may receive God's word from the scriptures, angels, other mortals, the prophets and Church leaders, and from the Spirit.

Alma 32:26-27 Alma encouraged his listeners to awake and arouse their faculties to an experiment so they could know that his words were true. Ponder what it means to "*awake and arouse [your] faculties*".

John 7:17 We "*experiment*" on the word of God by doing what the word tells us to do--by living the word.

Alma taught the people to nourish the word of God in their hearts

Comparing the word of God to a seed, Alma counseled the Zoramites to "*give place, that a seed may be planted*" in their hearts (Alma 32:28). Think about what you must do to "*give place*" in your heart for the word of God. What must be removed to have room for the word of God?

Alma 32:28-31, 33-35 According to Alma, people begin to experience a good feeling when the word of God has been planted in their hearts and it starts to swell within them. Think about what it means to feel the word "*swell within [your] breast*".

Alma 37:8-9 The scriptures enlarge our souls, enlighten our understanding, and expand our minds by bringing us to a knowledge of the Savior and his plan of salvation, including the need for repentance.

Alma 32:37 As the word of God begins to grow in our hearts, we must nourish it with great care.

Alma 32:41 We "*nourish [the word] with great care*" by developing and maintaining faith, diligence, patience, and hope for the future.

Alma 32:37 For the word to "*get root*" in our hearts and grow means that we let it become a part of us and that it begins to bear fruit by causing us to do good works.

Alma 32:38-40 If we neglect the word and do not nourish it after it has begun to grow in our hearts, it will wither and die because our hearts were barren and hardened. Ponder what you might do that would cause your ground, or your heart, to be barren.

Alma 32:37 Toward the end of his discourse, Alma compared the word to a tree that has grown from a seed. The tree he referred to in Alma 32:40-42 is the tree of life. Recall the vision of the tree of life seen by Lehi and Nephi. In that vision, the tree of life is a symbol of Jesus Christ. The word of God, represented by the rod of iron in that vision and by the seed in Alma's discourse, leads to the Savior, represented by the tree of life. Referring to Alma 32, **Elder Jeffrey R. Holland** taught, "*In this brilliant discourse, Alma moves the reader from a general commentary on faith in the seedlike word of God to a focused discourse on faith in Christ as the Word of God*" (Christ and the New Covenant [1997], 169).

Alma 32:41; Alma 33:23; 1 Nephi 15:36; D&C 14:7 The fruit of the tree of life is Everlasting life.

Alma cited prophets' testimonies of Jesus Christ and exhorted the people to plant the word of God in their hearts.

Alma 33:1 After hearing Alma's discourse, the people desired to know *"in what manner they should begin to exercise their faith"*. Alma responded by citing teachings of the prophets Zenos, Zenock, and Moses concerning Jesus Christ.

Alma 33:3-11 Alma related the teaching of Zenos about prayer to the Zoramites.

Alma 33:11-14 Alma's purpose in citing Zenos's teaching about prayer was to teach the Zoramites to exercise faith in the Son of God. Note that it is *"because of [His] Son"* that Heavenly Father hears our prayers and turns His judgments away from us.

Alma 33:15 Alma told the Zoramites that the prophet Zenock had also testified of Christ.

Alma 33:16 Zenock taught that God was angry because the people refused to understand that His mercy was bestowed on them through the Savior.

Alma 31:12, 16-17 This was an important teaching to relate to the Zoramites because they professed not to believe in Christ--that there would not be a Savior.

Alma spoke of a brass serpent that Moses made and raised in the wilderness (Alma 33:19; see also Numbers 21:9).

Alma 33:19; see also John 3:14-16; Helaman 8:13-15 The serpent was a type, or symbol, of Jesus Christ because he was the instrument of their salvation.

Alma 33:20-23; see also Alma 37:46 Alma's account of the brass serpent teaches that exercising faith in Jesus Christ is simple, but one must be humble and believing.

Amulek testified of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. He commanded the people to pray and exercise faith unto repentance.

After Alma had spoken, Amulek stood and began to teach the people.

Alma 34:2-5 Alma and Amulek perceived that the people still questioned whether they should believe in Christ.

Alma 34:6-8 Amulek answered the question with a personal witness of both Christ and the prophets who had foretold his coming. Think seriously about how you can receive a strong testimony of Christ and how the scriptures, prophets, and other witnesses of Christ have strengthened your testimony of Him.

Alma 34:8-9; see also Alma 22:14 Without the Atonement of Jesus Christ, *"all mankind...perish"* because man cannot overcome his fallen state without an infinite redemption.

Alma 34:10-12 Jesus was the only one who could atone for the sins of the world and save us from the effects of the Fall because no other sacrifice could be infinite and eternal.

Alma 34:14-16 Amulek's teaching that the Atonement is an *"infinite and eternal sacrifice"* is the subject of the following quote:

Elder Bruce R. McConkie taught: *"Man cannot resurrect himself; man cannot save himself; human power cannot save another; human power cannot atone for the sins of another. The work of redemption must be infinite and eternal; it must be done by an infinite being; God himself must atone for the sins of the world"* (A New Witness for the Articles of Faith [1985], 111-12).

Alma 34:17-29 Consider how Amulek's counsel helped the Zoramites, who had believed that they could worship only in synagogues and only once a week.

Alma 34:30-31; see also Alma 34:15-17 After they had received so many witnesses of the Savior, Amulek commanded the people to come forth and bring fruits of repentance. His counsel stresses the phrase *"faith unto repentance"*, repeating it four times. Consider why faith in Christ is an essential part of repentance.

Alma 34:31-36 Amulek warned against procrastinating, or delaying, the day of our repentance. Did you ever think about why people sometimes procrastinate repentance? The counsel in Alma 34:32 should remind us that we only have today for repentance. That should affect the way we live each day.

Conclusion

The purpose of planting a fruit tree is to be able to partake of its fruit. When we *"give place, that [the word] may be planted"* in our hearts, we can *"[look] forward to the fruit thereof"* (Alma 32:28, 41). Read Alma's description of this fruit in Alma 32:41-42. The fruit is eternal life and that it is only through the Atonement of Jesus Christ that we can partake of this fruit (Alma 34:14-16).

Additional Teaching**Strengthening new members of the Church**

Alma 35:1-6 The *"more popular part of the Zoramites"* cast out the people who believed in the words of Alma and his brethren.

Alma 35:7-9 The people of Ammon received the Zoramites who had been cast out, and then nourished, clothed, and provided land for them. Ponder what this example teaches about strengthening new converts.

"Give Ear to My Words"

Lesson 29 - Alma 36-39

Introduction

What is the best advice or counsel your parents ever gave you? Why was this advice or counsel so valuable? The chapters discussed in this lesson consist of Alma's words of counsel to his sons Helaman, Shiblon, and Corianton. These words of counsel are applicable to us as well.

Alma shared his testimony and gave the records to his son Helaman.

Alma 36 contains Alma's testimony as expressed to his son Helaman (see especially verses Alma 36:3-5 and Alma 36:26-28). Think about why it is important for children to hear their parents bear their testimonies and further, consider the ways your parents' testimonies influenced your life.

Alma 36:6-24; Alma 38:7-9 As part of his testimony to each of them, Alma told Helaman and Shiblon of his conversion. Consider why Alma shared his conversion story with his sons and apply that to yourself by considering the benefit you received from hearing about how other people have become converted.

Alma repeatedly encouraged Helaman to follow his example.

"Ye should do as I have done" (Alma 36:2).

"I beseech of thee that thou wilt hear my words and learn of me" (Alma 36:3).

"Ye also ought to retain in remembrance, as I have done" (Alma 36:29).

"Ye ought to know as I do know" (Alma 36:30).

Alma 37:1-2, 6-12 Alma emphasized to Helaman the importance of keeping the records by commanding him to keep them properly and bearing testimony of the value of sacred recordkeeping.

Alma 37:6-7 Keeping the records was a *"small and simple thing"* that would bring about *"great things"* through the power of God.

Alma 37:8-10 Here we are reminded of the *"great things"* the scriptures will do for us if we study them diligently--great things like bringing about our salvation, bringing us to a knowledge of God, and helping multitudes of others to accept the Savior.

Alma 37:32-34 Alma told Helaman to teach the people to abhor sin, to repent, to have faith in Christ, to practice humility and lowliness of heart, to be obedient to the commandments and withstand temptation, and to diligently do good works in meekness.

Alma 37:35 Alma counseled his son to *"learn wisdom in thy youth"*. Think about how we try to help young members accomplish this through Church programs.

Alma 37:36-37 Alma counseled his son to make the Lord and His influence a major part of his life through frequent prayer and constant devotion to the Lord. Consider how your life has been affected as you have endeavored to follow this counsel.

Alma 37:38-45 Alma compared the word of God and the Liahona to illustrate his point that being obedient and seeking the Lord's guidance is essential to getting where you should be in your life's journey.

Alma 37:46; see also Numbers 21:5-9; 1 Nephi 17:41 Alma counseled Helaman, *"Do not let us be slothful because of the easiness of the way"*. Ponder what Alma meant in implying that the way to eternal life is easy. Consider why the easiness of the way is a stumbling block to some people. It is true that we need to have a simple, saving faith in Christ, but how does one maintain a proper focus on that simple faith? Consider how we *"look to God and live"* (Alma 37:47).

Alma praised and encouraged his son Shiblon.

Alma 38:6-9 Alma also bore his testimony to his son Shiblon and told Shiblon of his conversion.

Alma 38:2-4 Qualities of steadiness, faithfulness, diligence, patience, and long-suffering in Shiblon brought great joy to his father. Alma teaches us that it is important for parents to recognize and praise their children for their good qualities and righteous living.

Alma 38:5 Alma encouraged Shiblon to continue to put his trust in God so that he could be helped in times of trial or affliction.

Alma 38:10-15 Even though Shiblon was faithful, Alma concluded his words to his son with an admonition to continue teaching the gospel, avoid pride and boastfulness, exercise self-control, be loving to others, work hard, retain humility, and be sober. Alma thought it was important for even the righteous to receive counsel and warning.

Alma 38:10, 12 Alma counseled Shiblon to continue teaching the word of God, being *"diligent and temperate, ...using ...boldness, but not overbearance"*. We need to follow this counsel as we share our beliefs with others.

Alma 38:11 Alma warned Shiblon not to boast of his own wisdom or strength because he knew that pride in our own wisdom or strength often leads to greater sins.

Alma 38:13-14 Humility is the antidote that allows us to overcome pride. We should follow the counsel to *"acknowledge [our] unworthiness before God at all times."*

Alma 38:12 Alma counseled Shiblon to *"bridle all [his] passions"*. To bridle our passions means that we must control and direct ourselves in the proper manner. Alma also teaches that we must bridle our passions in order to *"be filled with love"*.

Alma admonished his son Corianton to repent.

Alma's counsel to his son Corianton was somewhat different from his counsel to his other sons. Helaman and Shiblon had been living righteously, but Corianton had committed serious sins.

Alma 39:2-3 Sins Corianton had committed included refusing counsel, giving into pride, and fornication. Alma reminded his erring son that sexual immorality is a grievous sin.

Elder Boyd K. Packer taught: *"There was provided in our bodies...and this is sacred...a power of creation, a light, so to speak, that has the power to kindle other lights. This gift was to be used only within the sacred bonds of marriage. Through the exercise of this power of creation, a mortal body may be conceived, a spirit enter into it, and a new soul born into this life. This power is good. It can create and sustain family life, and it is in family life that we find the fountains of happiness. The power of creation...or may we say procreation...is not just an incidental part of the plan: it is essential to it. Without it the plan could not proceed. The misuse of it may disrupt the plan. Much of the happiness that may come to you in this life will depend on how you use this sacred power of creation. If [Satan] can entice you to use this power prematurely, to use it too soon, or to misuse it in any way, you may well lose your opportunities for eternal progression. Protect and guard your gift. Your actual happiness is at stake. Eternal family life ...can be achieved because our Heavenly Father has bestowed this choicest gift of all upon you...this power of creation. It is the very key to happiness"* (Ensign, July 1972, 111-13).

Alma 39:7-8, 12-13 Alma felt it necessary to discuss Corianton's sin with him to encourage personal repentance and to have him encourage others to join in repentance. Parents can learn from Alma about how to counsel children who have made mistakes or committed sin:

Alma reminded Corianton of what led to Corianton's sin (**Alma 39:2-4**).

He explained the consequences of Corianton's sin (**Alma 39:7-9, 11**).

He taught Corianton how to repent and avoid the sin in the future (**Alma 39:9-14**).

He taught Corianton about God's love and forgiveness (**Alma 39:15-19**).

Alma 39:2-3 Refusal to accept counsel, personal pride and stubbornness were actions or attitudes in Corianton that led to his sin.

Alma 39:4, 13; D&C 121:45 Here, we find counsel on what we can do to strengthen ourselves against Satan's enticements to be immoral.

Alma 39:11, 13 records the sad fact that Corianton's sinfulness influenced others. We find that Corianton's actions had more influence on the Zoramites than Alma's words did. Thus we see that it is important for Church members to set good examples.

Alma 39:9-14 Alma gave counsel to Corianton on how to repent of his sin and avoid such sins in the future:

- *"Go no more after the lusts of your eyes"* (**Alma 39:9**). The things we choose to look at or pay attention to influence our determination to stay morally clean.

- *"Take it upon you to counsel with your elder brothers"* (**Alma 39:10**). Counseling with righteous family members or friends helps strengthen our resistance to temptation.

- *"Suffer not yourself to be led away by any vain or foolish thing"* (**Alma 39:11**). Consider some vain or foolish things that Satan uses to try to lead us away.

- *"Turn to the Lord with all your mind, might, and strength"* (**Alma 39:13**). Ponder how you can turn to the Lord for help when you face temptation.

- *"Acknowledge your faults and that wrong which ye have done"* (**Alma 39:13**). Acknowledging that you have done wrong is an essential part of repentance. Without accepting personal responsibility, you cannot repent.

- *"Seek not after riches nor the vain things of this world"* (**Alma 39:14**). Seeking riches or *"the vain things of this world"* tempts us to sin because those things are not typically achieved while focusing on serving others.

Alma 39:15-19 records what Alma taught Corianton about Christ--that He would bring salvation and teach the way of salvation and redemption; that all souls are precious in His sight; and that we are called to teach of His coming.

Conclusion

Alma taught Corianton how to repent and return to faithfulness, and he gave counsel to Helaman and Shiblon on how to remain faithful. We are encouraged to follow Alma's example in teaching and counseling our children.

Additional Teachings include **Alma 35:16** Children need to be counseled individually. Children have different personalities, challenges, and needs. Alma spoke to each son *"separately."* He did not speak to his sons together or give each of them the same message; he spoke to each son alone and told him what he specifically needed to hear.

Mosiah 4:14-15; D&C 68:25-28 Parents have responsibilities to their children. Righteous parents in the scriptures who had both righteous and unrighteous children include Adam and Eve (Abel and Cain); Isaac and Rebekah (Jacob and Esau); Lehi and Sariah (Nephi, Sam, Jacob, Joseph, Laman, and Lemuel); Alma the Younger (Helaman, Shiblon, and Corianton). Even righteous parents can face the challenges of dealing with unrighteous children. Parents are obligated to teach their children the gospel and encourage them to live by gospel principles, but they must also respect their children's agency. Parents cannot force children to live righteously.

"The Great Plan of Happiness"

Lesson 30 - Alma 40-42

Introduction

Often we draw diagrams to teach about the plan of salvation. However, if this is all we do to explain the plan, we fail to mention Jesus Christ, who plays the central role in the plan. We also fail to mention doctrines that are central to the plan, such as the Fall, the Atonement, and agency. **Elder Neal A. Maxwell** taught: *"The Lord has described his plan of redemption as the Plan of Happiness. ... Conversationally, we reference this great design almost too casually at times; we even sketch its rude outlines on chalkboards and paper as if it were the floor plan for an addition to one's house. However, when we really take time to ponder the Plan, it is breathtaking and overpowering!"* ("Thanks Be to God," Ensign, July 1982, 51). Today some of Alma's counsel to his son Corianton will be discussed. In teaching Corianton, Alma referred to Heavenly Father's plan as *"the plan of restoration"* (Alma 41:2), *"the great plan of salvation"* (Alma 42:5), *"the great plan of happiness"* (Alma 42:8); *"the plan of redemption"* (Alma 42:11), and *"the great plan of mercy"* (Alma 42:31). As Alma taught about the plan, he emphasized the centrality of the Fall, the Atonement of Jesus Christ, and individual agency.

Alma taught Corianton about death and resurrection.

Chapters Alma 40-42 of the book of Alma continue Alma's counsel to his wayward son, Corianton. Alma saw that Corianton's misconduct was caused in part by a lack of testimony and a misunderstanding of some basic gospel doctrines. Alma helped Corianton understand what happens to us after death.

Alma 40:1; see also Alma 41:1; Alma 42:1 Alma decided which subjects he should talk to Corianton about by "perceiving" his wayward son's concerns. We can easily see that he was inspired, relying on the Holy Ghost to help him know what Corianton was concerned about. Ponder how you can better perceive the needs of those you teach.

Alma 40:11-13 Alma relates what happens to our spirits between death and resurrection. They go to either paradise or spirit prison. The *"outer darkness"* in verse 13 refers to the place we usually call "spirit prison".

Alma 40:11-15, 21 contains Alma's description of paradise and spirit prison:

PARADISE	SPIRIT PRISON
State of happiness	State of misery
State of rest and peace	State of darkness, with weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth
No troubles or sorrow	Awful, fearful waiting for the wrath of God

In 1918 President Joseph F. Smith received a revelation, now designated as D&C Section 138, that helps us understand more about the state of our spirits between death and resurrection. In this revelation, President Smith saw the Savior's ministry in paradise and the teaching of the gospel to those in spirit prison.

D&C 138:29-34, 57-59 President Smith learned that the spirits in spirit prison will be taught the gospel and that they will have the opportunity to repent before the final judgment.

Alma 40:21 Alma said that at an appointed time, we will be resurrected, brought before God, and judged.

Alma 40:21, 23 To be resurrected means that the spirit and body are reunited, and the body is restored to its *"perfect frame."*

Alma 40:5; see also Alma 11:42-44 Alma answers the question, "Who will be resurrected?", assuring us that all will be resurrected.

Alma 40:2-5, 8, 19-21 In these verses, Alma mentioned several things that he did not know about death and resurrection. From the fact that Alma testified of the doctrine of resurrection even though he did not know all the details about it, we learn that it is not necessary to understand every detail of a doctrine or event before receiving a testimony of its truthfulness.

Alma taught that after resurrection, the righteous will be restored to happiness; the wicked to misery.

Alma referred to resurrection as a restoration because the spirit and body are reunited and the body is restored to its *"perfect frame"* (Alma 40:23; Alma 41:2).

Alma 41:3-6 Further restoration will take place when we are resurrected and *"judged according to [our] works"*. The righteous will be restored to happiness, and the wicked will be restored to misery.

What does it mean to be restored unto good or evil? **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** stated, *"The resurrection is a restoration, both a restoration of body and spirit and a restoration to the individual of the same mental and spiritual acquirements and attitudes he had in this life"* (Mormon Doctrine, 2nd ed. [1966], 641).

Alma 41:7-8 here, Alma teaches that in a sense we are *"[our] own judges"*. That's true in that we choose whether to do good or evil and thus choose what we will be restored to after death.

Alma 41:10 Alma explained that Corianton could not be restored from sin to happiness because *"wickedness never was happiness"*.

Alma 41:10-13; Helaman 13:38 These verses explain why wickedness cannot bring happiness.

President Ezra Taft Benson said: *"While [people] may take some temporary pleasure in sin, the end result is*

unhappiness. ... *Sin creates disharmony with God and is depressing to the spirit*" (Ensign, Nov. 1974, 65-66).

Alma 41:14-15 Alma said that Corianton needed to do good to have good restored to him.

Alma taught Corianton about justice and mercy.

Alma 42:1 Corianton, troubled by his father's teachings, did not understand why *"the sinner should be consigned to a state of misery"*.

Alma 42:15 In response to this concern, Alma taught about the justice of God. He also taught that Jesus Christ atoned for the sins of the world *"to bring about the plan of mercy, to appease the demands of justice"*.

Alma 42:6-7, 10, 18 These verses help us to understand Alma's teachings about justice. Gospel truths are listed below:

a. Because of the Fall of Adam and Eve, we are in a fallen state. We are mortal ...subject to death... and imperfect. In this fallen state, we cannot dwell in the presence of God, who is immortal and perfect. Justice demands that we be cut off from God temporally and spiritually.

b. When we sin, we separate ourselves further from God because *"no unclean thing can dwell with God"* (1 Nephi 10:21). Justice demands that we be punished for our sins.

Alma 42:14 What would happen to us if we were subjected only to justice?--we would be cut off from God forever.

Alma 42:15 An atonement was required to satisfy the demands of justice so we could return to dwell in Heavenly Father's presence.

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Council of the Twelve gave the following illustration to show how Christ's atonement makes it possible to be saved from sin if we do our part. *"Let me tell you a story—a parable. There once was a man who wanted something very much. It seemed more important than anything else in his life. In order for him to have his desire, he incurred a great debt. He had been warned about going into that much debt, and particularly about his creditor. But it seemed so important for him to do what he wanted to and to have what he wanted right now. He was sure he could pay for it later. So he signed a contract. He would pay it off some time along the way. He didn't worry too much about it, for the due date seemed such a long time away. He had what he wanted now, and that was what seemed important. The creditor was always somewhere in the back of his mind, and he made token payments now and again, thinking somehow that the day of reckoning really would never come. But as it always does, the day came, and the contract fell due. The debt had not been fully paid. His creditor appeared and demanded payment in full. Only then did he realize that his creditor not only had the power to repossess all that he owned, but the power to cast him into prison as well. 'I cannot pay you, for I have not the power to do so,' he confessed. 'Then,' said the creditor, 'we will exercise the contract, take your possessions and you shall go to prison. You agreed to that. It was your choice. You signed the contract, and now it must be enforced.' 'Can you not extend the time or forgive the debt?' the debtor begged. 'Arrange some way for me to keep what I have and not go to prison. Surely you believe in mercy? Will you not show mercy?' The creditor replied, 'Mercy is always so one-sided. It would serve only you. If I show mercy to you, it will leave me unpaid. It is justice I demand. Do you believe in justice?' 'I believed in justice when I signed the contract,' the debtor said. 'It was on my side then, for I thought it would protect me. I did not need mercy then, nor think I should need it ever. Justice, I thought, would serve both of us equally as well.' 'It is justice that demands that you pay the contract or suffer the penalty,' the creditor replied. 'That is the law. You have agreed to it and that is the way it must be. Mercy cannot rob justice.' There they were: One meting out justice, the other pleading for mercy. Neither could prevail except at the expense of the other. 'If you do not forgive the debt there will be no mercy,' the debtor pleaded. 'If I do, there will be no justice,' was the reply. Both laws, it seemed, could not be served. They are two eternal ideals that appear to contradict one another. Is there no way for justice to be fully served, and mercy also? There is a way! The law of justice can be fully satisfied and mercy can be fully extended—but it takes someone else. And so it happened this time. The debtor had a friend. He came to help. He knew the debtor well. He knew him to be shortsighted. He thought him foolish to have gotten himself into such a predicament. Nevertheless, he wanted to help because he loved him. He stepped between them, faced the creditor, and made this offer. 'I will pay the debt if you will free the debtor from his contract so that he may keep his possessions and not go to prison.' As the creditor was pondering the offer, the mediator added, 'You demanded justice. Though he cannot pay you, I will do so. You will have been justly dealt with and can ask no more. It would not be just.' And so the creditor agreed. The mediator turned then to the debtor. 'If I pay your debt, will you accept me as your creditor?' 'Oh yes, yes,' cried the debtor. 'You saved me from prison and show mercy to me.' 'Then,' said the benefactor, 'you will pay the debt to me and I will set the terms. It will not be easy, but it will be possible. I will provide a way. You need not go to prison.' And so it was that the creditor was paid in full. He had been justly dealt with. No contract had been broken. The debtor, in turn, had been extended mercy. Both laws stood fulfilled. Because there was a mediator, justice had claimed its full share, and mercy was satisfied'" (Ensign, May 1977, pp. 54-55).*

Mosiah 15:7-9 The Atonement of Jesus Christ *"appease[d] the demands of justice"* because Christ subjected Himself to death and took upon Himself the sins of all mankind.

Alma 42:23 Alma testified that *"mercy cometh because of the atonement"*.

Alma 42:13, 23, 27, 29-30 To be able to receive the fulness of God's mercy, we must humble ourselves, repent, and become obedient.

After receiving his father's counsel, Corianton repented and returned to missionary service. (Alma 43:1; Alma 49:30)

"Firm in the Faith of Christ"

Lesson 31 - Alma 43-52

Introduction

Why do you think Mormon included so much information about war in the Book of Mormon? Well, it's quite possible that Mormon knew that the Book of Mormon would be read and studied in a time when war would be common throughout the world. These writings teach us how to remain Christlike during times of conflict. Also, Mormon recorded Nephite history preceding the Savior's appearance in great detail. We can read of the Nephites' experiences and be prepared for similar events occurring in our day prior to the Second Coming of Christ. This lesson will discuss what the battles between the Nephites and their enemies can teach us about how to handle earthly conflicts and how to defend ourselves and our families in the battle against Satan.

The Nephites fought to defend their families and their liberty.

Alma 43:3-4, 9-11, 45-47; Alma 48:14 The Nephites fought against the Lamanites to preserve and protect their wives and children, their rights, privileges, and liberty, their country, their freedom to worship God in spirit and truth, to defend the people of Ammon, and because they felt it was their duty to God to defend themselves.

Let's consider the circumstances under which the Lord approves of people going to war:

President Charles W. Penrose, who was a member of the First Presidency, said: *"It is not right for us to engage in the shedding of human blood, for vengeance or retaliation. But when the Lord commands or inspires his servants to counsel the sons and daughters of Israel to lend their aid in the work of righteous warfare, that is different. ...We are to arise in our might and in our strength and go forth to victory; not with a desire to shed blood, not with the desire to destroy our fellow creatures, but in self defense and because we do want to maintain and hand down to our posterity those sacred principles of liberty that have been revealed from on high"* (in Conference Report, Oct. 1917, 21).

Elder David O. McKay said: *"There are ...two conditions which may justify a truly Christian man to enter...mind you, I say enter, not begin...a war: (1) An attempt to dominate and to deprive another of his free agency, and, (2) Loyalty to his country. Possibly there is a third, [namely], Defense of a weak nation that is being unjustly crushed by a strong, ruthless one"* (in Conference Report, Apr. 1942, 72).

Alma 44:3-4 When Moroni confronted Zerahemnah, he attributed the Nephites' success in battle to the Lord's delivering the victory because of their religion and their faith in Christ; stating that God would support, keep and preserve them as long as they remained faithful to Him.

Alma 43:23, 49-50 The Nephites demonstrated their faith in Christ by asking His prophet, Alma, to inquire of the Lord concerning what their armies should do, and during battle, they cried in unison to the Lord for their liberty, freedom, and their lands.

The following principles governed the attitudes and actions of the righteous Nephites in times of war. Understanding and applying these principles today would help bring about greater peace in the world. We can also apply these principles in dealing with conflict in our personal lives.

- **Alma 43:8-10, 29-30, 45-47; Alma 48:14** Fight only for righteous reasons, such as self-defense.
- **Alma 43:53-54; Alma 44:1-2, 6** Have no hate toward your enemies; seek their best interests as well as your own.
- **Alma 44:3-4; Alma 48:15, 19-20** Live righteously and trust in God.
- **Alma 43:16-19; Alma 48:11-13, 17-19; see also D&C 98:10** Follow righteous and wise leaders.

Captain Moroni raised the "title of liberty" to inspire the people.

Alma 45:20-22 After the battles with the Lamanites, Helaman and his brethren went throughout the land, preaching and reestablishing the organization of the Church.

Alma 45:23-24; Alma 46:1-4 However, some of the Nephites grew proud and rebelled against the Church. The leader of this group of dissenters was Amalickiah, who wanted to be king over the Nephites.

Alma 46:1-7, 10 Through flattery, Amalickiah was able to persuade others to follow him by appealing to their unholy desire for power over the people.

Alma 46:8-9 From the account of Amalickiah and his followers, we learn that men can quickly forget God, rapidly embrace evil and be led away from the truth, and that one very wicked man can cause great wickedness among his brethren.

Alma 46:11-13, 18-20 Moroni created the title of liberty to inspire his brethren to defend their rights, their religion, their peace, and their families.

Alma 46:21-22 The people responded to the title of liberty by running forth to covenant that they would not forsake their God nor would they be ashamed to bear the name of Christ.

Think for a moment about how making and keeping covenants affects your life.

Amalickiah became king of the Lamanites and incited them to battle.

Alma 46:33; Alma 47:1, 4 When he failed to become king over the Nephites, Amalickiah fled into the wilderness, stirred up anger against the Nephites among the Lamanites, and conspired to dethrone the king of the Lamanites. Summarizing Alma 47:1-35 - Amalickiah became king over the Lamanites by treachery. He was given command of the king's loyalists and commanded to compel the remainder of the Lamanites to go to war against the Nephites. Amalickiah betrayed his soldiers and let them be captured by Lehonti's army of dissidents in return for being named second in command to Lehonti. He then had Lehonti poisoned so that he could assume full command of the entire Lamanite army. He led his army back to the king in the city of Nephi, where his henchmen murdered the king and blamed it on the king's servants. He persuaded the people and the queen to believe that he sorrowed for the slain king, so the people praised him and he took the queen to wife. He led the people in wickedness as they entirely forgot the Lord their God.

Some of the strongest opponents of the Nephites had once been Nephites themselves, including the Amalekites (Alma 24:29-30; Alma 43:6-7), the Zoramites (Alma 30:59; Alma 31:8-11; Alma 43:4), Amalickiah (Alma 46:1-7), Morianton (Alma 50:26, Alma 50:35), and Amalickiah's brother Ammoron (Alma 52:3).

Mosiah 2:36-37; Alma 47:35-36 These verses teach that those who have left the Church often fight very strongly against it because they lose the Spirit of the Lord.

The Prophet Joseph Smith made the following statement to a man who wondered why those who had left the Church often fought so fiercely against it: *"Before you joined this Church you stood on neutral ground. When the gospel was preached good and evil were set before you. You could choose either or neither. There were two opposite masters inviting you to serve them. When you joined this Church you enlisted to serve God. When you did that you left the neutral ground, and you never can get back on to it. Should you forsake the Master you enlisted to serve it will be by the instigation of the evil one, and you will follow his dictation and be his servant"* (in "Recollections of the Prophet Joseph Smith," Juvenile Instructor, 15 Aug. 1892, 492).

The supremely wicked Amalickiah and unfailingly righteous Moroni are contrasted in **Alma 48:1-17**. Just as one wicked person can cause much wickedness among the people (Alma 46:9), one righteous person, like Moroni, can inspire much righteousness.

War continued between the Nephites and the Lamanites.

These chapters continue the account of the ongoing battles between the Nephites and the Lamanites. This account can help us in our ongoing battle against Satan and his hosts, who are waging a war against truth and righteousness, fighting to destroy our opportunities for eternal life.

The accounts of war in the Book of Mormon can highlight principles that apply to our fight against the influence of Satan:

- **Alma 48:7-9; Alma 49:2-4, 13, 18** The Nephites built walls to protect their cities from the Lamanites' attacks. We can build walls of righteousness and faithful obedience as defenses to protect us from Satan's influence.

- **Alma 50:1-6** The Nephites continually strengthened their defenses.

We must continually strengthen our defenses against Satan through sincere prayer and righteous daily living.

- **Alma 44:3-4; Alma 49:30; Alma 50:20-22** The Nephites kept the commandments of God and followed their Church leaders.

Heeding the commandments of God and the counsel of our Church leaders helps us fight wickedness.

- **Alma 45:1; Alma 49:28** The Nephites thanked God for protecting them in battle.

Gratitude to the Lord for our life and daily sustenance protects us against Satan.

- **Alma 51:2-7, 12-23; Alma 53:8-9** Contention caused the Nephites to fight among themselves and allowed the Lamanites to gain power over them.

Contention allows Satan to gain power over us because it robs us of the influence and companionship of the Spirit.

Unity and support from other people helps us as we fight against wickedness through their moral and temporal support.

- **Alma 49:30; Alma 50:23** The righteous Nephites were prosperous and happy even in times of war.

We find peace and happiness even during times of terrible wickedness by remaining faithful--serving God and our brethren.

Conclusion

The principles taught in these chapters of the Book of Mormon can help protect us and our families from the onslaught of evil. They can also help us have peace in our souls during times of war and tribulation.

"They Did Obey...Every Word of Command with Exactness"

Lesson 32 - Alma 53-63

Introduction

Picture in your mind the young warriors of Helaman's army. Read Alma 57:25-26, stopping after the word slain in verse 26. In the battles between the Nephites and the Lamanites, there were surely other Nephite warriors whose lives were miraculously preserved. However, there were also many righteous Nephites who were killed (Alma 56:10-11; Alma 57:36). Helaman's army of young warriors is the only military army mentioned in the Book of Mormon in which not one soldier was killed in battle. We, like Helaman's young warriors, are part of a great army. The following statement was made by **President Ezra Taft Benson**. Although the statement was directed to Aaronic Priesthood holders, it applies to all members of the Church. *"You have been born at this time for a sacred and glorious purpose. It is not by chance that you have been reserved to come to earth in this last dispensation of the fulness of times. Your birth at this particular time was foreordained in the eternities. You are to be the royal army of the Lord in the last days. In the spiritual battles you are waging, I see you as today's sons of Helaman. Remember well the Book of Mormon account of Helaman's two thousand stripling warriors"* (Ensign, May 1986, 43.) Note: "stripling" means young man.

Ephesians 6:11-18; 1 Peter 2:9; and D&C 138:55-56 teach what it means to be *"the royal army of the Lord"*. The *'spiritual battles [we] are waging'* as part of the Lord's army are the daily battles for the souls of men. This lesson discusses the principles and characteristics that helped the 2,060 Ammonite warriors receive so much strength from the Lord. As we live according to these principles and develop these characteristics, our spiritual strength will increase. We will be more effective as servants in *"the royal army of the Lord."*

Two thousand valiant young Ammonites covenanted to fight for the liberty of the Nephites.

Alma 24:15-18; Alma 53:10-11 These verses remind us of the covenant of peace that the Ammonites (the Anti-Nephi-Lehies) made at the time of their conversion.

Alma 27:22-24; Alma 53:12 The Nephites had promised to protect the Ammonites from the Lamanites.

Alma 53:13 When they saw the afflictions of the Nephites, the Ammonites wanted to take up arms in defense of their country.

Alma 53:14-15; Alma 56:8 Helaman persuaded the people not to break their covenant because he feared that they might lose their souls.

This teaches us that keeping covenants is a very serious life and death matter and that we must hold our covenants sacred at all costs.

Alma 53:16 The Ammonites' sons, who had not made the covenant, took up arms to help the Nephites.

Alma 53:17 The young Ammonites showed the strength of their commitment to help the Nephites as they entered into a covenant to protect their land even unto death and that they would not give up their liberty. They were determined to keep their covenant *"in all cases."* We should make and keep sacred covenants.

Ponder how the Lord will strengthen us as we make covenants with Him and keep these covenants *"in all cases"* as you read the following:

President Ezra Taft Benson said: *"Men and women who turn their lives over to God will discover that He can make a lot more out of their lives than they can. He will deepen their joys, expand their vision, quicken their minds, strengthen their muscles, lift their spirits, multiply their blessings, increase their opportunities, comfort their souls, raise up friends, and pour out peace. Whoever will lose his life in the service of God will find eternal life"* (The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson [1988], 361).

Alma 53:19; Alma 56:1, 5 The young Ammonites asked Helaman to be their leader.

Alma 37:1-2, 14; Alma 46:6 Helaman was a prophet and a high priest over the Church.

The decision to follow a prophet increased the young Ammonites' effectiveness in the battles they would fight because they would be led by an inspired temporal and spiritual leader. Consider also what kinds of leaders might weaken people in their spiritual battles.

Alma 57:21 The young Ammonites responded to the commands they received by obeying and observing every command with exactness. Obviously, we too should follow the prophet *"with exactness."*

President Harold B. Lee, explaining why it is important to be exactly obedient to the teachings of the Lord's prophet, taught: *"The power of Satan will increase; we see it in evidence on every hand. Now the only safety we have as members of this church is to do exactly what the Lord said to the Church in that day when the Church was organized. We must learn to give heed to the words and commandments that the Lord shall give through his prophet, 'as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me;...as if from mine own mouth, in all patience and faith.' (D&C 21:4-5.) There will be some things that take patience and faith. You may not like what comes from the authority of the Church. It may contradict your political views. It may contradict your social views. It may interfere with some of your social life. But if you listen to these things, as if from the mouth of the Lord himself, with patience and faith, the promise is that 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against you; yea, and the Lord God will disperse the powers of darkness from before you, and cause the heavens to shake for your good, and his name's glory.' (D&C 21:6)"* (Improvement Era, Dec. 1970, 126).

The young soldiers exercised faith in God and fought courageously.

Alma 56:34-43 The first army that the young Ammonites faced was the Lamanites' strongest and most numerous army.

Alma 56:44-47 The young soldiers, when Helaman asked if they wanted to go against this army, responded that they knew God would be with them and they testified that He would not suffer them to fall; they valued the liberty of their fathers more than their own lives.

Alma 56:47-48; see also Alma 53:21; Alma 57:21 These warriors had learned to have such great faith and courage from their mothers. As parents, we must teach our children to believe in God.

The following statement by **President Spencer W. Kimball** emphasizes the influence that mothers can have on their children: *To be a righteous woman during the winding-up scenes on this earth, before the Second Coming of our Savior, is an especially noble calling. The righteous woman's strength and influence today can be tenfold what it might be in more tranquil times. She has been placed here to help to enrich, to protect, and to guard the home...which is society's basic and most noble institution. Other institutions in society may falter and even fail, but the righteous woman can help to save the home, which may be the last and only sanctuary some mortals know in the midst of storm and strife*" (The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 326-27).

Alma 56:48 The young soldiers did not doubt their mothers' testimonies. It is important for children to know the strength and certainty of their parents' testimonies so that they can go forth with confidence. Consider ways in which parents can share their testimonies with their children.

Alma 57:20; see also verses Alma 57:12-19 During one difficult battle, many Nephites *"were about to give way"*.

Alma 57:19-20 records the response of the young Ammonites during this battle--they stood firm and undaunted. As parents, we need to teach our children to be *"firm and undaunted,"* even when others *"give way."*

Alma 57:22-25; Alma 58:31-33, 39 While they suffered wounds, the results of the young Ammonites' faith and courage was that all of them were preserved and they were victorious.

Consider how we can remain *"firm and undaunted,"* even when our friends, associates, and others are *"about to give way"*, and, consider ways in which we can strengthen those who are *"about to give way"*.

Alma 53:20-21; Alma 57:26-27; Alma 58:40 The young Ammonites were *"firm and undaunted"* in the following ways:

"They were exceedingly valiant for courage" (Alma 53:20).

"They were...true at all times in whatsoever thing they were entrusted" (Alma 53:20)

"They were men of truth and soberness" (Alma 53:21).

They had *"exceeding faith in that which they had been taught to believe"* (Alma 57:26).

They *"put their trust in God continually"* (Alma 57:27).

They *"[stood] fast in that liberty wherewith God [had] made them free"* (Alma 58:40).

They were *"strict to remember the Lord their God from day to day"* (Alma 58:40).

They kept God's *"statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments continually"* (Alma 58:40).

"Their faith [was] strong in the prophecies" (Alma 58:40)

The young Ammonites had developed these characteristics in their youth, before they became soldiers. As parents, we need to help our youth develop righteous qualities in their youth.

Alma 58:1-9 In one battle, the Nephite armies led by Helaman, Gid, and Teomner faced *"an enemy which was innumerable,"* but they received very little assistance from the land of Zarahemla.

Alma 58:10 The source the Nephites turned to for strength was God. We too should pray for strength and deliverance.

Alma 58:11-12 The Lord answered the Nephites' prayers by visiting them with assurances of deliverance, speaking peace to their souls, and granting them great faith and hope.

Think about the ways such answers to prayer can help us *"take courage"* in our daily struggles.

Conclusion

In this lesson we reviewed the principles and characteristics that helped the 2,060 Ammonite warriors receive so much strength from the Lord. As we live according to these same principles and develop these same characteristics, our spiritual strength will increase. We will be more effective as servants in *"the royal army of the Lord."*

Additional Teachings

Alma 60 and 61 contain Moroni's letter to Pahoran, the governor of the land, and Pahoran's response. Included in these chapters are lessons on:

Making use of all the means the Lord has provided (Alma 60:21).

Cleansing *"the inward vessel"* (Alma 60:23).

Being *"constrained according to the covenant [we] have made to keep the commandments"* (Alma 60:34).

Seeking God's glory, not the *"honor of the world"* (Alma 60:36).

Not taking offense (Alma 61:9).

"A Sure Foundation"

Lesson 33 - Helaman 1-5

Introduction

Today's lesson shows the difference between people who build on weak foundations, such as people who place their trust in wealth or physical strength, and people who build their foundations on *"the rock of [their] Redeemer,...which is a sure foundation"* (Helaman 5:12).

Internal strife developed among the Nephites.

Helaman 1:1-4 Pahoran, the chief judge, had died, and three of his sons, Pahoran, Paanchi, and Pacumeni, contended for the judgment seat.

Helaman 1:5-7 When Pahoran was chosen to be chief judge, Pacumeni responded rationally and united with the voice of the people. Paanchi, on the other hand, was exceedingly wroth and immediately began to plot a rebellion that would put him on the throne.

Helaman 1:8-13 Because of Paanchi's rebellion, he was captured and tried before the people, who sentenced him to death for rebellion and seeking to destroy the liberty of the people. Paanchi's wicked followers had Kishkumen, a leader of a secret society, murder Pahoran while he sat on the judgment seat. By the voice of the people, Pacumeni was chosen to reign in Pahoran's stead.

Helaman 1:13-17 After Pacumeni became chief judge, the Lamanites came to battle against the Nephites with an innumerable army of well-armed men led by Coriantumr, a large and mighty man.

Helaman 1:18 The Nephites were unprepared to defend themselves against an outside attack from the Lamanites because their attention had been consumed by internal strife, contention, and disagreement within their own government.

Contention weakens nations and communities, wards and stakes, families and individuals by diverting attention and energy from productive, worthwhile concerns to petty and often prideful personal concerns. Consider what can be done to avoid or overcome contention.

Helaman 2:4 Gadianton, who was *"exceedingly expert in many words, and also in his craft,"* became the leader of the band of Kishkumen and carried on their secret work of murder and robbery.

Helaman 2:5 Gadianton promised the followers of Kishkumen that they would be given power and authority over the people in order to persuade them to follow him.

People are sometimes influenced by flattery and the promise of power when they allow worldly pride to completely overcome humility. We can avoid this influence only by drawing closer to the Spirit through fasting and prayer, scripture study, obedience to the commandments, and remembering who we are and where we came from.

Thousands joined the Church; some Church members were lifted up in pride.

Helaman 3 covers about 11 years of Nephite history. During those 11 years, the Nephites experienced periods of peace and periods of contention.

Helaman 3:1, 33-34 Pride disturbed the peace of the Nephites during those years.

Helaman 3:36 Exceeding riches and prosperity were the causes of the Nephites' pride.

Helaman 3:27-30; see also Deuteronomy 8:11, 17-18; Alma 62:48-51 Pride disturbs the peace in our lives because it distracts us from helping Christ with his saving mission. To guard against pride, we have to work at retaining humility through sincere prayer, fasting, and scripture study.

Helaman 3:29 To *"lay hold upon the word of God"* means that you grasp it with real intent to follow it.

Helaman 3:27-30; see also 1 Nephi 11:25; 1 Nephi 15:24 We will be blessed as we *"lay hold upon the word of God"*.

Blessings include protection against the power of Satan's wiles and guidance on the strait and narrow course to acceptance as immortal souls into the kingdom of heaven where we may sit on the right hand of God and fellowship with the patriarchs forever.

Helaman 3:33-34 In the 51st year, some Church members began to persecute others.

Helaman 3:35 The humble followers of Christ responded to the persecution from the proud members of the Church by suffering through the afflictions, being strengthened by frequent fasting and prayer, cultivating humility, strengthening their faith in Christ, and becoming sanctified by yielding their hearts to God.

Consider carefully how their example can help you when you face persecution, criticism, or affliction.

D&C 76:41; D&C 88:74-75 Sanctification is the process of becoming clean, pure, and free from sin through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

Lamanites and Nephite dissenters defeated the Nephites.

Helaman 4:5 Nephite dissenters convinced the Lamanites to go to war against the Nephites. The Lamanites defeated the Nephites and obtained many of their lands.

Helaman 4:11-13 Mormon, who abridged the book of Helaman, observed that wickedness and abominations--including abominations among church members--was the cause of the Nephites' weakness. Their pride in their riches; their oppression of the poor; their obvious lack of charity and compassion; their denial of the spirit of prophecy and revelation; their murders, immorality, and other crimes; and their boasting all left them without strength to defend themselves.

Ponder what parallels exist between the Nephites' actions and the actions of some people today as pride continues to seduce

members as well as non-members. Also consider how acknowledging your dependence on the Lord can strengthen you.

Helaman 4:14 Moronihah, Lehi, and Nephi prophesied *"many things unto the people ...concerning their iniquities, and what should come unto them if they did not repent of their sins"*.

Helaman 4:15-16; see also verses 21-26 When the people began to repent, they began to prosper and were led to regain a significant portion of their lands. They also took stock of themselves and their society and recognized their pride, their corruption of their laws, their disregard for the prophets, the decline of the church membership and activity, and they saw their weakness against their enemies and the necessity to depend on God to protect them.

Nephi and Lehi remembered their father's counsel. Miracles attended their ministry.

Helaman 5:1-4 Nephi gave up the judgment seat to preach the word of God in hopes of preventing his people from fully ripening unto destruction.

Helaman 5:5-7 Nephi and Lehi remembered that their father had told them about their names; that they should remember the righteous forefathers for whom they had been named, the works done by those men, and that they should follow that example and do good.

Take a moment to consider how the examples of prophets, other Church leaders, and other righteous people have helped you.

Helaman 5:9-11 Helaman taught his sons about the Atonement of Jesus Christ; that it was the only way to salvation and redemption; that the redemption allowed salvation from sin, not in sin; and that the Savior had power to redeem the repentant.

Helaman 5:12; see also 3 Nephi 14:24-27 To build on the rock of Christ is to have a sure foundation that protects you from Satan's assaults. It is a foundation of truth and power.

Some of the mighty winds and storms that Satan sends upon us may include temptations from family, friends and acquaintances, financial difficulties, illness or injury, and afflictions of body, mind, and spirit. Christ helps us withstand these winds and storms as we fast and pray, obey the commandments, follow personal revelation and the counsel of righteous leaders, and seek to follow the example of the Savior as we endure to the end.

We refer to Christ as our rock because he is the foundation of our lives. Foundations other than Christ are sometimes chosen by the foolish to build their lives upon. Consider how you have been blessed as you have built your life on the rock of Christ.

Helaman 5:17-19 Great miracles occurred in Zarahemla as Nephi and Lehi preached the gospel; many dissenters repented and thousands of Lamanites were converted.

Helaman 5:19, 51; see also Mosiah 1:5 It was very important that the Lamanites rejected *"the wickedness of the traditions of their fathers"* so that they could overcome their hatred and cease their contention with their brethren.

Elder Richard G. Scott said: *"I testify that you will remove barriers to happiness and find greater peace as you make your first allegiance your membership in the Church of Jesus Christ, and His teachings the foundation of your life. Where family or national traditions or customs conflict with the teachings of God, set them aside. Where traditions and customs are in harmony with His teachings, they should be cherished and followed to preserve your culture and heritage. There is one heritage that you need never change. It is that heritage that comes from your being a daughter or son of Father in Heaven"* (Ensign, May 1998, 87).

Helaman 5:21-32, 43-45 records the memorable, fiery manner in which the Lord demonstrated his protection for and approval of Nephi and Lehi.

Helaman 5:45-47 records how the Holy Ghost testified to the people.

Helaman 5:49-52 Once the people had received a witness of the Savior, they went forth bearing testimony, gave up their weapons of war, set aside their hatred, denied their false traditions, and yielded up the Nephites' lands.

D&C 33:9; D&C 88:81 Think about what your responsibility is once you receive a witness of the divinity and saving power of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

Review Helaman 5:12. We can protect ourselves against pride, contention, and Satan's "mighty storm" by building our foundation on the rock of Jesus Christ.

"Remember, remember, my sons" (Helaman 5:5-14)

In the Book of Mormon there are over 240 instances of the word remember or forms of the word (such as remembered, remembrance, or forget not). Fifteen of these instances are in Helaman 5. **Elder Spencer W. Kimball** said: *"When you look in the dictionary for the most important word, do you know what it is? It could be 'remember.' Because all of [us] have made covenants...our greatest need is to remember. That is why everyone goes to sacrament meeting every Sabbath day...to take the sacrament and listen to the priests pray that [we] '...may always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given [us]. ' ... 'Remember' is the word"* (Circles of Exaltation [address to religious educators, Brigham Young University, 28 June 1968], 8).

"How Could You Have Forgotten Your God?"

Lesson 34 - Helaman 6-12

Introduction

Look at the following sequence of numbers: 2, 3, 5, 8, 12. What would the next three numbers in that sequence be? The correct answer is 17, 23, and 30 because the pattern is formed by adding 1 to the first number, 2 to the second number, 3 to the third number, and so on. In the Book of Mormon there is a pattern that is almost as predictable as this sequence. The pattern is repeated many times. It is a cycle that leads from righteousness to wickedness and back to righteousness. By recognizing this pattern, we can avoid the Pride Cycle that led to the destruction of the Nephites.

The people were righteous and were blessed with peace and prosperity.

Nephi and Lehi had been missionaries to the Lamanites and had helped many of them repent and be baptized. The Lamanites soon became more righteous than the Nephites.

Helaman 6:1 The characteristics the Lamanites had that helped them become more righteous than many of the Nephites were firmness and steadiness in the faith.

Helaman 6:4-6 The converted Lamanites tried to help the Nephites by journeying to Zarahemla where they told of their conversions, exhorted the Nephites to faith and repentance, and diligently exemplified and preached humility.

Helaman 6:7-14 The result was that peace came in the land and among the peoples, trade and associated wealth increased, precious metals were found and refined, crops flourished, the people multiplied and became strong, their flocks and herds were plentiful, the women made textiles for clothing, they experienced joy and peace, and preaching and prophecies abounded.

This part of the Pride cycle includes Righteousness and Prosperity.

The Nephites became proud and wicked. Nephi called them to repentance.

After the Nephites became prosperous, many of them began to forget God and seek after riches and other worldly things. We now enter the part of the Pride Cycle where Pride and Wickedness take over.

Helaman 6:17; Helaman 7:20-21 Prosperity often leads to wickedness because the riches of the world cause some to forget the God who blessed them and instead, they seek to be richer and "better" than others.

Helaman 6:21-24; Helaman 7:4-5 Characteristics of the Gadianton robbers are evident here as they embrace the temptations of Satan, enter into evil covenants and take upon them unholy oaths, protect and preserve the wicked, agree to thwart justice and the law, foster secret societies for the purpose of doing evil, commit immoral acts of all kinds, and administer their own perverted system of punishment. Of course, many of these elements exist today in one form or another. Consider how you can appropriately fight evil influences in your community.

Helaman 6:25-30 Satan, the author of sin, was the source of the secret combinations.

Helaman 6:31 As Satan "*got great hold upon [their] hearts*", the Nephites became exceedingly wicked, turned from righteousness, trampled the commandments of God under their feet, substituted their own wisdom for the counsel of God, and built up idols of gold and silver.

Helaman 6:34-38 In these verses, we can identify the contrasts between the Nephites and the Lamanites.

NEPHITES	LAMANITES
Dwindled in unbelief (verse 34)	Grew in the knowledge of God (verse 34).
Grew in wickedness and sin (verse 34).	Walked in truth and righteousness before God (verse 34).
Lost the guidance of the Spirit of the Lord (verse 35).	Received the Spirit (verse 36).
Built up and supported the Gadianton robbers (verse 38).	Preached the word of God to the Gadianton robbers (verse 37).

Helaman 6:35 The Spirit of the Lord "*[withdrew] from the Nephites*" because of their wickedness and hard-heartedness.

Helaman 6:36 The Lord began to "*pour out his Spirit upon the Lamanites*" because they easily accepted his teachings and were willing to believe in his words. This teaches us that we can receive the influence of the Holy Ghost only with faith, humility, and a willingness to be obedient to the commandments.

When the Nephites continued in their wickedness, the Lord sent Helaman's son Nephi to call them to repentance. When Nephi saw the wickedness of the people, "*his heart was swollen with sorrow*" (Helaman 7:6). He knelt on his garden tower to pray. As he poured out his soul to God, a group of people gathered, curious to know why he mourned for the wickedness of the people (Helaman 7:11).

Review **Helaman 7:13-29; Helaman 8; and Helaman 9.** (Note: The Church's video presentation "The Pride Cycle", dramatizes the events described in these scriptures.)

Helaman 8:1-10 When Nephi rebuked them for their wickedness, many spoke out against him and stirred up the people to anger against Nephi. However, others recognized the truth of his condemnation and caused the judges and their followers to fear so that they did not seize Nephi. Ponder why so many remained unrepentant.

Helaman 9:39-10:1 When Nephi told them of the murder of their chief judge and Seantum confessed to murdering his brother, the chief judge, some believed Nephi's words. After the people debated whether Nephi was a prophet or a god, they left him standing alone. Keeping this situation in mind, think about what can keep us from listening to latter-day prophets.

President Ezra Taft Benson said: *"The two groups who have the greatest difficulty in following the prophet are the proud who are learned and the proud who are rich. The learned may feel the prophet is only inspired when he agrees with them; otherwise, the prophet is just giving his opinion - speaking as a man. The rich may feel they have no need to take counsel of a lowly prophet"* (The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson [1988], 138).

The Lord gave Nephi the sealing power. The unrepentant Nephites faced warfare and famine.

The Nephites forgot the Lord and continued in wickedness. Because of their wickedness, the people experienced devastating destruction and suffering.

Helaman 10:5-10 The Lord gave Nephi the sealing power, saying that *"all things [would] be done according to [Nephi's] word"*

Helaman 10:4-5 The Lord entrusted Nephi with such great power because he had been a faithful, diligent, courageous, selfless, righteous, and untiring servant.

Helaman 10:18-11:2 After the people rejected Nephi and disobeyed God, contentions and divisions arose, multiplied, and grew into wars throughout the land as the Gadianton robbers carried on their evil works.

Helaman 11:4 Nephi prayed for a famine in order to help the people remember the Lord and repent.

Helaman 11:4-6 Nephi prayed for famine instead of war because war would result in the people's destruction while in their sins. Nephi's prayer was answered with a great famine.

We now see The Pride Cycle enter the Destruction and Suffering phase.

The Nephites humbled themselves and repented.

The destruction and suffering from the famine influenced the Nephites to turn to the Lord for relief. They humbled themselves and repented.

Now a hopeful portion of the Pride Cycle begins with Humility and Repentance

Helaman 11:10-17 We learn from the Lord's answer to Nephi's prayer to end the famine that the Lord desires to forgive the repentant and honors the humble requests of his prophets.

Helaman 11:14-15 The Lord required complete repentance of the people before He would end the famine.

Helaman 11:20-21 The people were once again blessed for their faithfulness by having rains, which allowed them to begin a season of prosperity, building, increased population, territorial expansion, peace, and increased church membership.

Helaman 11:22 Contention over points of doctrine was the first sign that the short-lived period of humility and righteousness was ending.

Helaman 11:23 Nephi, Lehi, and their brethren put an end to this contention by their inspired teaching of the true doctrines.

Helaman 11:28-34 Following another period of wickedness and destruction by warfare, the fear of continued destruction and captivity helped the people repent and turn to the Lord.

Helaman 11:36 Two years later, the Nephites *"began again to forget the Lord their God"*. Think about why people are so quick to forget the Lord. Then, consider how we may be forgetting the Lord today.

Helaman 12:7 Mormon said that *"the children of men...are less than the dust of the earth"*.

Helaman 12:1-6, 8 shows that he made this statement based on the fact that the elements obey God while men often do not. We have the freedom to obey or disobey God's commandments but not to choose the consequences of our actions.

Helaman 12:25-26 Mormon said that the fate of those who disobey will be eternal damnation.

Helaman 12:23-24, 26 Those who repent and obey the Lord will have everlasting life.

Alma 62:48-51; Helaman 12:23-24 these verses teach us that people can break away from this Pride Cycle if they are willing to repent and hearken to the Lord.

President Gordon B. Hinckley said: *"Seek for the real things, not the artificial. Seek for the everlasting truths, not the passing whim. Seek for the eternal things of God, not for that which is here today and gone tomorrow. Look to God and live"* (Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley [1997], 494).

Conclusion

In the following statement, Elder Gordon B. Hinckley spoke of the Book of Mormon: *"No other written testament so clearly illustrates the fact that when men and nations walk in the fear of God and in obedience to his commandments, they prosper and grow, but when they disregard him and his word, there comes a decay that, unless arrested by righteousness, leads to impotence and death"* (Ensign, Nov. 1979, 8).

"Repent and Return unto the Lord"

Lesson 35 - Helaman 13-16

Introduction

Imagine a salesman who has only one product to sell: misery. What could this salesman do to sell his product? Well, he could make misery look appealing or he could trick people into thinking that his product will bring happiness instead of misery. Satan has nothing to offer but misery (2 Nephi 2:17-18, 27). So how does Satan make misery and sin look desirable? How does he try to persuade people that happiness and righteousness are undesirable? This lesson will discuss the prophecies of Samuel, a Lamanite prophet. Samuel preached to a group of Nephites who had allowed themselves to be overcome by Satan's temptations. They had *"sought for happiness in doing iniquity,"* which is contrary to the nature of God (Helaman 13:38).

Samuel warned the Nephites that they would be destroyed unless they repented

A Lamanite prophet named Samuel went to preach in Zarahemla, but the Nephites cast him out of the land. The Lord commanded Samuel to return to Zarahemla and prophesy. We find in Helaman 13:1-4 that when the Nephites did not allow Samuel to enter the city, he stood on the city wall and prophesied to them.

Helaman 13:8 Samuel warned the people that because of the hardness of their hearts, the Lord would take His word from them and withdraw His Spirit from them.

Mosiah 2:36-37 These consequences, withdrawal of inspired counsel and the Spirit, come to people who harden their hearts because they withdraw themselves from the Spirit and openly rebel against God—who will not dwell in unholy temples. Therefore, it behooves us to pause a moment and consider what we might do to soften our hearts.

Helaman 13:11 Through the prophet Samuel, the Lord said, *"Blessed are they who will repent and turn unto me".* Some people attempt to repent without turning to the Lord, but that doesn't work. Why is turning to the Lord an essential part of repentance? **President Ezra Taft Benson** taught: *"Repentance means more than simply a reformation of behavior. Many men and women in the world demonstrate great will-power and self-discipline in overcoming bad habits and the weaknesses of the flesh. Yet at the same time they give no thought to the Master, sometimes even openly rejecting Him. Such changes of behavior, even if in a positive direction, do not constitute true repentance. ... True repentance is based on and flows from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no other way. True repentance involves a change of heart and not just a change of behavior (see Alma 5:13)"* (The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson [1988], 71).

Helaman 13:20-21 The Nephites had *"set their hearts upon riches"*. In addition, they had not hearkened to the words of the Lord, who had given them their riches.

Helaman 13:17-22 Because of this, the Nephites and their riches were cursed. Ways in which people give more time and attention to worldly concerns than to spiritual concerns include participating in sports, entertainment, or money-making activities instead of fulfilling Church callings in service to others. Ponder how you can assess whether you are giving enough attention to your spiritual welfare.

Helaman 13:22 Samuel said that the Nephites always remembered their riches but did not remember to thank the Lord for them. Think about why it is difficult for some people to remain grateful when they are blessed with abundance. (Could it be pride?) Gratitude counteracts pride. Think about ways you can show gratitude to the Lord.

Helaman 13:24-25; compare with Matthew 23:29-39 The Nephites persecuted and killed the prophets of their day, but they said, *"If our days had been in the days of our fathers of old, we would not have slain the prophets"*.

Helaman 13:26 People sometimes praise past prophets and reject living prophets because the living prophets leave no doubt of the people's guilt as they warn them and urge their repentance.

Helaman 13:27-29 Some people allow themselves to *"be led by foolish and blind guides"* when they succumb to flattery and follow those who find no fault with them but actually encourage them in their pride.

Helaman 13:38 According to Samuel, the Nephites had *"sought for happiness in doing iniquity"*.

Helaman 13:38; see also Alma 41:10-11 It is impossible to find true happiness in sin because it is contrary to the nature and commandments of God.

We can find true happiness and help others to find true happiness if we follow this counsel: **The Prophet Joseph Smith** said, *"Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it, and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God"* (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 255-56).

Samuel prophesied of the signs that would precede the birth and death of the Savior. He continued to call the people to repentance.

Helaman 14:2, 15 Samuel prophesied of the Savior's birth—to come as the Redeemer of those who would believe in Him; and Samuel spoke of the Savior's death as a necessary step to bring about the salvation of men.

Helaman 14:3-7, 20-28 Signs Samuel said would attend the Savior's birth and death included great lights in the heaven, a night with no darkness, the rise of a new star, and many unspecified signs and wonders in heaven at the time of his birth; and at his death the sun would be darkened along with the moon and stars for three days, thunderings and lightnings occur for many hours, the earth would tremble with earthquakes, solid rock masses above and beneath the earth's surface would be broken up and remain so ever after, great tempests would arise, mountains would collapse into valleys while valleys would become mountains, highways would be destroyed and cities devastated, graves open to yield up their dead and saints

would appear.

Helaman 14:13 Samuel said that if the people would repent, they would receive a remission of their sins through the merits of Christ. Merits are qualities or actions that entitle a person to claim rewards.

2 Nephi 2:7-9; Alma 22:14 Because He was the only one who could answer the ends of the law; and because fallen man could have no merit on his own, it is only through the Savior's merits, gained through His suffering and death, that we can be forgiven of our sins.

President Ezra Taft Benson taught, *"Even the most just and upright man cannot save himself solely on his own merits"* (The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson, 71).

Helaman 14:15-18 According to Samuel, Jesus had to die that men may be brought into the presence of the Lord. Consider how knowing of the Savior's sacrifice affects you.

Helaman 14:29 Samuel said, *"If [people] are condemned they bring upon themselves their own condemnation"*.

Helaman 14:30-31 This is so because God gave us a knowledge of good and evil and the power to choose between the two by using our free moral agency. It is essential that we be *"permitted to act for [our]selves"* so that we can freely choose what will be restored to us in the eternities.

Some believe Samuel and were baptized. Others hardened their hearts and tried to kill Samuel.

Helaman 15:3; see also Hebrews 12:6 The Lord chastened the Nephites because of his love for them. The Lord's chastening shows His love for us because it demonstrates that he does give us opportunities to choose, make mistakes, and then have an opportunity to learn and then repent and make a better choice. We learn from the Lord's chastening that we are loved and that he wants us to have ample opportunity to choose the right and be blessed for our choices.

Helaman 15:7-8



Knowledge of the truth and belief in the scriptures lead to faith and repentance because they help us understand the benefits of becoming like the Savior and they help us trust in his promises. Faith and repentance lead to a change of heart because they allow us to have the companionship of the Spirit that cleanses us of worldly desires and causes us to abhor sin.

Helaman 15:8 The Lamanites who experienced a change of heart remained *"firm and steadfast in the faith"*.

2 Nephi 31:19-20 When we experience a change of heart, we must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, have a perfect brightness of hope, develop a love of God and all men, feast upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end in following the example of the Savior to ensure that the change is lasting.

Helaman 16:1-7 Some Nephites responded to Samuel's prophecies and warning by believing and seeking out Nephi to baptize them; others became angered and sought to kill Samuel with stones and arrows--but when many of them saw that he was protected by the Lord, they humbled themselves and sought baptism; while others remained extremely angry and sought to have Samuel bound and taken away.

Helaman 16:13-15 Although they saw that the words of the prophets were being fulfilled, the majority of the Nephites began to harden their hearts and depend on their own strength and wisdom.

Helaman 16:16-23 Unbelieving Nephites sought to explain away the signs that they had seen as lucky guesses or the wicked traditions of leaders who wanted to rule over them.

Preparing for the Second Coming

President Ezra Taft Benson: *"The record of the Nephite history just prior to the Savior's visit reveals many parallels to our own day as we anticipate the Savior's second coming"* (Ensign, May 1987, 4).

In this statement, the *"record of the Nephite history"* referred to by President Benson was the book of 3 Nephi--the account of the Nephites before they were visited by the resurrected Lord. That statement could also apply to the book of Helaman--the account of the Nephites before they saw the signs of the Savior's birth.

Helaman 13-16 contains accounts of prophecies and events that parallel signs and events that will precede the Second Coming of Jesus Christ. An excerpt of a chart of these events is found in the Book of Mormon Class Member Study Guide.

President Ezra Taft Benson taught: *"In the Book of Mormon we find a pattern for preparing for the Second Coming. A major portion of the book centers on the few decades just prior to Christ's coming to America. By careful study of that time period, we can determine why some were destroyed in the terrible judgments that preceded His coming and what brought others to stand at the temple in the land of Bountiful and thrust their hands into the wounds of His hands and feet. ... Can anyone doubt that this book was meant for us and that in it we find great power, great comfort, and great protection?"*

(Ensign, Nov. 1986, 6-7).

Review Samuel's prophecies and consider how a study of these prophecies can help you prepare for the Savior's Second Coming.

"On the Morrow Come I into the World"

Lesson 36 - 3 Nephi 1-7

Introduction

The following fable was related by **Elder George A. Smith**, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: *"A man, traveling through the country, came to a large city, very rich and splendid; he looked at it and said to his guide, 'This must be a very righteous people, for I can only see but one little devil in this great city.' The guide replied, 'You do not understand, sir; this city is so perfectly given up to wickedness, corruption, degradation and abomination of every kind that it only requires one devil to keep them all in subjection.' Traveling on a little further he came to a rugged path and saw an old man trying to get up the hill side, surrounded by seven great, big, coarse looking devils. 'Why,' says the traveler, 'this must be a tremendously wicked old man, only see how many devils there are around him!' 'This,' replied the guide, 'is the only righteous man in the country and there are seven of the biggest devils trying to turn him out of his path and they all cannot do it'"* (in *Deseret News*, 11 Nov. 1857, 7:287).

As we strive to faithfully keep the commandments, we will face opposition. Today's lesson discusses the opposition faced by the believers among the Nephites. Some people endured in spite of all opposition, while others received great blessings yet quickly *"turned from their righteousness"* (3 Nephi 7:8). From these chapters we can learn the importance of remaining faithful in spite of trials and temptation.

The signs of the Savior's birth vindicated those who had endured in faith.

The events in this first chapter occurred five years after Samuel prophesied of Jesus' birth. Samuel had said, *"Five years more cometh, and behold, then cometh the Son of God"* (Helaman 14:2).

3 Nephi 1:7 While waiting for Samuel's prophecies to be fulfilled, *"the people who believed began to be very sorrowful"*.

3 Nephi 1:5-9 Some of the reasons for the sorrow of the believers included:

3 Nephi 1:5-6. Some unbelievers said that the time was past for the prophecies to be fulfilled and that the believers' faith was in vain.

3 Nephi 1:7 Unbelievers made *"a great uproar throughout the land"*.

3 Nephi 1:9 A day was selected to put to death all believers.

3 Nephi 1:8 In spite of these challenges to their faith, the believers remained steadfast. Keeping that in mind, what can you do to remain steadfast when your faith is challenged?

3 Nephi 1:10-14 When Nephi saw the wickedness of the unbelievers, he prayed to the Lord for his people. After Nephi had prayed all day for his people, the Lord revealed to him that it was actually a time for joy because the promised sign would be given that night; the Savior would come into mortality the next day; the prophecies concerning the mission of Christ spoken by the holy prophets would be fulfilled; the Savior would come unto his own and fulfill the plan of salvation.

3 Nephi 1:15-21 Here we read how Samuel's prophecies were fulfilled. Consider how this account helps to strengthen your faith in Christ.

The Gadianton robbers came to battle against the Nephites.

3 Nephi 1:22; 3 Nephi 2:1-3 Satan tried to turn people away from their belief in the Savior and His birth by sending forth lies among the people to harden their hearts. Satan gradually gained possession of the hearts of the people, and soon the people *"began to forget those signs and wonders."* Have you seen the adversary use those kinds of tactics today? Think about the counsel we have received concerning what we can do to remember and preserve our spiritual experiences by keeping daily journals.

3 Nephi 2:11-13, 17-19 As the people began to increase in wickedness, dangers they faced included wars and contentions as the Gadianton robbers slew many people, laid waste to cities, and spread death throughout the land. Consider the kinds of behavior and attitudes that threaten our safety today.

3 Nephi 3:1 In the 16th year from the time of Christ's birth, Lachoneus, the governor and chief judge of the Nephites, received a letter from Giddianhi, the leader of the Gadianton robbers.

3 Nephi 3:6-8 Giddianhi desired a complete surrender of Lachoneus' people, lands, and possessions to effect a unification of all his people in the oaths and secret covenants of the Gadianton society.

When the Gadianton robbers announced their intention to destroy the Nephites, the people began at once to prepare to protect themselves, under the direction of Lachoneus and Gidgiddoni. We can learn from their actions what we might do that will help protect us in times of temptation and fear. **3 Nephi 3:12-26** gives us some insight as listed below:

a. **3 Nephi 3:12** *"Lachoneus, the governor, was a just man, and could not be frightened"*. Fear may cause someone to give in to temptation. However, we know that personal righteousness can help us remain courageous when we face temptation or affliction because we know the Spirit will inspire and protect us as we do what is right.

b. **3 Nephi 3:12** Lachoneus told the people to *"cry unto the Lord for strength"*. It is important to pray for strength to face temptations or challenges because we need the Lord's assistance to overcome many of the challenges that will beset us.

c. **3 Nephi 3:13, 3 Nephi 3:22** Lachoneus caused the people to *"gather themselves together"*.

According to **3 Nephi 4:3-4**, it was important for the Nephites to gather into one place to defend themselves by

pooling their resources and sharing their defenses while they worked to rid the land of the Gadiantons.

Moroni 6:4-6 Here we read that our association with other members of the Church can increase our ability to withstand the forces of evil as we are numbered among the people of God, nourished by the good word of God, kept in the right way, continually reminded of our need to pray, continually reminded of the Savior's blessing of salvation to us, encouraged by others' concern for our welfare, and offered the opportunity to renew our baptismal covenants through the sacrament.

d. **3 Nephi 3:14** *"He caused that fortifications should be built"* and placed *"guards round about"*. We fortify ourselves and guard against temptation by keeping the commandments, praying, hearkening to the prophet, honoring our covenants, and practicing self-reliance and wise preparation as we have been counseled to do.

e. **3 Nephi 3:16** The Nephites did *"exert themselves...to do according to the words of Lachoneus"*. We are blessed when we follow inspired leaders because following them is the same as responding positively to the Lord himself.

f. **3 Nephi 3:25** *"They did repent of all their sins"*. Repentance helps us receive greater strength from the Lord.

g. **3 Nephi 3:26** They were *"strong with armor"*. We have been counseled in D&C 27:15-18 to put on the whole armor of God. We wear this armor each day when we keep our covenants and obey our inspired leaders.

3 Nephi 4:11-13, 16-29 The result of these preparations when the Gadianton robbers came against the Nephites was victory in the initial confrontation, and then, when the Gadiantons laid siege to the Nephites, the Nephites' preparation and following their inspired leaders' direction gave them even greater advantage over their enemies.

3 Nephi 4:30-33 The Nephites rejoiced after their victory, shedding tears of joy and singing the praises of the Lord.

The Nephites lived righteously and prospered, but pride and dissensions arose.

The Nephites defeated the Gadianton robbers in the 21st year after the birth of Christ. In 13 more years, the Savior would visit the Nephites and minister to them.

3 Nephi 5:1-26; 3 Nephi 6:1-9 For several years after the defeat of the Gadianton robbers, the Nephites enjoyed great peace and prosperity.

3 Nephi 6:10-15 Satan gained great power as people puffed up with pride; did all manner of iniquity; sought power, authority, and riches, and the vain things of the world. Their peace was disrupted. Remember the pride cycle discussed in lesson 34?

3 Nephi 6:17-23 As the people continued in their wickedness, prophets called them to repentance, but the people rejected and killed them.

3 Nephi 6:27-30; 3 Nephi 7:1-5 Secret combinations increased, and the people were soon divided into tribes.

3 Nephi 7:15-19 Nephi ministered to the people in response to their wickedness.

3 Nephi 7:21-26 As a result of his work, many were converted and baptized.

As each passage is read, note the spiritual condition of the people:

- A.D. 21-26 **3 Nephi 5:1-3**. The people served God *"with all diligence."*
- A.D. 26-27 **3 Nephi 6:4-5**. There was great order and prosperity.
- A.D. 28 **3 Nephi 6:9**. There was continual peace.
- A.D. 29 **3 Nephi 6:10-16**. There were disputings, pride, and boasting.
- A.D. 30 **3 Nephi 6:17-18** *"They were in a state of awful wickedness."*
- A.D. 31 **3 Nephi 7:21**. A few people were converted to the Lord.
- A.D. 32-33 **3 Nephi 7:23**. Nephi continued to cry repentance.

3 Nephi 10:18-19 All the people could have enjoyed the blessings of seeing the Savior if they had remained faithful. The more righteous part of the people were spared during the destruction that accompanied the Crucifixion of the Savior. They received great blessings when the Savior visited them after His Resurrection. The more wicked part of the people were destroyed. These events will be discussed in the next lesson.

Conclusion

We also wait for the coming of the Savior. While we wait, Satan will try to turn us toward wickedness as he did the Nephites. If we prepare ourselves as did the people in the time of Lachoneus, and if we endure in righteousness, we will be worthy to receive all that the Lord desires to bestow upon us.

"Whosoever Will Come, Him Will I Receive"

Lesson 37 - 3 Nephi 8-11

Introduction

3 Nephi 11 is often the first chapter that people are invited to read when they receive a copy of the Book of Mormon from the missionaries. This chapter contains the account of the resurrected Savior visiting the Nephites. Think about why 3 Nephi 11 would be an effective way to introduce the Book of Mormon to someone. What feelings or experiences have you had as you have read this chapter? The chapters describing the Savior's visit to the Nephites are some of the most powerful passages in the Book of Mormon. This lesson discusses the calamities that occurred in the Americas when Jesus was crucified. It includes the account of the beginning of His ministry among the Nephites.

Great destruction occurred in the Americas at the time of Jesus' death.

Samuel the Lamanite had prophesied of terrible destructions that would take place when Jesus was crucified (Helaman 14:20-27. About 33 years after the sign of Jesus' birth, the people "*began to look with great earnestness*" for the fulfillment of Samuel's words (3 Nephi 8:3).

SAMUEL'S PROPHECIES	FULFILLMENT
Helaman 14:21, 23	3 Nephi 8:5-7, 17-18; 3 Nephi 9:8
Helaman 14:24	3 Nephi 8:8-10, 14
Helaman 14:20, 27	3 Nephi 8:20-21

3 Nephi 8:19-23 When the destruction ceased, the earth was covered with thick darkness.

3 Nephi 9:18; see also John 8:12; D&C 11:28 Total darkness is an appropriate sign for the death of the Savior because he is the true light of the world. Consider carefully the ways in which the Savior has brought light to your life.

3 Nephi 8:23-25 This scripture records the reaction of those who survived the destruction--howling, weeping, groaning, crying, and mourning. Reading about their experience helps us prepare for the Second Coming if we learn from their regrets about their failure to repent.

Survivors heard the voice of the Lord inviting them to return to Him.

3 Nephi 9:1-12 After the destruction, the surviving Nephites heard the voice of Christ describing how different cities--Zarahemla, Moroni, Moronihah, Gilgal, Onihah, Mocom, etc.--were destroyed.

3 Nephi 9:12 The Lord gave his reason for the destruction--because of their wickedness and abominations. Look closely at how often He repeated this reason in verses 2-12.

3 Nephi 9:13-14 "Come unto me" is the invitation He extended to those who had survived. The word *come* appears three times in verse 14.

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland said: "*'Come,' [Christ] says lovingly. 'Come, follow me.' Wherever you are going, first come and see what I do, see where and how I spend my time. Learn of me, walk with me, talk with me, believe. Listen to me pray. In turn you will find answers to your own prayers. God will bring rest to your souls. Come, follow me*" (Ensign, Nov. 1997, 65). Ponder what we need to do today to accept this invitation.

3 Nephi 9:17, 19-20 Jesus declared that the law of Moses was fulfilled in Him and that He would no longer accept burnt offerings and sacrifices. He taught in verse 20 that He required a new sacrifice of us.

What does it mean to offer a "*broken heart and a contrite spirit*"? That was answered when **President J. Reuben Clark Jr.**, who was a member of the First Presidency, said: "*Under the new covenant that came in with Christ, the sinner must offer the sacrifice out of his own life, not by offering the blood of some other creature; he must give up his sins, he must repent, he himself must make the sacrifice*" (Behold the Lamb of God [1962], 107).

3 Nephi 9:20 The Savior promised the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost to those who make this offering.

3 Nephi 9:22 Jesus said He had given His life for those who would come unto Him like a child.

Mosiah 3:19 Childlike qualities we need in order to come unto the Savior include submissiveness, meekness, humility, patience, a fulness of love, and a willingness to submit to all things the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon us. After Jesus announced the extent of the destruction and promised redemption to those who would believe, many hours of silence passed. When Jesus spoke again, He used an analogy in 3 Nephi 10:4-6 of a hen gathering her chicks to describe His yearning to gather His people. Jesus used this analogy three times but changed it slightly in each verse.

Why does He want to gather us? **The Prophet Joseph Smith** taught: *"What was the object of gathering... the people of God in any age of the world? ...The main object was to build unto the Lord a house whereby He could reveal unto His people the ordinances of His house and the glories of His kingdom, and teach the people the way of salvation. ...It is for the same purpose that God gathers together His people in the last days"* (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 307-8).

D&C 4:1-7 teaches how we can assist in this gathering.

3 Nephi 10:9-10 After calling the people to repent and come unto Him, Christ ceased speaking to the people. Three days of mourning passed. Then the darkness dispersed, the noise and destruction stopped, and the people's sadness turned into joy.

3 Nephi 10:12-13 The people who had been spared were the "more righteous part" of the people; those who had received the prophets and not persecuted the saints.

3 Nephi 10:18-19 Blessings received by these people included a manifestation of Christ unto them.

3 Nephi 10:14 Mormon's counsel to us, the readers of this account, is that we search the scriptures and confirm for ourselves that these events were fulfillment of prophecy.

Jesus Christ descended from heaven and taught the people.

The people had gathered around the temple in the land Bountiful, marveling about the changes that had occurred and *"conversing about this Jesus Christ, of whom the sign had been given concerning his death"* (3 Nephi 11:1-2).

3 Nephi 11:3 While the people were conversing about what had happened, they heard the voice of God the Father. What was the voice like? It was not harsh or loud, but small and piercing.

3 Nephi 11:4-6 The people had to hear the voice for the third time before they understood it.

3 Nephi 11:5 The people were finally able to understand the voice when they *"did open their ears to hear it"*. Ponder what you can do to better hear and understand God's words to you.

3 Nephi 11:7 God the Father introduced the Savior by saying that His name had been glorified by the Son and that He was well pleased with His Son.

3 Nephi 11:8-11 The Savior introduced Himself by declaring that He was that Jesus Christ whom the prophets had testified would come into the world; that He is the light and life of the world; and that He had taken upon himself the sins of the world.

3 Nephi 11:13-15 Jesus extended an invitation to all the people in the multitude to arise and come forth to feel His hands and side to know that He had indeed died for their sins. 3 Nephi 17:25 records that there were 2,500 people in the multitude. Think about what you can learn from this example of the Savior's love.

3 Nephi 11:21-27 The Savior taught the Nephites about baptism, instructing them that priesthood power was necessary to perform baptisms, baptism must be requested by a repentant person, that both parties must stand in the water, that the baptism must be performed in the name of Christ, that the exact wording must be repeated, and that the person receiving baptism is to be fully immersed and then shall be brought forth again out of the water. Consider why it is important to be baptized in the correct manner and by someone who has the authority to baptize.

3 Nephi 11:22, 28 Jesus taught that there should be *"no disputations"* among the people concerning baptism or any other points of His doctrine.

3 Nephi 11:29; D&C 10:62-63 Contention about gospel doctrines is dangerous because it stirs up anger and causes the angry parties to serve the devil.

We can be unified in true doctrine by studying the scriptures and obeying the counsel of our priesthood leaders.

3 Nephi 11:30-38 The Savior taught as His doctrine: believing in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, repenting and becoming as a child, being baptized, and receiving the Holy Ghost.

3 Nephi 11:39 He promised that those who build their lives on His doctrine can be assured that the gates of hell shall not prevail against them.

3 Nephi 11:41 We can more fully obey the Savior's instructions to declare these words *"unto the ends of the earth"* if we pray for missionary opportunities and follow the Spirit when prompted to speak to someone about the gospel.

Conclusion

Read 3 Nephi 10:14, and remember the importance of understanding and searching the scriptures. Although persecution will increase as the separation between the righteous and the wicked grows, we will be strengthened as we study the scriptures and follow the prophets.

"Old Things Are Done Away, and All Things Have Become New"

Lesson 38 - 3 Nephi 12-15

Introduction

Think of paintings and pictures of Jesus Christ you've seen in the past. In providing representations of Jesus' character, different artists have portrayed Jesus in many different ways. Think about this question without answering aloud: "If someone asked you to describe Jesus' character, what would you say?" **President Harold B. Lee** spoke of one accurate description of Jesus' character: *"In His Sermon on the Mount the Master has given us somewhat of a revelation of His own character, which was perfect, or what might be said to be 'an autobiography, every syllable of which He had written down in deeds,' and in so doing has given us a blueprint for our own lives"* (Stand Ye in Holy Places [1974], 342).

When Jesus visited the Nephites, He gave a discourse similar to the Sermon on the Mount. As we study and apply the teachings in this discourse, we will learn more about the Savior's character. We will also be able to develop a blueprint, or plan, to pattern our lives after the life of the Master. Be true disciples of Jesus Christ by following His example and by living the higher law that He taught to the Nephites.

Jesus taught the Beatitudes to the Nephites.

Note: You may want to compare 3 Nephi 12:3-12 with the similar teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, found in Matthew 5:3-12.

3 Nephi 12:3; also refer to 3 Nephi 9:13-14, 20-22 and Ether 12:27. In these scriptures, we find that to "come unto Christ" means that we seek out the Savior and apply for his grace by being humble, offering a sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and having faith in Christ as our Savior.

While we're on this subject, ponder how being *"poor in spirit,"* or humble, helps you to "come unto Christ".

3 Nephi 12:4; also see John 14:26-27; Mosiah 18:8-9 Some ways in which the Lord provides for us to be comforted include giving us the gift of the Holy Ghost to comfort us, and by giving us a church family of brothers and sisters who will comfort us as fulfillment of their baptismal covenants.

3 Nephi 12:5. What does it mean to be meek? **President Gordon B. Hinckley** taught, *"Meekness implies a spirit of gratitude as opposed to an attitude of self-sufficiency, an acknowledgment of a greater power beyond oneself, a recognition of God, and an acceptance of his commandments"* ("With All Thy Getting Get Understanding," Ensign, Aug. 1988, 3-4).

3 Nephi 12:6 To *"hunger and thirst after righteousness"* means to seek to follow the Savior's commandments and his example with a deep longing and sincere burning desire, not just a passive interest. We will be filled with the influence of the Holy Ghost as we *"hunger and thirst after righteousness"*.

3 Nephi 12:7. It is important that we be merciful because we seek to emulate the Savior's attitudes and actions--doing as He did when He gave himself for us in the Atonement.

2 Nephi 2:8-9 We need the Lord's mercy because He is the only one who can save us.

3 Nephi 12:8; See also 1 Nephi 10:21. We must be pure in heart to be able to see God because no unclean thing can dwell in His presence.

D&C 93:1 We can purify our hearts by repenting and forsaking our sins, seeking Christ, praying for forgiveness and guidance, being obedient to inspiration and answers to prayers, keeping the commandments, and honoring the covenants we've made.

3 Nephi 12:9. We can be peacemakers in our homes and communities by setting an example of patience, understanding, moderation, courtesy, respect for others and their perspectives, and showing love to all and forgiveness as needed.

3 Nephi 12:10-12. The righteous are sometimes persecuted because others must be allowed to exercise their free agency, because they need to be tested and proven faithful, or because their example and suffering may be a testimony to others who will be converted or strengthened by their example in trials and tribulation.

3 Nephi 12:44; Luke 6:35 We are required to respond to persecution with love for our enemies, blessing them as they curse us, doing good to those who hate us, and praying for the welfare of those who persecute us.

Jesus declared that His followers were to be the salt of the earth and a light to other people.

Jesus said, *"I give unto you to be the salt of the earth"* (3 Nephi 12:13). To help us understand what it means to be "the salt of the earth", **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** explained: *Among the ancient Hebrews salt...was used as a preservative, in seasoning food, and in all animal sacrifices. (Lev. 2:13; Ezek. 43:24; Mark 9:49-50. [Leviticus 2:13; Ezekiel 43:24]) So essential was it to the sacrificial ordinance that it was the symbol of the covenant made between God and His people in connection with that sacred performance. (Lev. 2:13; Num. 18:19; 2 Chron. 13:5. [Numbers 18:19; 2 Chronicles 13:5]). Accordingly, our Lord's statement, made first to the Jews and then to that other great body of Hebrews, the Nephites, that they had power 'to be the salt of the earth,' takes on great significance. ... They had power, in other words, to be the seasoning, savoring, preserving influence in the world, the influence which would bring peace and blessings to all others"* (Mormon Doctrine, 2nd ed. [1966], 667-68).

Ponder how your influence can help others receive peace and other blessings.

Elder Carlos E. Asay: *"A world-renowned chemist told me that salt will not lose its savor with age. Savor is lost through mixture and contamination"* (Ensign, May 1980, 42).

Ponder how you can avoid being *"contaminated"* by the things of the world. Keep your savor by avoiding evil and the

people and places that may exercise evil influence over you.

D&C 101:39-40; D&C 103:9-10 These passages teach about being "*the salt of the earth*" and "*the light of [the] people*" by making and honoring sacred covenants and by being saviors of men (through missionary work and sharing the gospel, temple worship and performing vicarious ordinances, and service as home and visiting teachers.)

3 Nephi 12:16; 3 Nephi 18:24 We can let our light "*shine before [the] people*" by doing good works and setting an example of faithfulness and righteousness.

3 Nephi 12:16 The result of our letting our light shine should be that others may glorify our Heavenly Father and seek to do his works.

Jesus declared that He had fulfilled the law of Moses. He taught the people a higher law.

The law mentioned in the following verses is the law of Moses. The law of Moses was a strict system of performances and ordinances, including animal sacrifice (Mosiah 13:29-30). It had been given to help the Israelites look forward to the Atonement of Jesus Christ (2 Nephi 25:24; Mosiah 13:31-33; Alma 34:13-14).

3 Nephi 15:4-5 Christ gave the law of Moses to the Israelites.

3 Nephi 12:17-19; 3 Nephi 15:2-5 Jesus declared to the Nephites that He had fulfilled the law of Moses.

Alma 34:13-16 explains how Jesus fulfilled this law. The Savior fulfilled the law of Moses when He atoned for our sins. After His Atonement, the people were no longer commanded to make animal sacrifices, which had been required as part of the law of Moses to point toward the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Instead, the people were commanded to "*offer for a sacrifice...a broken heart and a contrite spirit*" (3 Nephi 9:20; see also verse 3 Nephi 9:19).

After Jesus declared that He had fulfilled the law of Moses, He gave the Nephites a higher law. Read each passage listed under "**The Law of Moses**" and then read the corresponding passage listed under "**The Higher Law.**" Consider the differences between these laws. Ponder ways that the higher law can help you draw closer to the Lord.

THE LAW OF MOSES	THE HIGHER LAW
3 Nephi 12:21	3 Nephi 12:22-24
3 Nephi 12:27	3 Nephi 12:28-30
3 Nephi 12:31	3 Nephi 12:32
3 Nephi 12:33	3 Nephi 12:34-37
3 Nephi 12:38	3 Nephi 12:39-42
3 Nephi 12:43	3 Nephi 12:44-45

3 Nephi 12:48 After teaching the Nephites that they should love their enemies, Jesus said, "*Therefore I would that ye should be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect*".

2 Nephi 2:7-9; 3 Nephi 19:28-29 ; Moroni 10:32-33. these scriptures teach us why we need the Atonement of Jesus Christ in order to be perfected.

Jesus taught the Nephites how they must live to be His true disciples.

These chapters contain teachings on how we can be true disciples of Jesus Christ.

3 Nephi 13:1-8, 16-18. Jesus condemned some people who did good things such as doing alms (giving to the poor), praying, and fasting because of the motives behind their actions. From His examples of service as well as the precepts he taught, we know that our motives should be pure when we give service and do other good works.

3 Nephi 13:9-13; 3 Nephi 14:7-11. Jesus' words in these verses teach about how we should pray--reverently and humbly address the Father, pray simply and sincerely to accept and do His will, give thanks and communicate needs such as the need for forgiveness, pray for the welfare of others, and then be willing to accept His will as to the answer you will receive. Specific counsel is given against reciting "vain" repetitions. Note: While much of our prayers may seem repetitious, such as asking daily for the protection or blessing of family members, that does not qualify as a "vain" repetition.

3 Nephi 13:14-15. Jesus emphasized that we need to forgive others. Ponder how you can become more forgiving.

3 Nephi 13:19-24; also See D&C 88:67-69. To have an eye that is "*single*" means that we are focused on the goals of heaven. It is impossible for us to serve both God and mammon (worldliness) because those are competing and controlling influences that cannot coexist, so we must choose between the two.

3 Nephi 13:25-34. The Savior directed the words recorded in these verses to his Nephite Apostles.

3 Nephi 13:33 We can apply these words of those verses in our lives, even though we have **not** received the command to "*take no thought*" for food, drink, or clothing by putting the things of God first in our lives.

3 Nephi 14:1-5. We avoid improperly judging or criticizing others by realizing that we are not yet perfect.

3 Nephi 14:6. This same teaching is found in Matthew 7:6. In the Joseph Smith Translation of that verse, Jesus commands His disciples to preach repentance rather than teach the mysteries of the kingdom (Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 7:9-11). It is important to focus our gospel teaching on basic doctrines because those are the foundation of all Church

teachings and they are the hardest ones to master.

3 Nephi 14:12. Following this principle makes us better disciples of Christ because it encourages us to follow the Savior's example.

3 Nephi 14:13-14. It is significant that the way to eternal life is narrow, while the way to destruction is broad because it encourages us to develop discipline and obedience to stay in the narrow path, both of which are necessary qualities to follow the Savior.

3 Nephi 14:15-20. This teaching is particularly important today because there are so many false teachers who can only be known by the results of their actions and not their teachings. (See Joseph Smith-Matthew 1:22, which describes the last days.)

3 Nephi 14:21-23. We must do the will of Heavenly Father to be able to enter the kingdom of heaven because we obtain blessings only through obedience to the law upon which the blessing is predicated. (See D&C 130:20-21.)

3 Nephi 14:24-27. Jesus' parable about building a house on rock or sand applies in our lives as we choose the foundation upon which we will build our mortal and eternal lives. (See Helaman 5:12.)

Conclusion

3 Nephi 15:1. As we live according to the Savior's teachings, we will have a sure foundation and be strengthened to withstand whatever trials or temptations we may experience. We will become "*the salt of the earth*" and "*the light of [the] people,*" and we will be able to help others draw nearer to the Savior (3 Nephi 12:13-16).

"Behold, My Joy Is Full"

Lesson 39 - 3 Nephi 17-19

Introduction

In your mind, picture Jesus healing the Nephites and blessing the children as you read **3 Nephi 17:5-13, 17-24**. Consider what it might have been like to be among the multitude that experienced these events. *Note:* if you have access to the video: "My Joy is Full", review it. This lesson discusses these events and more of what the resurrected Savior did and taught when He visited the Nephites after His death and Resurrection.

Jesus commanded the Nephites to ponder and pray about what He taught. He healed the sick, blessed the children, and prayed for the people.

3 Nephi 17:1-2 As Jesus prepared to leave the Nephites, He recognized that the people did not understand all that He had been teaching them.

3 Nephi 17:3 He instructed the people to go home and ponder what they had been taught, pray to the Father for understanding, and prepare their minds for the next day's teachings.

In answer to the following questions: *What does it mean to ponder? How would pondering help the Nephites prepare for further instruction from the Savior? How can pondering help us better understand gospel principles?*, **Elder Joseph B.**

Wirthlin taught: *"Pondering, which means to weigh mentally, to deliberate, to meditate, can achieve the opening of the spiritual eyes of one's understanding. Also, the Spirit of the Lord may rest upon the ponderer"* (Ensign, May 1982, 23).

Jesus told the people to pray about what He had taught them. Ponder how prayer helps us better understand gospel principles as it directs our spiritual faculties toward the things of God. Try to think of some other ways we can *"prepare [our] minds"* to receive the Lord's truths.

3 Nephi 17:5-6 Jesus was moved to *"tarry a little longer"* with the people because he felt their need and their desire for Him to stay among them. This demonstrated His feelings for the people as He expressed His compassion for them. In this context, consider how you have felt Jesus' love and concern for you.

3 Nephi 17:7-25 records the actions of the Savior as He tarried with the Nephites.

3 Nephi 17:7-9, 20 Their faith in the Savior enabled the sick and lame among the Nephites to be healed by the Savior.

3 Nephi 17:10 After the sick and lame were healed, both the healed and the whole bowed down and worshipped the Lord. Think about how you show your gratitude to the Savior for the blessings He has given you.

3 Nephi 17:21 This scripture records that the Nephite children were blessed one by one, showing the depth of the Savior's love for little children. (You may also want to read Matthew 19:13-15.)

3 Nephi 11:37-38 The Savior had commanded the Nephites to become as little children.

Mosiah 3:19 gives us insight into the childlike qualities Jesus wants us to have such as submissiveness, humility, meekness, patience, a fulness of love, and a willingness to submit unquestioningly to the Father's will.

The question we should ask (and answer for ourselves) is: What can I do to develop these qualities?

Jesus instituted the sacrament among the Nephites.

3 Nephi 18:1-4 After Jesus blessed the children, He instituted the sacrament among the Nephites.

3 Nephi 18:1-11 We learn about the ordinance of the sacrament from these verses:

a. **3 Nephi 18:5** The sacrament must be blessed and passed by those who have been ordained to do so.

b. **3 Nephi 18:5, 11** The sacrament is to be administered to all worthy members of the Church.

c. **3 Nephi 18:7, 11** The bread and wine represent the body and blood of the Savior.

see also D&C 27:2 and note that today we use water instead of wine.

3 Nephi 18:7, 10-11 We testify by partaking of the sacrament that we do always remember Him; that we are willing to follow His commandments.

3 Nephi 18:7, 11 The blessing promised to those who remember and follow Christ is that they may always have His Spirit to be with them.

Ponder what you can do to prepare yourself to partake of the sacrament each week. Search your mind to remember how partaking of the sacrament has been a blessing to you.

3 Nephi 18:26-29; see also 1 Corinthians 11:28-29 The Savior taught the disciples about the importance of partaking of the sacrament worthily and commanded them to guard it carefully from the unworthy.

Partaking of the sacrament unworthily brings condemnation upon us because we make a covenant that we are breaking as we make it since we are not obeying the commandments if we are unworthy, so covenanting to obey His commandments while simultaneously breaking them is hypocritical and makes a mockery of a solemn ordinance.

3 Nephi 18:29-32 The Savior told His disciples to pray for those who were not worthy to partake of the sacrament and minister to them, seeking to get them to repent; to change their lives so that they could be worthy.

3 Nephi 18:32 He instructed his followers not to cast out those who were not worthy to partake of the sacrament because they might someday repent and accept salvation.

It is important to continue to minister to those who have turned away from the gospel 1) for their benefit and possible salvation and 2) because the effort to teach and assist others gives us opportunity to show compassion and concern for our other family members. Think of ways in which you can do this.

3 Nephi 18:25 The Lord commanded the people to come to Him to see and to feel that they might know that He is the Resurrected Lord.

It is important for us to bear testimony of Jesus Christ to strengthen our own testimony and to give the Spirit the opportunity to bear spiritual confirmation of our testimony to those we teach.

The disciples taught and ministered to the people. The Savior returned to teach the people and pray for them.

3 Nephi 19:1-3 After Jesus ascended into heaven, the Nephites who had seen the Savior took their families to their own homes and they bore testimony of what they had experienced.

3 Nephi 19:3 Those who heard the Nephites' testimonies of the Savior responded to those testimonies by preparing to be at the place where Jesus would appear on the morrow.

Think about the opportunities you have to bear witness of the Savior.

3 Nephi 19:4-8 While the multitude was waiting for the Savior's arrival the next day, the twelve disciples taught the people, prayed with them, and ministered to them; note that this fulfilled the Savior's instruction to them the previous day, as recorded in **3 Nephi 18:16**.

3 Nephi 19:9; 10-15 The disciples prayed to receive the Holy Ghost, which was what they most desired.

3 Nephi 19:9 Consider why you think the disciples so fervently desired *"that the Holy Ghost should be given unto them"*. It is vital that we receive the Holy Ghost to enlighten us and prepare us to receive eternally-significant knowledge, but also to cleanse us that we might be worthy to be in the Lord's presence.

3 Nephi 19:17, 19 After instructing the disciples to pray, Jesus *"went a little way off from them"* to pray alone.

3 Nephi 19:21, 23 Jesus prayed for the Holy Ghost to be given to those who believed in the disciples' words and furthermore, He prayed that the disciples and the believers might truly believe in Him and join He and the Father in their unity of purpose.

You may want to compare this prayer to part of Jesus' great intercessory prayer before His Crucifixion (in John 17:20-23). It is important that followers of Jesus Christ *"be one"* with Him and the Father. We become one with Them when we make our goal to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.

3 Nephi 19:24-25 The prayers of the Nephite disciples were pleasing to the Lord because *"it was given unto them what they should pray"*.

We follow the disciples' examples in our own prayers when we pause and sincerely, fervently listen for the Holy Ghost to direct our prayers and tell us what we should pray for.

3 Nephi 19:31-33 The multitude was able to hear and understand Jesus' words the third time He prayed because their hearts were open.

To have an open heart is to allow our innermost desires to be directed by the Spirit. To open our hearts so the Spirit can teach us requires those child-like qualities mentioned previous in this lesson as recorded in Mosiah 3:19.

Conclusion

The Nephites were blessed to see and hear marvelous things because of their great faith (3 Nephi 17:20; 3 Nephi 19:35) and their fervent prayers (3 Nephi 19:6-9). As we exercise faith in Jesus Christ and pray fervently in our personal and family prayers, the Spirit of the Lord will be with us to bless and help us in all that we do.

Additional Teachings

1. "Watch and pray always"

3 Nephi 18:15, 18-19, 21. Prayer helps protect us from Satan's temptations. Think about how family prayer has influenced your family and consider ways in which you can increase your commitment to have daily family prayer--no matter what may try to interfere.

2. "And they did pray for that which they most desired" (3 Nephi 19:9).

If you have a note pad and a pen, make a list of the six things you desire most--if not, simply think about the six things you desire most. Then, cross off the items on the list that you would not feel comfortable praying for.

Read 3 Nephi 19:9 to see what the Nephite disciples desired most and then consider how you might increase your desire for righteousness and spirituality.

3. "And they did pray unto Jesus" (3 Nephi 19:18)

To clarify why the Nephite disciples prayed to Jesus (3 Nephi 19:18, 3 Nephi 19:24-25, 3 Nephi 19:30), read 3 Nephi 19:22 and the following statement by Elder Bruce R. McConkie: "The only scriptural instances in which prayers were addressed directly to the Son were when...and because!...that Holy Being, as a resurrected personage, was standing before the petitioners. (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 3 vols. [1966-73], 2:79).

Jesus Himself prayed to the Father at this time (3 Nephi 19:19-24, 27-29,31). All our prayers should be addressed to our Father in Heaven and closed in the name of Jesus Christ.

"Then Will I Gather Them In"

Lesson 40 - 3 Nephi 16; 3 Nephi 20-21

Introduction

Today's lesson will help you answer the following questions: What is the house of Israel? Why was Israel scattered? Who are the Gentiles? What do the Gentiles have to do with the scattering and gathering of Israel? What is the gathering of Israel? What sign has been given to show that the latter-day gathering of Israel has begun? As members of the Church, what are our responsibilities in the gathering of Israel?

The Savior prophesied of the scattering of the house of Israel.

What is the house of Israel? The titles "*house of Israel*" and "*Israel*" refer to the descendants of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel. Members of the house of Israel have been referred to in scripture as "*the covenant people of the Lord*" (1 Nephi 15:14) and "*the children of the covenant*" (3 Nephi 20:25-26).

1 Nephi 5:14 The Nephites were of the house of Israel, as descendants of Jacob's son Joseph. The Savior taught of the scattering of Israel.

Why was Israel scattered? 3 Nephi 16:4 records that the members of the house of Israel were "*scattered forth upon the face of the earth because of their unbelief.*"

The Savior prophesied of the spiritual gathering of the house of Israel.

Who are the Gentiles? In the scriptures, the term *Gentiles* is used to designate either people who were not born into the house of Israel or nations that are without the gospel. In the chapters discussed in this lesson, the term *Gentiles* refers to nations that are without the gospel, even though some individuals in those nations may be descendants of Jacob (Bible Dictionary, Gentile, 679).

What do the Gentiles have to do with the scattering and gathering of Israel?

3 Nephi 16:7-9; 3 Nephi 21:1-5. Scripture records that the Savior prophesied that the Gentiles would play a part in the scattering of Israel. The prophecy also states that it would be through the Gentiles that Israel would eventually receive the restored gospel and be gathered.

What is the gathering of Israel? 3 Nephi 16:4,12; 3 Nephi 20:10-13. We need to understand that Israel is gathered as people gain a testimony of the Redeemer and His restored gospel and join His Church. In the early days of the restored Church, part of the gathering of Israel was the Lord's command that members of His Church join the body of Saints in North America, whether in Missouri, Illinois, or the Salt Lake Valley. In the future, another temporal gathering will occur, as members of the house of Israel are gathered to the lands of their inheritance. However, the gathering now taking place is a spiritual gathering.

President Spencer W. Kimball explained: "*The 'gathering of Israel' is effected when the people of the faraway countries accept the gospel and remain in their native lands. The gathering of Israel for Mexicans is in Mexico; in Scandinavia, for those of the northern countries; the gathering place for the Germans is in Germany; and the Polynesians, in the islands; for the Brazilians, in Brazil; for the Argentines, in Argentina*" (Ensign, May 1975, 4).

3 Nephi 21:2-7 and 3 Nephi 29:1-2 Signs have been given to show that the latter-day gathering of Israel has begun because the Book of Mormon has been given to the Gentiles. The "*sayings*" and "*works*" of the Nephites have come forth to the Gentiles through the translation of the Book of Mormon.

For some examples of some roles that the Book of Mormon plays in the gathering of Israel, compare **3 Nephi 16:4,12; 3 Nephi 20:10-13** with **1 Nephi 6:3-4** and the **title page of the Book of Mormon**. The Book of Mormon was written to teach of the covenants of the Lord and to convince all people that Jesus is the Christ.

3 Nephi 21:9-10 The Lord spoke of a servant who would help in the "*great and...marvelous work*" of

bringing forth the Book of Mormon. This servant was Joseph Smith, Jr.

2 Nephi 3:3-8, 11-12 Joseph Smith was a literal descendant of Jacob, but he lived in a Gentile nation. His work in restoring the gospel and bringing forth the Book of Mormon was thus part of the fulfillment of the Lord's promise that *"the truth [would] come unto the Gentiles"* (3 Nephi 16:7).

3 Nephi 16:11-12 The Lord promised that after the fulness of the gospel was restored through the Gentiles, He would remember His covenant with the house of Israel.

3 Nephi 20:25, 27, 29; 3 Nephi 21:4; Mormon 5:20 The covenant that the Lord promised to remember was the Abrahamic covenant.

Genesis 17:1-8; Abraham 2:6, 9-11 These passages remind us of the blessings and responsibilities of the Abrahamic covenant.

2 Nephi 30:2; 3 Nephi 16:13; 3 Nephi 21:6, 22 The future of the Gentiles who repent and turn to God is obvious when we learn that all people who repent and come unto the Lord through baptism will be numbered among His covenant people.

President Joseph Fielding Smith said: *"Every person who embraces the gospel becomes of the house of Israel. In other words, they become members of the chosen lineage, or Abraham's children through Isaac and Jacob unto whom the promises were made. The great majority of those who become members of the Church are literal descendants of Abraham through Ephraim, son of Joseph. Those who are not literal descendants of Abraham and Israel must become such, and when they are baptized and confirmed they are grafted into the tree and are entitled to all the rights and privileges as heirs"*

(Doctrines of Salvation, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954-56], 3:246).

As members of the Church, what are our responsibilities in the gathering of Israel?

The mission of the Church is to invite all people to come unto Christ. We accomplish this mission by proclaiming the gospel, redeeming the dead, and perfecting the Saints. The mission of the Church contributes to the gathering of Israel as we reveal who the covenant people really are and invite them to partake of the blessings of the covenant.

The Savior prophesied of the temporal gathering of the house of Israel.

3 Nephi 16:16 and 3 Nephi 20:14; see also 2 Nephi 1:5-7. According to these verses, a specific promise was extended by the Lord to the Nephites--a promise that they would be given the lands of the Americas as an inheritance.

Enos 1:10; Ether 2:8-9 Responsibilities to maintain righteousness and serve God accompany this promise granting their inheritance.

3 Nephi 21:22-29. In these verses, we see what will happen in this land of inheritance in the last days. A city called the New Jerusalem will be built.

3 Nephi 20:29-34 The original city of Jerusalem will also be restored. The Jews will be given this land as an inheritance.

3 Nephi 21:1 The Savior said that He would gather His people and establish Zion again among them. While the word Zion often refers to specific places, it is also a condition of heart and mind.

See **D&C 97:21 and Moses 7:18-19** for some examples of how Zion has been described in the scriptures. Ponder how you can begin to establish Zion in your home, ward, and stake today.

Conclusion

In the last days, the title *house of Israel* encompasses all those who repent, follow Jesus Christ, and are baptized into His Church. Live so as to be worthy to be part of the Lord's covenant people.

"He Did Expound All Things unto Them"

Lesson 41 - 3 Nephi 22-26

Introduction

Search, Ponder, Pray. If you have a Children's Songbook available, read the words of the hymn: "Search, Ponder, and Pray." (Children's Songbook, 109). Ponder the message of the song and how it relates to our study of the scriptures. This lesson illustrates how the Savior used the scriptures to teach valuable truths. As we search, ponder, and pray about the scriptures, we will have a greater understanding of these truths.

The Savior quoted some of Isaiah's prophecies about the house of Israel.

Chapter 22 records the Savior quoting an entire chapter of Isaiah's teachings (Isaiah 54) concerning the glory of Zion in the latter days.

3 Nephi 22:2 Isaiah exhorted the house of Israel, *"Enlarge the place of thy tent...[and] lengthen thy cords and strengthen thy stakes"*. Think about what the tent and the stakes symbolize and what you think it means to *"enlarge the place of thy tent"* and *"strengthen thy stakes..."* as you read the following from a prophet...

President Ezra Taft Benson said: *"The prophets likened latter-day Zion to a great tent encompassing the earth. That tent was supported by cords fastened to stakes. Those stakes, of course, are various geographical organizations spread out over the earth. Presently, Israel is being gathered to the various stakes of Zion." "...Stakes are a defense for the Saints from enemies both seen and unseen. The defense is direction provided through priesthood channels that strengthens testimony and promotes family solidarity and individual righteousness"* ("Strengthen Thy Stakes," Ensign, Jan. 1991, 2, 4).

Take a moment to consider what you can do individually and what we as families can do to ensure that our stakes are a refuge and a defense against evil.

3 Nephi 22:4-10 Isaiah described the relationship between the Lord and the house of Israel as a marriage commitment. He described the Lord as the husband and Israel as the wife.

Referring to this description and what it can teach us about the Lord's devotion to His people, **Elder Jeffrey R. Holland** said: *"The imagery of Jehovah as bridegroom and Israel as bride is among the most commonly used metaphors in scripture, being used by the Lord and his prophets to describe the relationship between Deity and the children of the covenant. ... Christ has, on occasion, been rightfully angry with backsliding Israel, but that has always been brief and temporary; 'a small moment.' Compassion and mercy always return and prevail in a most reassuring way. The mountains and the hills may disappear. The water of the great seas may dry up. ... But the Lord's kindness and peace will never be taken from his covenant people. He has sworn with a heavenly oath that he will not be wroth with them forever"* (Christ and the New Covenant [1997], 290).

3 Nephi 22:11-12; see also Revelation 21:18-21 The Lord described the place to which the house of Israel would be gathered in the last days as a place adorned with precious stones.

3 Nephi 22:13-17 The promises made to those who will live in this place include: all of their children shall be taught of the Lord and they shall live in peace and righteousness, having no need for fear because the Lord will protect them from their enemies. These promises give strength to those who are afflicted.

3 Nephi 23:1 After Jesus had quoted these prophecies, He said to the people, *"Ye ought to search these things"*.

Speaking about searching the scriptures instead of merely reading them, **Elder Henry B. Eyring** said: *"We treasure the word of God not only by reading the words of the scriptures but by studying them. We may be nourished more by pondering a few words, allowing the Holy Ghost to make them treasures to us, than by passing quickly and superficially over whole chapters of scripture"* (Ensign, Nov. 1997, 84).

Consider how you have been blessed as you have studied the scriptures and try to concentrate on an experience in which particular passages of scripture have provided inspiration or insight or become meaningful as answers to personal problems.

3 Nephi 23:3-5 It was important that the people record the Savior's words so that they could go forth at a time of the Lord's choosing to the Gentiles, and because all who listen to and obey his teachings by repenting and then making and honoring the baptismal covenants will be saved.

The Savior commanded the people, *"Search the prophets, for many there be that testify of these things"* (3 Nephi 23:5). Pause and think about what the prophets testify of. Further, consider how you have been strengthened by the testimonies of ancient and modern prophets.

The Savior commanded the people to add to their records.

After commanding the people to write the things He had taught them, Jesus continued to teach the people concerning other scriptures.

Jesus commanded the Nephites to add to their records a prophecy made by Samuel the Lamanite. In this prophecy, Samuel said that *"many saints [would] arise from the dead, and [would] appear to many, and [would] minister unto them"* (3 Nephi 23:6-13). This particular record was important because the fulfillment of Samuel's prophecy bore witness

of the reality of the Resurrection.

3 Nephi 23:14 After Jesus told the people to write Samuel's prophecy, He commanded them to teach it to others. Consider specific ways in which you can more effectively teach the words of the Savior.

3 Nephi 24:1 Jesus also commanded the people to write some of the words of the prophet Malachi.

The words of Malachi were absent from the Nephites' records. Malachi was an Old Testament prophet whose words were not included on the plates of brass because he did not live until nearly 200 years after Lehi left Jerusalem. (See Bible Dictionary, "Malachi," 728.)

3 Nephi 24:1, 8-18; 3 Nephi 25:1-6 Some teachings of Malachi are of special importance to us. Look up the following passages and describe what Malachi taught.

a. **3 Nephi 24:1; compare Malachi 3:1; See D&C 45:9.** Messengers prepared the way for the Lord's Second Coming as the restored gospel, including the keys and powers, were restored by heavenly messengers. Also, consider the manner in which Joseph Smith might be considered a messenger for the last dispensation.

b. **3 Nephi 24:8-12 ; compare Malachi 3:8-12.** Great blessings are promised in these verses to those who pay tithes and offerings--including protection from Satan, abundant harvests, and being part of a delightful land. Consider how you have been blessed as you have paid tithes and offerings.

c. **3 Nephi 24:13-18 ; compare Malachi 3:13-18.** Some people believe that "*it is vain to serve God*" (see specifically 3 Nephi 24:14-15) because they don't see immediate worldly rewards. But think about how you can remain steadfast in your faith even when evil seems to be prospering.

d. **3 Nephi 25:1-6; compare Malachi 4:1-6.** As you think about what it means to be left without "root or branch", consider your roots to be your parents and ancestors and your branches to be your children and posterity. To be united with our roots and branches, we must receive temple ordinances that preserve our family relationships for time and eternity.

The Lord said He would send Elijah before the Second Coming.

D&C 110:13-16 Elijah did return as he appeared in the Kirtland Temple. Keys he restored were the keys of the sealing power, which provide the way for us to be united with our ancestors and our posterity.

The Savior expounded all things from the beginning.

3 Nephi 26:2 The Father's direction and His desire that Malachi's words be available to the present and future generations were the reasons the Savior gave for teaching the prophecies of Malachi to the Nephites.

Consider which teachings of Malachi have been of special significance to you.

3 Nephi 26:1, 3-5 The Savior taught the plan of salvation to the people after discussing the prophecies of Malachi. (Note: "*expound*" means to explain carefully and in detail.)

We should teach the gospel "*from the beginning,*" as Jesus did so that we explain all the detail needed for the listener to have a fair understanding of the Father's plan and the responsibilities we all have in that plan.

In his record, Mormon included only "*the lesser part*" of what Jesus taught the people (3 Nephi 26:8).

Having only this small part tries our faith and requires us to develop a dependence on the Savior and personal revelation from Him through the Holy Ghost.

3 Nephi 26:9 As you ponder how we can receive "*the greater things*" by believing that which we have received, note what Pres. Kimball taught...

President Spencer W. Kimball said: "*I have had many people ask me through the years, 'When do you think we will get the balance of the Book of Mormon records?' And I have said, 'How many in the congregation would like to read the sealed portion of the plates?' And almost always there is a 100-percent response. And then I ask the same congregation, 'How many of you have read the part that has been opened to us?' And there are many who have not read the Book of Mormon, the unsealed portion. We are quite often looking for the spectacular, the unobtainable. I have found many people who want to live the higher laws when they do not live the lower laws*" (The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, ed. Edward L. Kimball [1982], 531-32).

3 Nephi 26:14, 16. These verses indicate the Savior's special love for children.

3 Nephi 26:19-21 The Nephites who had witnessed these events treated each other as loved ones; brothers and sisters with whom they shared everything freely as if they were treasured family members.

Ponder how you can follow their example in your marriage, family, ward, and stake.

Conclusion

The Savior showed us the importance of the scriptures by quoting them, commanding the people to search them, and adding to them. As we search, ponder, and pray about the scriptures, we will understand them more deeply and be able to teach them to others more effectively.

"This Is My Gospel"

Lesson 42 - 3 Nephi 27-30; 4 Nephi

Introduction

"Mormon Church". Consider your feelings about this nickname. **President Boyd K. Packer** said: *"Others refer to us as Mormons. I do not mind if they use that title. However, sometimes we are prone ourselves to say 'Mormon Church.' I do not think it best for us to do so"* ("The Peaceable Followers of Christ," Ensign, Apr. 1998, 64). Why is it best not to refer to ourselves as the "Mormon Church"? **The First Presidency** stated: *"Keep in mind that this is the Church of Jesus Christ; please emphasize that fact in making contacts with others. ... We feel that some may be misled by the too frequent use of the term 'Mormon Church' "* ("Policies and Announcements," Ensign, Mar. 1983, 79). **3 Nephi 27** includes Jesus' instructions to His Nephite disciples concerning the name of His Church. Today's lesson is designed to help us understand the fundamental doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ and to teach that living the gospel is the only way to true and eternal happiness.

The Savior commanded His Nephite disciples to call the Church after His name. He expounded His gospel.

Jesus' Nephite disciples were *"united in mighty prayer and fasting"* when Jesus came to them and asked, *"What will ye that I shall give unto you?"* (3 Nephi 27:1-2).

3 Nephi 27:3 The disciples asked Him to settle the disputations that had arisen over what the name of the church should be.

3 Nephi 27:4-9 His answer was that the church should be named for Him, as taught in the scriptures.

D&C 115:4 The Lord has commanded that His restored Church, like His Church among the Nephites, be called after His name.

It is important for us to remember that the Church is called after the name of Jesus Christ because He leads it and it must proclaim His doctrines and teachings to be His.

3 Nephi 27:7 Jesus said, *"Whatsoever ye shall do, ye shall do it in my name"*.

What are some things we do in the name of Christ? **President Boyd K. Packer** said: *"Every prayer we offer is in His name. Every ordinance performed is in His name. Every baptism, confirmation, blessing, ordination, every sermon, every testimony is concluded with the invocation of His sacred name. It is in His name that we heal the sick and perform other miracles of which we do not, cannot, speak. ...In the sacrament we take upon ourselves the name of Christ. We covenant to remember Him and keep His commandments. He is present in all that we believe"* ("The Peaceable Followers of Christ," Ensign, Apr. 1998, 64).

Jesus taught that in addition to being called after His name, His Church must be *"built upon [His] gospel."* He said, *"If it so be that the church is built upon my gospel then will the Father show forth his own works in it"* (3 Nephi 27:10).

3 Nephi 21:1-9; 3 Nephi 21:24-29; Moses 1:39 The works of the Father include making and fulfilling covenants with His children, revealing knowledge of the plan of Happiness, establishing His people in lands where they can worship Him, gathering His people when they repent and turn to Him, and making the gospel available to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.

You have seen these works in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. When Latter-day Saints bear their testimonies, they often say that they know the gospel is true. Consider how you would respond if, after saying "I know the gospel is true," you were asked, "What is the gospel?"

"This is my gospel". After Jesus said that His Church must be built on His gospel, He gave His disciples a concise, complete definition of His gospel.

3 Nephi 27:13-22 lists different aspects of the gospel of Jesus Christ:

- a. Jesus' submission to the will of the Father (3 Nephi 27:13)
- b. The Atonement (3 Nephi 27:14)
- c. Resurrection (3 Nephi 27:14-15)
- d. Judgment (3 Nephi 27:14-15)
- e. Repentance (3 Nephi 27:16, 19-20)
- f. Baptism (3 Nephi 27:16, 20)
- g. Faith in Jesus Christ (3 Nephi 27:19)
- h. The gift of the Holy Ghost (3 Nephi 27:20)
- i. Enduring to the end (3 Nephi 27:16-17, 19)

3 Nephi 27:21-22 The Savior promised those who live according to His gospel that they will be exalted for following in His footsteps.

Jesus asked His disciples, *"What manner of men ought ye to be?"* The answer was that they should be even as the Savior is. (See **3 Nephi 27:27**).

Consider what you can do to be more like the Savior.

The Savior granted the desires of His twelve disciples. Three of the disciples chose to remain on the earth until His Second Coming.

3 Nephi 28:1-5 Before the Savior returned to His Father, He spoke to His disciples one by one and asked what each desired of Him. Nine asked that their ministries might end when they reached a certain age and that they might then go speedily to

Him in His kingdom. The other three were hesitant to express their desire, but the Savior knew their thoughts.

3 Nephi 28:7-9 The desire of the last three Nephite disciples was to remain on earth and bring souls to Christ until the end of the world. Jesus said that these disciples were "*more blessed*" because of their desire. From this statement, we learn the principle taught in **D&C 15:6; D&C 16:6; and D&C 18:10-16**, that our joy will be increased as we bring repentant souls to Christ.

3 Nephi 28:13-15 In response to their request, the three disciples were transfigured, meaning that their bodies were changed so they "*could behold the things of God*". Then they were translated.

3 Nephi 28:7-40 The account in these verses teaches about characteristics of translated beings:

Translated beings never taste of death or endure the pains of death (**3 Nephi 28:7-8, 38**).

When the Savior comes in His glory, they will be "*changed in the twinkling of an eye from mortality to immortality*" (**3 Nephi 28:8**).

Except for the sorrow they feel for the sins of the world, they do not experience pain or sorrow (**3 Nephi 28:9, 38**).

They help people become converted to the Lord (**3 Nephi 28:9, 18, 23, 29-30**).

They cannot be killed or harmed in any way (**3 Nephi 28:19-22**).

Satan cannot tempt them or have any power over them (**3 Nephi 28:39**).

They remain in a translated state until the Judgment Day, when they will be resurrected and received into the kingdom of God (**3 Nephi 28:40**).

Note: Stories often circulate about the three Nephites who were translated. Members of the Church should be careful about accepting or retelling these stories and such stories should not be discussed in the Sunday School class.

After many years of peace, the majority of the people dwindled in unbelief and rejected the gospel.

The short book of 4 Nephi contains Mormon's abridgment of about 300 years of history. The history was originally written by four men: Nephi, who was named after his father, one of the Savior's twelve Nephite disciples; Nephi's son Amos; and Amos's sons Amos and Ammaron. The first part of the book describes a period of great righteousness and happiness, and the second part of the book tells of the people's decline into wickedness.

4 Nephi 1:1-18. Characteristics of the people described in these verses include: peace-loving, just, free, righteous, Christian, prosperous, industrious, numerous, strong, fair, delightful, family-centered, blessed, obedient, humble, prayerful, faithful, loving, agreeable, moral, modest, truthful, honest, happy, united, and godly.

4 Nephi 1:2, 4, 13, 15-18 For many years after Jesus' visit, there was no contention among the people. There was no contention because the love of God dwelt in each individual's heart. (See 4 Nephi 1:15.)

How can we become like the righteous people described in 4 Nephi? What can we do so that the love of God will dwell in our hearts? **President Gordon B. Hinckley** said: "*If the world is to be improved, the process of love must make a change in [our] hearts. ...It can do so when we look beyond self to give our love to God and others, and do so with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind*" ("*And the Greatest of These Is Love*," Ensign, Mar. 1984, 5).

4 Nephi 1:17 During this period of peace, there was not "any manner of -ites".

4 Nephi 1:2-3, 15-17 This means that they were united and treated each other with love, not being divided or competitive with each other, not seeking distinction from each other, but only seeking the welfare of their brothers and sisters. Consider the problems that exist today because of distinctions between groups of people and think of ways the gospel helps us become united, despite our differences.

4 Nephi 1:20-46 These verses teach us the actions and attitudes that contributed to the end of this long era of peace.

- a. Division and the creation of classes (**4 Nephi 1:20, 26, 35**)
- b. Pride and greed because of riches (**4 Nephi 1:23-25, 41, 43; see also 3 Nephi 27:32**)
- c. Churches that professed to know Christ but denied most of His gospel (**4 Nephi 1:26-29, 34**)
- d. Churches built up to help people get gain (**4 Nephi 1:26-29, 41**)
- e. Hard-heartedness (**4 Nephi 1:31**)
- f. Persecution of Christ's followers (**4 Nephi 1:29-34**)
- g. Parents teaching children not to believe in Christ (**4 Nephi 1:38**)
- h. Parents teaching children to hate (**4 Nephi 1:39**)
- i. Secret combinations (**4 Nephi 1:42, 46**)

The attitudes and actions described in 4 Nephi 1:40-46 led to the Nephites' destruction. It is important for us to examine this account to learn from and avoid those errors and sins.

Conclusion

3 Nephi 27:10, 22, 28-29 Review the Lord's promises in these verses. When the people remained faithful to the gospel, "*there could not [have been] a happier people*" (4 Nephi 1:16).

"How Could Ye Have Departed from the Ways of the Lord?"

Lesson 43 - Mormon 1-6; Moroni 9

Introduction

If you were sailing a boat, what equipment would you want it to have? Mormon compared his people, the Nephites, to a boat that was lacking some essential pieces of equipment. Read Mormon 5:17-18 and consider how people who do not follow the Savior are "*as a vessel without sail or anchor*". Unlike the rest of the Nephites, Mormon used the gospel as both a sail and an anchor in his life. He lived righteously even when it seemed that everyone around him was wicked. This lesson discusses what happened to Mormon and his people and how we can use the gospel as a sail and an anchor in our lives. We should be able to see the importance of living according to gospel principles despite the increasing wickedness in the world around us.

Mormon was given responsibility for the sacred records.

Mormon was responsible for abridging all of the plates into the record we know as the Book of Mormon. Mormon 1-6 contains Mormon's record of his own time and people.

Mormon 1:2-3 Mormon was "about ten" years old when he was given responsibility for the sacred records by Ammaron, but he was told at that time not to retrieve the plates of Nephi until he was "about 24".

Mormon 1:3-4 Ammaron instructed Mormon to take the plates of Nephi, leave the rest where they were deposited, and then to record the things he had observed about the people.

Characteristics the young Mormon possessed that prepared him for his role in preserving and abridging the sacred records included being sober and observant. He was also educated in the learning of his people and he was a spiritually-minded youth.

Mormon 1:15 When Mormon was 15 years old, he "*was visited of the Lord, and tasted and knew of the goodness of Jesus*". Think about how you can come to know of the goodness of Jesus.

Mormon 1:16-17 The Lord forbade Mormon to preach to the Nephites because they had willfully rebelled against their God and they had hardened their hearts.

Mormon 1:13-18 Other losses the Nephites experienced because of the hardness of their hearts included the loss of miracles and healings that had been performed by the "*beloved disciples*" who were taken away--the three Nephite disciples who had desired to remain on the earth until the Savior's Second Coming (see 3 Nephi 28:1-9); no gifts from the Lord nor any companionship of the Holy Ghost; the land was cursed and infested by the Gadianton robbers; and the Lord made their hidden worldly treasures "slippery" so that they could neither hold nor retain them when they buried them in the cursed land. Ponder the losses you might experience if you were to harden your heart against the Lord and His servants.

Mormon became the leader of the Nephite armies. The Nephites suffered in battle because of their wickedness.

Mormon 1:19; Mormon 2:1, 8, 10, 18 Conditions existing in Nephite society during Mormon's lifetime included witchcraft and sorcery, a predominant influence of Satan's power, a resumption of war between the Lamanites and Nephites; blood and carnage during continual revolution; no one could keep anything of his own; and wickedness and abominations flourished.

Mormon 1:19; Mosiah 12:4-8; Helaman 13:5-10 These conditions fulfilled the words of earlier prophets including Abinadi and Samuel the Lamanite

Alma 17:2-3; Helaman 3:35; D&C 121:45-46 Even though we, like Mormon, live in a time of much wickedness, these scriptures teach what we can do to maintain our faith and personal righteousness--pray, fast, study the scriptures, choose righteous associates, seek personal revelation, serve the Lord and his children by teaching the gospel, be humble and faithful, and purify your heart by yielding unto God and the influence of the Spirit.

Mormon 2:10-12 Mormon rejoiced when he saw the people mourning because he thought they were on the way to becoming righteous.

Mormon 2:13-14 His rejoicing was in vain because they were not choosing to repent but only to lament that they could not be happy in sinning.

2 Corinthians 7:9-10 The difference between "*sorrowing...unto repentance*" and "*the sorrowing of the damned*" is that godly sorrow works unto repentance and that brings salvation, while worldly sorrow only brings death.

Mormon 2:14; see also 3 Nephi 9:20; D&C 59:8 To "*come unto Jesus with broken hearts and contrite spirits*" is to seek his forgiveness and commit to follow his example forevermore.

Mormon 2:19 Mormon had hope and peace even when he viewed the wickedness of his people because he knew that he personally would be saved because he had been faithful and obedient.

Consider how you can maintain hope and peace amid the wickedness of the world today.

Mormon 3:3 Mormon said that when his people defeated the Lamanites in battle, "*they did not realize that it was the Lord that had spared them*". Think about why it is important that we recognize that the blessings we receive are from the Lord.

Mormon 3:9-13 After more than 30 years of leading the Nephite armies, Mormon refused to lead them because of their wickedness and their desire to seek revenge. The Lord had commanded them not to seek revenge, and He declared, "*Vengeance is mine*" (Mormon 3:14-15).

Ponder the consequences that come when people seek vengeance. Then consider how you can overcome feelings of vengeance if they arise in your heart.

Mormon 3:12 We learn from Mormon that we should respond with love and sincere prayer for them when we encounter people who are hard-hearted.

Think seriously about how you can develop greater love for such people and why it is important to continue to pray for the hard-hearted.

Mormon explained the purposes for the records he had abridged and written.

After refusing to lead the Nephite armies, Mormon said he would "*stand as [a] witness,*" recording the events that were taking place among the Nephites" (Mormon 3:16).

In these verses, Mormon directly addresses those for whom his record is intended:

Mormon 3:17-19; Mormon 5:9-10, 14 Mormon's record was intended for the Gentiles and the House of Israel, including the twelve tribes across the face of the earth, and especially to the remnant of the house of Israel in the Americas in the latter-days.

Mormon 3:20-22; Mormon 5:14-15 Purposes for keeping and preserving the record included:

- a. "*That ye may know that ye must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ...to be judged of your works*" (Mormon 3:20).
- b. "*That ye may believe the gospel of Jesus Christ*" (Mormon 3:21; see also Mormon 5:15).
- c. To provide a witness "*that Jesus [is] the very Christ and the very God*" (Mormon 3:21; see also Mormon 5:14).
- d. To "*persuade all ye ends of the earth to repent*" (Mormon 3:22).

Think about how Mormon's writings have helped fulfill these purposes in your life.

In a final great battle, all but 24 of the Nephites were killed.

Mormon 4:5 In commenting on the Nephites' losses against the Lamanites, Mormon explained that "*it is by the wicked that the wicked are punished*". Think about what this means and how you see this happening in the world today.

Mormon 5:2 Mormon felt that the situation was hopeless when he agreed to lead the armies again.

Mormon 5:1 Mormon understood who could bring the Nephites victory in battle -- the Lord. His understanding differed from the Nephites' belief that Mormon as a military leader could lead them to victory.

Mormon 4:23; see also Mormon 1:3-4 Mormon took the plates from the Hill Shim because he understood that the land was about to fall to the Lamanites.

Mormon 6:6 Mormon hid the plates in the Hill Cumorah because he was getting old; he knew this would be the last great battle; and he knew that he had been commanded to safeguard the sacred records. It was very important to protect the plates because if the Lamanites gained possession of them, they would be destroyed.

Mormon 6:7-15 The result of the final battle at Cumorah was the destruction of the Nephites as a people with over 230,000 slain in that battle.

Mormon 6:16-22; Mormon 8:2-3 After the battle of Cumorah, the Lamanites hunted down the remaining 24 Nephites and killed all but Moroni. The Nephite nation was thus completely destroyed.

Mormon 1:13,16; Mormon 2:26-27; Mormon 3:2-3; Mormon 4:12; Mormon 5:2,16-19; Moroni 9:3-5,18-20 Such "*great calamity*" came upon the Nephites because they had embraced wickedness and abominations until the judgment of God was brought upon them.

We also live among much wickedness. How can individual righteousness make a difference in an unrighteous society? **Elder Neal A. Maxwell** warned: "*Only reform and self-restraint, institutional and individual, can finally rescue society! Only a sufficient number of sin-resistant souls can change the marketplace. As Church members we should be part of that sin-resistant counterculture*" (Ensign, May 1993, 77).

Conclusion

The Nephite society was destroyed because of its great wickedness. Although we also live in a time of great wickedness, we must not be part of it. By following Mormon's example of steadfastness and faith, and by studying the records he so carefully preserved, we can withstand the evil influences of our day and provide an example of courage and hope for others.

Additional Teachings:

Righteous youth: Mormon was only ten when Ammaron entrusted him with the records. (See Mormon 1:2-4.) And he was just fifteen when he saw Jesus Christ. (See Mormon 1:15.)

Joseph Smith was 14 years old when he received the First Vision of the Father and the Son, and he was 21 when he received the gold plates from the angel Moroni. Righteousness and wisdom are not limited by age or other circumstances. The Lord will bless those who serve Him at any age.

"I Speak unto You As If Ye Were Present"

Lesson 44 - Mormon 7-9

Introduction

Teachers often use stories, object lessons, or interesting questions at the beginning of lessons to catch people's attention.

"I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not."

"Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing."

Why should these statements catch our attention? Well, when Moroni made these statements around A.D. 400, he was talking directly to us. See Mormon 8:35. All the teachings in Mormon 7-9 are directed to people living in the latter days. Mormon 7 contains counsel specifically for latter-day descendants of Lehi, and Mormon 8-9 contains counsel for all people in the latter days.

Mormon exhorted the latter-day descendants of Lehi to repent, believe in Christ, and be baptized.

Mormon 7 contains Mormon's words to the latter-day descendants of Lehi. Latter-day descendants of Lehi are found among the people of North, Central, and South America and the Pacific Islands.

Mormon 7:2 In this final message, these were Mormon's first words to the latter-day descendants of Lehi. It is important for the descendants of Lehi to know that they are "*of the house of Israel*" so that they may learn and understand both their responsibilities to the Lord and the associated blessings.

Abraham 2:8-11 Blessings the Lord has promised to righteous members of the house of Israel include "... *I will make of thee a great nation, ...bless thee above measure, ...make thy name great among all nations, and thou shalt be a blessing unto thy seed after thee, that in their hands they shall bear this ministry and priesthood unto all nations; ... I will bless them through thy name; and [they] shall rise up and bless thee, as their father;...And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee; and in thee...shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal*"

Mormon 7:3-10 Instructions Mormon gave the latter-day descendants of Lehi include:

- Repent, be baptized, and receive the gift of the Holy Ghost (**Mormon 7:3, 5, 8, 10**).
- Lay down weapons of war unless God commands differently (**Mormon 7:4**).
- Come to the knowledge of their ancestors (**Mormon 7:5**).

It is important for the latter-day descendants of Lehi to gain a knowledge of their ancestors. We all benefit from a knowledge of God's works among our ancestors.

- Believe in Jesus Christ and His Atonement (**Mormon 7:5-7, 10**).
- Study the gospel in the Bible and the Book of Mormon (**Mormon 7:8-9**).

Mormon 7:9; see also **1 Nephi 13:38-40**; **2 Nephi 3:11-12** The Book of Mormon helps people believe the Bible by serving as another witness of Christ and adding clarity to biblical doctrines.

D&C 49:24 In this dispensation the Lord has said that "*the Lamanites shall blossom as the rose*". This prophecy is being fulfilled today as more and more of the Lamanites embrace the Church and learn of their heritage in the house of Israel.

Moroni prophesied that the Book of Mormon will come forth in a day of great wickedness.

Mormon 8 contains Moroni's first writings after the death of his father, Mormon.

Mormon 8:1-5. You sense a deep sense of sadness and loneliness from Moroni as you read these words. We can learn from Moroni's diligence despite his sadness and his situation of being so alone.

Mormon 8:16; see also verses Mormon 8:14-15 Moroni prophesied of Joseph Smith, saying, "*Blessed be he that shall bring this thing [the Book of Mormon] to light*".

Mormon 8:14; Joseph Smith-History 1:30-35,46,59 Moroni played the role of guardian and custodian of the plates as well as being the delivering heavenly messenger and mentor to Joseph Smith in bringing the Book of Mormon "*out of darkness unto light*".

Ponder what you can do so the Book of Mormon will continue to be "*brought out of darkness unto light*". **President Ezra Taft Benson** said: "*I commend you faithful Saints who are striving to flood the earth and your lives with the Book of Mormon. Not only must we move forward in a monumental manner more copies of the Book of Mormon, but we must move boldly forward into our own lives and throughout the earth more of its marvelous messages*" (Ensign, May 1989, 4).

Mormon 8:21-22. Moroni's words in Mormon 8:22 can strengthen us as we labor in the Lord's cause, knowing that nothing can stop the work.

Mormon 8:26-33 Moroni prophesied about conditions in the world when the Book of Mormon would come forth. As you read these verses, consider ways in which the conditions described in these verses are evident today. Moroni prophesied that as it came forth, people would be saying that there are no more miracles, that darkness and sin would cause the death of saints, that the power of God would be denied, churches would be corrupted and proud, that natural disasters would be frequent and terrible, peace would be overcome by wars and conflicts, earthquakes would shake the earth in many places, sin would be rampant and many would condone it and promise that the Lord would excuse sin, indulgences would be sold by churches, and churches would be built up to get worldly gain.

Mormon 8:34-35 Moroni was able to prophesy so clearly concerning the last days because he literally saw our times and knew exactly what would come.

Mormon 8:35 Moroni said that he would speak to those of us in the last days *"as if [we] were present"*. Then he said, *"I know that ye do walk in the pride of your hearts"* (Mormon 8:36).

Mormon 8:36-41 Moroni said that pride would abound and cause the complete downfall of many in the last days.

Mormon 8:37, 39 Pride affects people's attitudes toward the needy as the proud choose luxury and fine worldly goods for themselves rather than choosing to help those in need. The proud also seek to ignore the needy.

Mormon 8:38 Some people might be *"ashamed to take upon [themselves] the name of Christ"* because it is not fashionable in the world of the rich and proud. They might lose their exalted social standing and their "friends".

Think about why it might help us to remember that *"endless happiness"* has more value than *"the praise of the world"*.

What should be our response to Moroni's prophecies about pride? **President Ezra Taft Benson** said: *"The antidote for pride is humility,...meekness, submissiveness (see Alma 7:23). It is the broken heart and contrite spirit (see 3 Nephi 9:20; 3 Nephi 12:19; D&C 20:37 ; D&C 59:8; Psalm 34:18; Isaiah 57:15 ; Isaiah 66:2). "* *"God will have a humble people. Either we can choose to be humble or we can be compelled to be humble. "* *"Let us choose to be humble"* (Ensign, May 1989, 6).

Moroni exhorted people in the last days to believe in Christ.

Mormon 9:1 This chapter begins with Moroni's words to people in the latter days who do not believe in Christ.

Mormon 9:3-5 Moroni warns that such people would be *"more miserable to dwell with...God [than] to dwell with the damned souls in hell"*. Their own feelings about their guilt would make them completely miserable in God's presence.

Mormon 9:6; D&C 121:45 We are taught that we must sincerely repent and turn completely to God so that we can dwell in God's presence.

2 Nephi 28:2-6; Mormon 9:7; Joseph Smith-History 1:17-19 , 21-22 ; and Articles of Faith 1:7 Consider how these four passages relate to one another.

Mormon 9:8-10 Moroni said to people who do not believe in the gifts of the Spirit that they either have not read or do not understand the scriptures and their teachings about the nature of God.

Mormon 9:11 To those who believe that God no longer performs miracles, Moroni said, *"I will show unto you a God of miracles"*.

Mormon 9:11-17 Moroni taught the lessons of the scriptures to show that the Lord is a God of miracles. These doctrines summarize the plan of redemption:

- a. The creation of the heavens, the earth, and mankind (**Mormon 9:11-12, 17**).
- b. The Fall (**Mormon 9:12**).
- c. Redemption through Jesus Christ (**Mormon 9:12-13**).
- d. The resurrection of all people (**Mormon 9:13**).
- e. The return of all people to the Lord's presence to be judged (**Mormon 9:13-14**).

Mormon 9:18 Moroni referred to the *"many mighty miracles"* performed by Jesus and His Apostles. Think about some of the miracles performed by Jesus and His Apostles that have inspired you.

Mormon 9:20 Unbelief and disobedience cause miracles to cease for some people.

Mormon 9:21-25 Signs will continue to follow those who believe in Christ, including answers to their prayers, the ability to overcome Satan and cast out devils, the gift of tongues, miraculous protection from earthly perils, the ability to perform miracles of healing, and the receipt of a testimony of the Lord and His work.

If someone were to tell you that the Lord is not a God of miracles, how would you respond? What experiences could you appropriately share to bear witness that the Lord is a God of miracles?

Mormon 9:27 Moroni exhorted us to *"doubt not, but be believing"*.

In this dispensation, the Prophet Joseph Smith declared, *"Where doubt is, there faith has no power"* (Lectures on Faith [1985], 46).

What can we do to overcome our doubts? **Joseph Smith** taught: *"Those who know their weakness and liability to sin would be in constant doubt of salvation if it were not for the idea which they have of the excellency of God, that he is slow to anger and long-suffering, and of a forgiving disposition, and does forgive iniquity, transgression, and sin. An idea of these facts does away doubt, and makes faith exceedingly strong"* (Lectures on Faith, 42).

Conclusion

Read **Mormon 9:27**. Although Moroni warned of the judgments of God, he also testified of the Lord as a *"God of miracles...whose Atonement brings to pass...the redemption of man"* (Mormon 9:11-12).

"Never Has Man Believed in Me As Thou Hast"

Lesson 45 - Ether 1-6

Introduction

While residing in Kirtland Elder Reynolds Cahoon had a son born to him. One day when President Joseph Smith was passing his door, he called the Prophet in and asked him to bless and name the baby. Joseph did so and gave the boy the name of Mahonri Moriancumer. When he had finished the blessing he laid the child on the bed, and turning to Elder Cahoon he said, 'The name I have given your son is the name of the brother of Jared; the Lord has just shown [or revealed] it to me.' Elder William F. Cahoon...heard the Prophet make this statement to his father; and this was the first time the name of the brother of Jared was known in the Church in this dispensation (George Reynolds, "The Jaredites," Juvenile Instructor, 1 May 1892, 282).

This lesson discusses the brother of Jared, Mahonri Moriancumer, of whom the Lord said, "Never has man believed in me as thou hast" (Ether 3:15). Because of his faith, the Jaredites were blessed to have their language preserved after the tower of Babel, and they were guided safely to the Promised Land. His example can increase our understanding of the importance and power of faith.

The Lord granted the requests of the brother of Jared.

The prophet Ether wrote the record of the Jaredites, who left Babylon when the Lord confounded the language of the people attempting to build the tower of Babel. Ether wrote this record on 24 gold plates, which were later found by the people of Limhi (**Mosiah 8:7-11**). The book of Ether contains Moroni's abridgment of Ether's record. When the people were scattered and their language was confounded, Jared asked his brother to go to the Lord.

Ether 1:34 This verse tells us that the brother of Jared was a man of imposing physical presence--large and strong --and more importantly, he was highly favored of the Lord, so it must have appeared to Jared that his brother might more easily gain a desired blessing from the Lord.

Ether 1:34-39 In response to requests from Jared, the brother of Jared "did cry unto the Lord".

Alma 34:17-28 These verses give us some instruction that is helpful in understanding the difference between "crying unto the Lord" and merely saying prayers. We can make our prayers more effective if we exercise faith that motivates us to be more faithful, diligent, and obedient in our lives; more sincere and completely honest and humble in our prayers; more conscious of the Lord in each moment of our daily life; and more loving and mindful of our fellow men in our daily actions.

Ether 1:35, 37, 40 Each time the brother of Jared prayed, the Lord "had compassion" on him and his people, answering pleas to retain their language, remain together as an extended family, and be guided to wherever the Lord desired them to go. Pause and consider how you have felt the Lord's compassion in response to your prayers.

Ether 1:41-42 Preparations the Lord instructed the people to make included gathering the resources that would provide their livelihood--flocks and seeds--and their family and those they considered "friends" along with their friends' families.

Ether 1:43 The reason the Lord promised to guide the Jaredites to a promised land was their constancy in prayer. Note the Lord's words: "This long time ye have cried unto me." We learn from this example that if our prayers are consistent, sincere, humble, and based on faith and willingness to obey, the Lord will answer our righteous desires.

The Jaredites began their journey to the promised land.

Ether 2:7 The Lord promised to lead the Jaredites to "the land of promise, which was choice above all other lands".

Ether 2:7 The Lord preserved that choice land for a "righteous" people.

Ether 2:8 The Lord gave a stern warning to the brother of Jared regarding the Promised Land that if they did not serve Him--the true and only God--that they would be swept off the Promised Land.

Ether 2:9-12 Moroni noted that the decrees of God pertaining to the land of promise were a warning and promise for **all** people who would inhabit the Americas, not just the Jaredites.

Ether 2:13 When they arrived at the seashore, the Jaredites pitched their tents and stayed there for four years. At the end of the four years, the Lord spoke with the brother of Jared.

Ether 2:14 The Lord chastened Mahonri Moriancumer because he had failed to pray unto the Lord.

Ponder why you might sometimes neglect to call upon the Lord.

Ether 2:15-17 The brother of Jared repented and began building barges to cross the sea.

Ether 2:19 The brother of Jared encountered three major problems after the barges were built--lack of illumination, lack of ability to steer the vessels, and lack of a ventilation system to allow them to breathe.

Ether 2:20 The Lord instructed the brother of Jared to cut holes in the bottoms and tops of the barges to have fresh air to breathe by capturing it when the barges were floating on the surface of the water.

Ether 2:23-25 When the brother of Jared asked how to light the barges, the Lord's response was to assure him that the Lord would control the winds and the waves, but He asked the brother of Jared for a suggestion as to how to illuminate the barges' interiors since windows and fire wouldn't be possible.

What can we learn from the Lord's response and why is it important to do all we can in addition to asking the Lord for help?

Elder Russell M. Nelson said that he has often heard President Gordon B. Hinckley say, "I don't know how to get anything done except getting on my knees and pleading for help and then getting on my feet and going to work" (Ensign, Nov. 1997, 16).

The brother of Jared saw Jesus Christ.

Ether 3:1-5 The brother of Jared proposed to solve the problem of lighting the barges by having the Lord "*prepare*" the stones to "*shine forth in darkness*" by simply touching them with His finger. This demonstrated his humility and faith. Review these verses and identify words or phrases spoken by the brother of Jared that show his humility and faith.

Ether 3:6 When the brother of Jared had finished speaking, the Lord touched the stones one by one with His finger.

Ether 3:6-8 The brother of Jared was very frightened when he saw the finger of the Lord because he thought he might be smitten for learning that the Lord's body was very similar to mortal man's.

Ether 3:9 The Lord said that the faith of the brother of Jared exceeded that of **any** man who had come before Him.

Ether 3:11 The Lord asked if the brother of Jared believed His words before showing Himself to this faithful mortal.

Ether 3:12 The response of the brother of Jared demonstrated the depth of his faith because he accepted the Lord's words even before he had heard them. Think about what you might do to follow his example.

Ether 3:13-14 The Lord described Himself to the brother of Jared as being the Savior chosen in the pre-mortal existence, gave the name by which he would be called in mortality and by his followers, described his positions as both Father and Son, declared that all men could have light through faith in Him, and taught that those who believe in Him would become his sons and daughters in eternity.

It was necessary for the brother of Jared to exhibit complete faith and an unflinching testimony of God to be in the Lord's presence. Ponder what is necessary for you to be in the Lord's presence eternally.

Ether 3:15-18, 25-26 The Lord showed the brother of Jared the body of his spirit that the bodies of men were created in the image of, and then He showed him all the inhabitants of the earth throughout all time.

Ether 3:21-24, 27-28; Ether 4:1 After he had seen these things, the Lord instructed the brother of Jared to treasure these sacred things and not show them to any man, but that when the brother of Jared shall "*come unto me* [the Lord]", he would write down what he saw and it would be preserved until the Lord wanted it to come forth and then it would be understood by using the two sacred seer stones that would accompany the record.

Moroni sealed up the writings of the brother of Jared.

Ether 4:4 Moroni described the vision of the brother of Jared by saying that greater things had never been revealed.

Ether 4:3, 5 The Lord command Moroni to seal up the brother of Jared's record and the interpreters and hide them in the earth.

Ether 4:6-7 We will be able to receive these records when we have faith as great as the brother of Jared's and become sanctified.

Ether 4:8, 10, 12 The Lord taught that those who deny His words at the last day will be cursed for denying his words, his disciples, the Savior, and the Father.

Ether 4:11 The blessings of manifestations of the Spirit and a knowledge of God will come to those who believe the Lord's words.

Ether 4:13-14 The Lord exhorted the Gentiles and the house of Israel to come unto Him and receive great blessings and knowledge.

Ether 4:15, 18 He said that to come unto Him, we must exercise faith in Christ, repent, accept and honor the baptismal covenants, and call upon the Father with a broken heart and contrite spirit.

Ether 4:15-19 He promised the blessing of eternal life to those who do these things.

The Jaredites traveled to the Promised Land.

Ether 6:1-12 These verses continue the record of the Jaredites as they journeyed to the Promised Land. The Jaredites' journey to the Promised Land can be likened to our journey through life.

Ether 6:3 The Lord caused the stones in the barges "*to shine in darkness, to give light unto men, women, and children*". Consider what "lights" the Lord has provided for us as we journey through life--the scriptures, the prophets, and the companionship of the spirit might appear on your list of "lights".

Ether 6:4 The Jaredites entrusted themselves to the Lord after they had prepared all they could for their journey.

Ether 6:8-9 As the winds blew and the Jaredites were driven forth, the Jaredites sang hymns of praise and thanked the Lord throughout the day and night.

Ether 6:12 When the Jaredites arrived in the Promised Land, they bowed down and gave thanks to the Lord.

Conclusion

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland: "*The brother of Jared may not have had great belief in himself, but his belief in God was unprecedented. In that there is hope for us all. His faith was without doubt or limit. ...Once and for all it was declared that ordinary people with ordinary challenges could rend the veil of unbelief and enter the realms of eternity*" (Christ and the New Covenant [1997], 29).

"By Faith All Things Are Fulfilled"

Lesson 46 - Ether 7-15

Introduction

Mosiah 8:8-9, 12, 19; Mosiah 28:17-19. The record referred to in these verses is the record of the Jaredites, which was abridged by Moroni in the book of Ether. What effect did hearing this record have on the people of Mosiah?--It caused them to mourn. Consider why you might think it is important for us to read this account. This lesson discusses the account of the Jaredites from their arrival in the Promised Land to their complete destruction many generations later. Although the account of their destruction is tragic, we, like the people of Mosiah, can rejoice in the knowledge the record gives us. Today's lesson will remind us of the importance of exercising faith, being humble, and heeding the counsel of the prophets.

Moroni explained the importance of faith.

Ether 6:18 After arriving in the Promised Land, the Jaredites began to *"multiply...and wax strong in the land"*.

Ether 6:21-30 When Jared and his brother died, a king was appointed to lead the people.

Ether Chapters 7-11 records the succession of righteous and wicked kings, the rise of secret combinations among the people, and the teachings of prophets who were called to preach repentance to the Jaredites.

Ether 12 begins the account of the teachings of Ether, who was one of those prophets.

Ether 12:3 Ether exhorted the people to believe in God, saying that *"by faith all things are fulfilled"*.

Ether 12:4 Ether described those who believe in God as *"sure and steadfast...always abounding in good works...being led to glorify God"* because their souls are anchored in faith and hope.

Think about how faith and hope anchor you. Consider how faith leads to good works that glorify God.

Ether 12:5 Ether prophesied *"great and marvelous things"* to the people, but they did not believe him because they could not see them.

Think of times when you or other people have been blessed for following prophetic counsel even when you could not *"see"* or understand the reasons for the counsel.

Moroni recorded that the people would not believe the prophecies of Ether because they could not see them. Moroni then defined faith and gave examples of it.

Ether 12:6; see also Hebrews 11:1; Alma 32:21 Moroni defined faith as *"things which are hoped for and not seen"*.

Ether 12:6; see also Ether 12:29-31; D&C 58:2-4 Consider what it means that we *"receive no witness until after the trial of [our] faith"*.

Ether 12:7-22 Moroni listed several events that occurred as a result of faith. Events he listed included: the appearance of the Resurrected Lord to their "fathers", the reception of the Mosaic Code by Moses, the giving of the higher law as provided by the Savior, the miraculous deliverance of Alma and Amulek from prison, the reception of the Holy Ghost by converted Lamanites through the efforts of Nephi and Lehi, a miracle among the Lamanites by Ammon and his brethren, and the appearance of Christ to the brother of Jared.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, *"We receive by faith all temporal blessings that we do receive, [and] we in like manner receive by faith all spiritual blessings that we do receive"* (Lectures on Faith [1985], 3).

The Lord taught Moroni that He gives us weakness that we may be humble.

Ether 12:23-25 Moroni was concerned about how the Gentiles would receive his record, thinking that they would mock his writing ability and vocabulary.

Ether 12:26 The Lord responded that fools would mock, but the meek would respond to His grace.

It is important to read Moroni's words *"and all scriptures"* with meekness so that we may feel and understand by the power of the Spirit.

Ether 12:27 This verse contains the Lord's promise to those who humble themselves and have faith in Him (*"Then will I make weak things become strong unto them"*). Think of examples of this promise being fulfilled in the scriptures, your life, or the lives of others.

Ether 12:28-34 Moroni wrote of the importance of faith, hope, and charity.

These qualities bring us unto Christ as we apply them to His work on the earth.

Ether 12:41 Moroni exhorted us to *"seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written"*.

Ponder the ways in which you can *"seek Jesus"* today.

Ether 12:41 The Lord promises the grace of the Father and the Son to those who do this.

We need the grace of God and His Son to strengthen our testimonies and keep us on the path to eternal life.

Moroni recorded Ether's prophecies concerning the Promised Land.

Ether 13:2-12 Ether prophesied about the New Jerusalem and the Old Jerusalem:

- The Old Jerusalem (*"from whence Lehi [came]"*), will be *"built up again, a holy city unto the Lord"* (Ether 13:5). This will be done by the descendants of Judah before the Second Coming.
- Before the Second Coming, *"a new Jerusalem should be built up upon this land [the Americas]"* (Ether 13:6). The New Jerusalem will be a holy city built by a remnant of the house of Joseph (Ether 13:8).
- The City of Enoch will come down out of heaven and become part of the New Jerusalem (Ether 13:3, 10 ; see also

Revelation 21:2, 10). This will occur after the Second Coming.

Ether 13:10-11 Moroni described those who would be worthy to live in these holy cities as those who had made and kept covenants through Christ, becoming members of the house of Israel, and those among the original house of Israel who accepted the Savior.

To be "*washed in the blood of the Lamb*" is to be cleansed from sin through the Atonement of Jesus Christ.

War raged throughout the land. The Jaredite civilization was destroyed.

Ether 13:13-14 The people cast Ether out, and he made the remainder of his record while hiding in the cavity of a rock. The people soon became engulfed in wars and secret combinations.

Ether 13:20-21 During the second year that Ether dwelled in the cavity of a rock, the word of the Lord came to him, instructing him to go and prophesy unto Coriantumr to repent with all his household or else he [Coriantumr] would be destroyed.

Ether 13:22 Coriantumr responded to Ether's prophecies by refusing to repent and seeking to slay Ether.

Ether 13:23-15:28 describes continual bloodshed as different groups sought to obtain power. Millions of Jaredites were killed in the battles. Although Coriantumr lost many battles and was wounded several times, he did not die. Near the end of the record, Coriantumr and Shiz gathered all the people together for a final battle. After several days of fighting, only Coriantumr and Shiz remained alive.

Ether 15:29-32 The battle finally ended with Shiz being beheaded by Coriantumr.

Ether 13:20-21 (previously cited) This was a fulfillment of Ether's prophecy that we reviewed a moment ago.

Ether 15:1-5, 18-19; see also Helaman 13:32-33, 38 We learn from the Jaredite record that repenting is essential before we become so deeply involved in sin that we lose the desire and power to escape from the evil in our lives and its consequences upon us and our families.

There are some similarities between the history of the Nephites and the history of the Jaredites because both fell from grace through their bad choices and the downward spiral of sin. Think seriously about what we can learn from the accounts of these two civilizations.

Additional Teachings

1. The importance of following the prophets

The history of the Jaredites gives many examples of the following pattern:

- a. The people become wicked.
- b. Prophets call the people to repentance.
- c. The people accept the prophets and are blessed, or they reject the prophets and begin to suffer the consequences.
- d. In response to the consequences, the people repent and follow the prophets, or they continue in wickedness to their destruction.

Examples of this pattern are found in Ether 7:23-27; Ether 9:23-35; Ether 11:1-8, 11-14, 19-23.

2. Moroni warned against secret combinations

After the death of Jared and his brother, the people were ruled by a succession of kings. With the passing of each generation, contention for the throne became more intense. As this contention grew, Jared's daughter devised a plan to make her father the king (Ether 8:8)

Note that the man named Jared in this account was a descendant of the Jared referred to in Ether 1-6.

Ether 8:9-12 Jared's daughter planned to make Akish desire her for his wife. Then, her father would require Akish to slay his father, Omer the king, so that Jared could inherit the throne.

Ether 8:13-18 This plan introduced the secret combinations of old into the land as Akish administered the secret oaths to his kinfolk.

Ether 8:21-22 Moroni taught about the danger of secret combinations and their power to bring civilizations down to destruction.

Ether 8:23, 26 Moroni included these things in his record as a warning to the Gentiles who would receive his writings.

Ether 8:23-25 We can recognize secret combinations and protect ourselves from them by noting that they seek unrighteous power and control over others by oaths that promote secrecy and getting of worldly gain; we protect ourselves by embracing the gospel and humbly seeking the will of the Lord.

3. "Because thou hast seen thy weakness thou shalt be made strong" (Ether 12:37)

As Hyrum Smith prepared to go to Carthage Jail, where he and the Prophet Joseph Smith were murdered, he read Ether 12:36-38 and folded down the page (D&C 135:4-5). Consider the comfort these verses offer.

"To Keep Them in the Right Way"

Lesson 47 - Moroni 1-6

Introduction

Think of the last time you attended a sacrament meeting at a ward or branch other than your own. What elements of sacrament meeting are the same wherever you go in the Church? If you made a list, you would probably include praying, singing hymns, blessing and partaking of the sacrament, bestowing the gift of the Holy Ghost on new converts, and concluding testimonies or discourses in the name of Jesus Christ. Consider why it is important that we be unified in these matters.

This lesson discusses Moroni's teachings about some of the ordinances of the gospel (bestowing the gift of the Holy Ghost, ordaining priests and teachers, administering the sacrament, and baptizing) that are part of the restored Church today. His teachings can help us see the continuation today of the same ordinances that existed in the Church that the Savior established anciently. They also help us fulfill our responsibility as Church members to strengthen one another and to *"keep [one another] in the right way"* (Moroni 6:4; see also 2 Nephi 25:28-29).

Having survived the destruction of the Nephites, Moroni continued his writings.

Moroni had believed that his abridgment of Ether's record would be his last writings. However, because he had not yet died, he continued writing.

Moroni 1:1-4 Moroni's circumstances were definitely not favorable while he was writing these words. He was alone and hiding from the Lamanites to preserve his life.

Moroni 1:2-3 The Lamanites would have killed him because they hated anyone who would not deny the Christ--and Moroni was not about to deny his Savior.

Consider what this shows us about Moroni's faith. How could you personally develop such a firm testimony of Jesus Christ that you would be sustained by it in such dire circumstances?

Moroni 1:4 Moroni continued to write because, even though the Lamanites of his day would have killed him, he continued to be concerned for their descendants.

Moroni taught about essential gospel ordinances.

The Book of Mormon teaches us about the importance of the ordinances of the gospel. However, until the book of Moroni, relatively little is recorded about how ordinances were performed. Moroni increases our understanding of how ordinances were performed in the ancient Church.

Moroni 2:1-3 describes the words the Savior spoke to His Nephite disciples as He laid His hands upon them.

Moroni 2:2. The Savior instructed the disciples to bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost

Bestowing the Gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands in the name of Jesus Christ.

Moroni 3 describes how the disciples ordained priests and teachers.

Ordaining Priests and Teachers to preach repentance and remission of sins

D&C 20:46-59 While latter-day revelation gives more detail, we see that the responsibilities specified by Moroni are quite similar to the duties of priesthood holders today.

We help Aaronic Priesthood bearers understand and fulfill their assigned duties by assuring that they are familiar with the scriptures and that they are trained in the priesthood by adult leaders who know their duties and are led by the Spirit while they lead the young men.

Moroni 4 and **Moroni 5** describe the manner of administering the sacrament.

Moroni 4:3; Moroni 5:2. These verses contain covenants we make through the sacrament:

Administering the Sacrament

To remember, follow, and obey the Savior.

We are promised that we will have the companionship of the Spirit in return for making and honoring our sacrament covenants. Think about how you feel when you have partaken of the sacrament reverently and worthily.

Chapters 2-5 are important for our day as they help us see the consistency of gospel ordinances through different periods of time.

It should strengthen us to see the same ordinances present in different dispensations of the Lord's Church because it is a testimony and evidence that the plan of salvation is consistent and the ordinances are allowing us to make the same covenants that have always bound us to our Heavenly parents.

Moroni explained the requirements for Church membership and the need for record keeping and fellowshiping.

Moroni 6:1-3 Moroni taught the requirements for baptism: True repentance, a broken heart and contrite spirit, a testimony of Jesus Christ and a determination to serve Him to the end.

Moroni 6:4 Moroni taught that after people were baptized and had received the gift of the Holy Ghost, *"they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ; and their names were taken"*.

Moroni 6:4 Their names were recorded *"that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God to keep them in the right way..."*.

Of course, their priesthood leader has the responsibility to see that both long-time and new members are "*remembered and nourished by the good word of God*", but their brothers and sisters in the Church are also charged with that responsibility.

President Gordon B. Hinckley taught: "*Any convert whose faith grows cold is a tragedy. Any member who falls into inactivity is a matter for serious concern. The Lord left the ninety and nine to find the lost sheep. His concern for the dropout was so serious that He made it the theme of one of His great lessons. We must constantly keep Church officers and the membership aware of the tremendous obligation to fellowship in a very real and warm and wonderful way those who come into the Church as converts, and to reach out with love to those who for one reason or another step into the shadows of inactivity*" (in Church News, 8 Apr. 1989, 6).

President Hinckley also said: "*With the ever increasing number of converts, we must make an increasingly substantial effort to assist them as they find their way. Every one of them needs three things: a friend, a responsibility, and nurturing with 'the good word of God' (Moroni 6:4)*" (Ensign, May 1997, 47).

Ponder what you can do to follow President Hinckley's counsel and be sure to think about how you have been blessed by others who have remembered and nourished you.

Moroni 6:5-6. Moroni recorded that the Church "*did meet together oft*" to fast and pray, partake of the sacrament, and teach each other.

We are strengthened when we fast and pray together as we seek unity in our goals and our actions by seeking the guidance of the Spirit.

Church meetings give us an opportunity to speak to each other "*concerning the welfare of [our] souls*" as we speak in sacrament meetings or participate in or teach Sunday School, Primary, Young Men's/Women's, Priesthood, or Relief Society classes.

It is important that we meet together to partake of the sacrament so that we can renew our covenants and our commitment and help each other to honor those covenants.

Moroni 6:9 Moroni taught that Church meetings were to be conducted through the guidance of the Spirit.

To invite the Spirit into our meetings, we can each come with that "*broken heart and contrite spirit*" as well as a love for each other and a willingness to hear and obey.

Conclusion

Moroni taught of the importance of strengthening one another as members of the Church. Look for ways you can "*remember and nourish*" other members of the ward or branch and think of things you can do to help others feel welcome in our wards and branches.

Elder Carl B. Pratt told of the feelings his family experienced as they visited different wards in the Church. "*Some wards our children loved to visit because they quickly found friends among the youth, and we all received a warm and hearty welcome. But there were other wards to which our children returned with less enthusiasm, and there was a noticeable absence of the warm and hearty welcome. ... We then began to observe that in some wards we visited ..., if we had been investigators or new members, we would not have felt very welcome... These experiences...made us conscious of the need we all have to improve what we call our fellowshipping skills. Brothers and sisters, we have the richest blessings that God can give to His children. We have the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We ought to be the most open, friendly, happy, kind, considerate, thoughtful, loving people in the whole world. Will nonmembers, new converts, and visitors to our chapels recognize us as His disciples by the warmth of our greeting, by the ease of our smiles, by the kindness and genuine concern that shine in our eyes?*" (Ensign, Nov. 1997, 11-12).

Consider how you think visitors or new converts would feel in your ward or branch and then ponder ways in which you can improve the way visitors and new converts are treated.

"Come unto Christ"

Lesson 48 - Moroni 7-8, 10

Introduction

One cold day in February 1910, Vincenzo di Francesca, a Protestant minister, came across a weather-beaten copy of a religious book with no title page. Curious, he wrapped the book in newspaper and took it with him. At home he cleaned and read the book. "I read and reread, twice and twice again, and I found it fit to say that the book was a fifth gospel of the Redeemer," he said. The book he had found was the Book of Mormon. When he had read it, he followed the admonition in Moroni 10:4. *"At the end of the day, I locked the door of my room, knelt with the book in my hands, and read chapter ten of the book of Moroni. I prayed to God, the Eternal Father, in the name of his son, Jesus Christ, to tell me if the book were of God, if it were good and true, and if I should mix its words with the words of the four gospels in my preaching. I felt my body become cold as the wind from the sea. Then my heart began to palpitate, and a feeling of gladness, as of finding something precious and extraordinary, bore consolation to my soul and left me with a joy that human language cannot find words to describe. I had received the assurance that God had answered my prayer and that the book was of greatest benefit to me and to all who would listen to its words."* The testimony Vincenzo di Francesca received at this time helped him through many difficult experiences. He was stripped of his position as a minister because he taught from the Book of Mormon. It was 1930 before he learned the name of the book and the name of the Church that published it. Because of war and other political problems, another 21 years passed before he was able to be baptized. Throughout these difficulties, he maintained a strong testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. (See Vincenzo di Francesca, "I Will Not Burn the Book!" Ensign, Jan. 1988, 18-21.) This lesson discusses the final chapters of the Book of Mormon. Included in these writings are Moroni's instructions about how each of us can gain a personal testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon and the standard we should apply to judge between good and evil.

Mormon explained how to judge between good and evil.

Moroni 7 contains the words of Mormon, as recorded by his son Moroni.

Moroni 7:3 Mormon referred to the members of the Church as *"peaceable followers of Christ"*.

Moroni 7:4-5 The basis of Mormon's judgment about the Church members was his observation of how they dealt with others in daily life and the works they performed.

We become *"peaceable followers of Christ"* by doing what the Savior would do if He were in our place. We know what He would do when we listen for and are guided by the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

Moroni 7:6-9 Mormon taught about the importance of having pure motives for doing good works if we wish to benefit from our works. If we have anything in our hearts other than pure motives (love of God and our fellowmen), our works will not enhance our rewards from Father.

The meaning of giving a gift or praying *"with real intent"* is to be free of hypocrisy and to realize that nothing is ours--it's all our Father's--and all we should want to do is to use what He gives us wisely and for the benefit of all.

Purifying our motives for doing good isn't easy. We must develop a strong testimony of the Savior and let the Spirit guide us daily to develop pure motives.

Moroni 7:12-19 Mormon teaches us how to discern good from evil:

We must ask ourselves: Does (this thing or this action) invite me to love and serve God? Is (this action) inspired of God? Use these questions when you are evaluating whether a thing or action is good or evil.

It can be easier to judge whether or not something leads us toward God than it is to judge whether or not something leads us toward the devil. Satan's deceitful practices often encourage us to think that something is *"not so bad"*---that it is not really evil, even if it is not good. Anything that does not lead us toward God only leads us away from Him.

Moroni 7:14; see also 2 Nephi 15:20 Mormon cautioned the people to *"take heed...that ye do not judge that which is evil to be of God, or that which is good...to be of the devil"*. It doesn't take much thought about the society around us to confirm that we see this confusion of good and evil happening today.

Moroni 7:16, 18-19 We have been given an influence to help us judge good from evil. The *"Spirit of Christ"* or *"light of Christ"* is *"an uplifting, ennobling, persevering influence that comes upon mankind because of Jesus Christ"* (Bible Dictionary, "Light of Christ," 725). It is available to all people and can prepare a person to find truth and receive the Holy Ghost. In its role of helping us discern between right and wrong, the light of Christ is often called our conscience.

Consider the ways the light of Christ has helped you discern good from evil. How can you become more receptive to the guidance of the light of Christ?

Mormon explained the importance of faith, hope, and charity

Moroni 7:20 Mormon asked, *"How is it possible that ye can lay hold upon every good thing?"*.

Moroni 7:21-26 He answered this question by teaching that *"All things which are good cometh of Christ,"* and we can *"lay hold"* on them by exercising faith in Him.

Think about blessings that have come to you or to others because of faith.

Moroni 7:28-30, 35-38 The relationship between faith and miracles is that faith must precede the miracle.

Moroni 7:37; see also Ether 12:12, 18 It is necessary for faith to precede miracles.

Why don't miracles alone provide a firm foundation for faith? **President Brigham Young** said, *"Miracles, or these*

extraordinary manifestations of the power of God, are not for the unbeliever; they are to console the Saints, and to strengthen and confirm the faith of those who love, fear, and serve God" (Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. John A. Widtsoe [1941], 341).
Moroni 7:40-42 What is hope? What relationship exists between faith and hope? Those questions were answered by **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** when he taught: *"As used in the revelations, hope is the desire of faithful people to gain eternal salvation in the kingdom of God hereafter. ...Faith and hope are inseparable. Hope enables [us] to have faith in the first instance and then because of faith that hope increases until salvation is gained"* (Mormon Doctrine, 2nd ed. [1966], 365-66).
Moroni 7:43 We find here that meekness and lowliness of heart must precede faith and hope. Think about the reason this is true--Why must a person be *"meek, and lowly of heart"* to have true faith and hope? Could it be that we must be free of pride before we can truly accept the testimony of Christ?

Moroni 7:46-47 Mormon taught that in addition to faith and hope, we must have charity, which he defines as *"the pure love of Christ"*.

Moroni 7:45 Characteristics of charity include longsuffering, kind, envieth not, humble, unselfish, tolerant, pure in thought, joyful in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, and endureth all things.

Reflect in your thoughts on how experiences in your life have confirmed that *"charity never faileth"*.

Moroni 10:20-21 We increase our faith and hope as we increase our testimony of Christ. The challenge is to become filled with the pure love of Christ by becoming so close to the Savior that we become like Him in our thoughts, feelings, and desires. We must strive to possess faith, hope, and charity because it is not easy given our carnal natures--we must desire those virtues fervently and make them a daily priority.

Mormon teaches that little children are saved through Christ's Atonement.

This chapter contains a letter from Mormon to his son Moroni.

Moroni 8:8-9, 11, 19-20 Little children do not need baptism because *"they are not capable of committing sin"* and *"the curse of Adam"* was removed from them by Christ's atonement. Note that Mormon's teachings about little children also apply to *"all they that are without the law"* [Moroni 8:22], which refers to those who are mentally incapable of understanding the commandments and ordinances of the gospel.

Moroni 8:20, 22-23 The baptism of little children is *"mockery before God"* because it denies the power of the Savior's redemption and his mercy. Small children cannot repent because they are not accountable and they are not under any condemnation.

Moroni 8:10, 24-26 Little children are saved because they are innocent and incapable of sinning. Those of us who have sinned can gain salvation through the Atonement of Christ by becoming like little children in their meekness, humility, submissiveness, and obedience to our Father's requirements.

The Holy Ghost testified of all truth. Spiritual gifts followed those who came unto Christ.

As the final chapter in the Book of Mormon, Moroni 10 contains Moroni's closing words.

Moroni 10:1 This chapter is addressed to Moroni's brethren, the Lamanites.

Moroni 10:2 Moroni closes with *"a few words by way of exhortation"*. The word *exhort* means to advise or urge strongly. Moroni exhorts his readers to:

- a. *"Remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men"* (verse 3).
- b. *"Ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true"* (verse 4).
- c. *"Deny not the power of God"* (verse 7).
- d. *"Deny not the gifts of God"* (verse 8).
- e. *"Remember that every good gift cometh of Christ"* (verse 18).
- f. *"Remember that [Christ] is the same yesterday, today, and forever"* (verse 19).
- g. *"Remember these things [that Moroni has written]"* (verse 27).
- h. *"Come unto Christ"* (verse 30).

Think about it--have you gained a testimony that the Book of Mormon is the word of God?

Moroni 10:4-5 The role of the Holy Ghost in our gaining testimonies of spiritual things is clear: He will testify of the truth to us.

1 Corinthians 2:11; Alma 26:21-22; Moroni 10:6-7 We cannot gain our testimonies through our intellect alone because a testimony does not just encompass knowledge--we must also have faith in that which we do not know but which we must accept on faith. We must have faith that the teachings of the scriptures, the prophets, and the Holy Ghost are true.

Moroni 10:7 Moroni exhorted us to *"deny not the power of God"*.

In what ways might we sometimes deny God's power? **Elder Jeffrey R. Holland** taught: *"The Savior said, 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you....Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid' (John 14:27). 'I submit to you, that may be one of the Savior's commandments that is, even in the hearts of otherwise faithful Latter-day Saints, almost universally disobeyed; and yet I wonder whether our resistance to this invitation could be any more grievous to the Lord's merciful heart. I can tell you this as a parent: as concerned as I would be if somewhere in their lives one of my children were seriously troubled or unhappy or disobedient, nevertheless I would be infinitely more devastated if I felt that at such a time that child could not trust me to help or thought his or her interest was unimportant to me or unsafe in my care. In that same spirit, I am convinced that none of us can appreciate how deeply it wounds the loving heart of the Savior of the world when he finds that his people do not feel confident in his care or secure in his hands or trust in his commandments'"* ("Come unto Me,"

Ensign, Apr. 1998, 19).

Moroni 10:8-19 Moroni taught about spiritual gifts, saying that they are numerous, they come from God, they can be administered in different ways, they are given by the Spirit, and they are beneficial to men.

D&C 46:11-12 We each receive different gifts from God so that we may share our gifts with others, they may share theirs with us, and we may all be profited thereby.

Consider what you have learned and felt as you have pondered the messages of the Book of Mormon.

Moroni 10:30, 32 Moroni's exhortation to "*come unto Christ*" reflects the entire message of the Book of Mormon, which is another testament of Jesus Christ.

Think of some specific ways in which this year's study of the Book of Mormon has helped you come unto Christ.

Additional Teachings:

President Gordon B. Hinckley said: "*I would like to urge every man and woman...and every boy and girl who is old enough to read to again read the Book of Mormon during this coming year. ...There is nothing we could do of greater importance than to have fortified in our individual lives an unshakable conviction that Jesus is the Christ, the Living Son of the Living God. That is the purpose of the coming forth of this remarkable and wonderful book*" (in Church News, 4 May 1996, 2).

President Joseph Fielding Smith said: "*No member of this Church can stand approved in the presence of God who has not seriously and carefully read the Book of Mormon*" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1961, 18).

President Ezra Taft Benson said: "*The Book of Mormon is studied in our Sunday School and seminary classes every fourth year. This four-year pattern, however, must not be followed by Church members in their personal and family study. We need to read daily from the pages of the book that will get a man 'nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book'* (History of the Church, 4:461)" (Ensign, Nov. 1988, 4).

President Benson also said: "Every Latter-day Saint should make the study of this book a lifetime pursuit" (Ensign, May 1975, 65).