

**BM#15 "Eternally Indebted To Your Heavenly Father"**  
**Mosiah 1-3**

- I. Introduction
- II. Mosiah 1
- III. Mosiah 2
- IV. Mosiah 3
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**I. Introduction**

In this lesson [BM#15] and the following lesson [BM#16], we will examine the farewell address of King Benjamin to his people. King Benjamin is the son of Mosiah, who under the Lord's direction left the land of Nephi with his people and came to the land of Zarahemla. (See Omni 1:12.) Here they joined with the people who were under the reign of King Zarahemla. The people of Zarahemla consisted of the followers of Mulek, who was the youngest son of King Zedekiah. (See Omni 1:15-16; Heleman 8:21.) They had left Jerusalem in approximately 587 B.C. [2 Chronicles 36:11], and settled in the North of ancient America. Lehi and his party had settled in the South. (See Heleman 6:10).

George Reynolds states

**"Benjamin.** The second of the three prophet-kings of the Nephites who reigned in the land of Zarahemla. He was the son of *Mosiah I* and the father of *Mosiah II* and like them, was most probably a seer. He undoubtedly held the priesthood, as he receive the ministrations of angels, was favored with revelations from the Lord, and organized the Church of Jesus Christ among his people. He was also the custodian of the sacred record, etc., having received them from *Amaleki* who was childless. The time and place of his birth is not given though it was probably in the land of Nephi. He lived to a great age and died full of peace and honor in Zarahemla B.C. 122. He was illustrious for the justice and mercy with which he administered the laws, for his great devotion to God and love for his people and for the frugality and simplicity of his personal life..

"The reign of Benjamin was not one of uninterrupted peace. [He had to deal with the Lamanites and drive them out of the land]. [He] was also troubled with various religious impostors, false Christ's, pretended prophets, etc. who caused apostasy and dissension among the people,...

"[He also had to deal with] the original inhabitants of Zarahemla, [who were] just awakening to a newness of religious life, [and] were particularly subject to the influences brought to bear by these impostors. They had but lately learned the mysteries of the plan of salvation and the coming of the Messiah to dwell among the sons of men....

"There was [also] another class who, moved by the spirit of unrest, were a source of perplexity to the king. They were those who, having left the land of Nephi with the righteous, still permitted their thoughts and affections to be drawn towards their former homes and old associates." (*A Dictionary of the Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1891, [1954], 64-65).

With this introduction to King Benjamin and the challenges he had faced during the time he had served as king, he is now drawing to the end of his life. As he does so, he seeks to provide words of counsel for his three sons [Mosiah II, Helorim, and Heleman], and announce to them, Mosiah II will follow him as king. He calls his people to gather at the temple so he may give them his final words of counsel and admonition as their king.

Lesson Outline:

I. End of King Benjamin's reign and coronation of Mosiah II.

A. Education of King Benjamin's sons.

B. Installation of Mosiah II as king.

1. Benjamin's charge to Mosiah.

2. Assembly of people at the temple.

II. King Benjamin teaches his people.

A. Importance of service.

B. The Angel's prophecies about Jesus Christ and his Atonement.

Reference: *Book of Mormon Reference Companion*. Dennis L. Largey, General Editor. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2003, 571); *Book of Mormon Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 66).

**I. Mosiah 1**

The record states that during these later years of King Benjamin's reign, "there was no more contention in all the land" and "king Benjamin had continual peace all the remainder of his days" (Mosiah 1:1).

Mosiah 1:2

**2 And it came to pass that he had three sons; and he called their names; Mosiah, and Helorum, and Helaman. And he caused that they should be taught in all the language of his fathers, that thereby they might become men of understanding; and that they might know concerning the prophecies which had been spoken by the mouths of their fathers, which were delivered them by the hand of the Lord.**

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

"Parents in all gospel dispensations have been charged with the responsibility to teach their children the principles of righteousness to the extent that those principles have been revealed to them. (see Moses 5:12; 6:5-6, 58-62; D&C 68:25; 93:44-49). Each generation is charged with the responsibility of passing to the succeeding generation the torch of 'light and truth' by which they have been guided. To fail to do so is to come under the condemnation of God." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol.2.* Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988, [4<sup>th</sup> Printing, 1992], 129).

Not only did King Benjamin desire that his sons gain knowledge of the world in which they lived that they may become "men of understanding," he also felt that it was equally important that they understand the "prophecies which had been spoken by the mouths of their fathers, which had been delivered them by the hand of the Lord" (Mosiah 1:2). These prophecies had been recorded on the Small plates of Nephi and, with the Brass plates, made up their scriptures. It is a wise parent today who ensures that their children are also taught from the scriptures. Almost daily children are confronted with the philosophies espoused by the worldly who are often anemic regarding the spiritual part of their lives. The word of God is designed to provide them with spiritual armor so that they may be able to combat those who would lead them into false paths.

Mosiah 1:3-4

3 And he also taught them concerning the records which were engraven on the plates of brass, saying: My sons, I would that ye should remember that were it not for these plates, which contain these records, and these commandments, we must have suffered in ignorance, even at this present time, not knowing the mysteries of God.

4 For it were not possible that our father, Lehi, could have remembered all these things, to have taught them to his children, except it were for the help of these plates; for he having been taught in the language of the Egyptians therefore he could read these engravings, and teach them to his children, that thereby they could teach them to their children, and so fulfilling the commandments of God, even down to this present time.

Robert L. Millet states,

"It is difficult to know exactly what is meant when King Benjamin indicated that the brass plates were written in Egyptian. Perhaps the phrase 'language of the Egyptians' in [this] verse means the same thing that Nephi means when he spoke of the language of his father (and thus the language of the Book of Mormon) as consisting of 'the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians' (1 Nephi 1:2). That is to say, the Nephite record reflected the Hebrew culture and background of the Jews, but was written in Egyptians characters. In the present context, then, the brass plates may have been records of Hebrew prophets and their prophecies, all recorded in an Egyptian script."  
("The Brass Plates: An Inspired and Expanded Version of the Old Testament," in *The Old Testament and Latter-day Saints*. Salt Lake City: Randall Book Co., 1986, 421-422).

Mosiah 1:5

5 I say unto you, my sons, were it not for these things, which have been kept and preserved by the hand of God, that we might read and understand the mysteries, and have his commandments always before our eyes, that even our fathers would have dwindled in unbelief, and we should have been like unto our brethren, the Lamanites, who know nothing concerning these things, or even do not believe them when they

**are taught them, because of the traditions of their fathers, which are not correct.**

King Benjamin makes a powerful statement regarding the effect of the scriptures upon the spiritual understanding of the people. Without the scriptures, "always before [their] eyes,...even [our]...fathers would of dwindled in unbelief. King Benjamin knew of the effect the lack of scriptures had upon the Lamanites. He would have also known the effect upon the Mulekites who did not bring records [scriptures] with them when they came to ancient America. His father, Mosiah, learned when he met them that not only "their language had become corrupted;" but also their spiritual understanding for "they denied the being of their Creator;" (Omni 1:17). Living at a time when the scriptures are readily available, we might not appreciate their importance upon our belief, but those who were without scriptures were adversely affected.

Mosiah 1:6

**6 O my sons, I would that ye should remember that these sayings are true, and also that these records [Brass plates] are true. And behold, also the plates of Nephi, which contain the records of the sayings of our fathers from the time they left Jerusalem until now, and they are true; and we can know of their surety because we have them before our eyes.**

I recall some individuals telling me that they would believe the Book of Mormon was true if they could see *the plates*. Without the physical evidence before their eyes, they could not believe it. Others read the words of the Book of Mormon and, through the whispering of the Spirit, knew the book is true. As we are willing to exercise our faith by reading the Book of Mormon, with a sincere desire to know its truths, we can know with a certainty that can even surpass seeing the plates themselves.

Mosiah 1:7

**7 And now, my sons, I would that ye should remember to search them [scriptures] diligently, that ye may profit thereby; and I would that ye should keep the commandments of God, that ye may prosper in the land according to the promises which the Lord made unto our fathers.**

A sincere desire to know also means keeping the commandments. The spirit of the Lord comes most often to those who have prepared themselves by obedience to receive the Holy Spirit. For most individuals, the truth is revealed line upon line, precept upon precept, in proportion to their willingness to apply what they have learned and see for themselves if it is true. As they do so, more truth will then be given. (see 2 Nephi 28:30.)

King Benjamin calls his son, Mosiah II, to have the people assemble. He will then present his son to be "a king and a ruler over this people, whom the Lord our God hath given us" (Mosiah 1:10).

Mosiah 1:11-12

**11 And moreover, I shall give this people a name, that thereby they may be distinguished above all the people which the Lord God hath brought out of the land of Jerusalem; and this I do because they have been a diligent people in keeping the commandments of the Lord.**

**12 And I give unto them a name that never shall be blotted out, except it be through transgression.**

M. Catherine Thomas states,

"Perhaps this was the first time among all the people brought out from the land of Jerusalem that a king and priest---in the tradition of Adam, Enoch, and Melchizedek--had succeeded in bringing his people to this point of transformation: he had caused them as a community actually to receive the name of Christ...The people [would yet taste] the glory of God and [come] to a personal knowledge of him; through the power of the Holy Spirit they [would experience] the mighty change of heart and the mystery of spiritual rebirth." ("Benjamin and the Mysteries of God," in *King Benjamin's Speech*. Edited by John W. Welch and Stephen D. Ricks. Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1998, 290-291, 293).

Mosiah 1:13

**3 Yea, and moreover I say unto you, that if this highly favored people of the Lord should fall into transgression, and become a wicked and an adulterous people, that the Lord will deliver them up, that**

**thereby they become weak like unto their brethren; and he will no more preserve them by his matchless and marvelous power, as he has hitherto preserved our fathers.**

It is important to understand that all blessings the Lord confers upon us are based upon our obedience to his commandments, and are predicated upon our continued worthiness. In the future, if we should no longer be worthy, these blessings would also be withdrawn from us. It is true for individuals, as well as nations.

Mosiah 1:15-16

**15 And it came to pass that after king Benjamin had made an end of these sayings to his son, that he gave him charge concerning all the affairs of the kingdom. 16 And moreover, he also gave him charge concerning the records which were engraven on the plates of brass; and also the plates of Nephi; and also the sword of Laban, and the ball or director, which led our fathers through the wilderness, which was prepared by the hand of the Lord that thereby they might be led, every one according to the heed and diligence which they gave unto him.**

With this charge from his father, Mosiah II now held all the monarchical power necessary to govern the people. He had also been charged by his father with keeping the spiritual records of the people. He is also to continue to care for the spiritual artifacts of the people; the sword of Laban, and the ball or director that had led Lehi and his company through the wilderness.

## **II. Mosiah II**

Mosiah 2:1-3

**1 And it came to pass that after Mosiah had done as his father had commanded him, and had made a proclamation throughout all the land, that the people gathered themselves together throughout all the land, that they might go up to the temple to hear the words which king Benjamin should speak unto them. 2 And there were a great number, even so many that they did not number them;...**

**3 And they also took of the firstlings of their flocks, that they might offer sacrifice and burnt offerings according to the law of Moses;**

M. Catherine Thomas states,

"...we might infer that Benjamin's people came up to the temple with some preparation for and in some anticipation of a spiritual event. They would have been aware of what their kings had been trying to do for them according to the ancient pattern. They knew there was a blessing awaiting them. They came up to the temple, in part, to give thanks to God for their king, 'who had taught them to keep the commandments of God, that they might rejoice and be filled with love towards God and all men' (Mosiah 2:4).

"The phrases, to rejoice and be filled with love and to be filled with joy, seem to have a technical meaning in the scriptures. They appear to be alternative ways of describing being born again." ("Benjamin and the Mysteries of God," in King Benjamin's Speech. Edited by John W. Welch and Stephen D. Ricks. Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1998, 284).

The fact that they came with "the firstlings of their flocks that they might offer sacrifice and burnt offerings according to the law of Moses" (Mosiah 2:3), confirms that this gathering represented, not only the coronation of a new king, but also a spiritual gathering by the community.

Mosiah 2:5-6

**5 And it came to pass that when they came up to the temple, they pitched their tents round about, every man according to his family, consisting of his wife, and his sons, and his daughters, and their sons, and their daughters, from the eldest down to the youngest, every family being separate one from another.**

**6 And they pitched their tents round about the temple, every man having his tent with the door thereof towards the temple,...**

They are not assembled as a congregation, but grouped together in family units with their tents facing the temple.

Lee L. Donaldson states,

"The temple is placed in the center of Israel both literally and symbolically. For ancient Israel, the entire camp was laid out in relationship to the tabernacle or temple. The temple was located in the center of the camp, and each tribe was responsible for guarding a certain portion of it (Numbers 2-3). For modern Israel, the temple is where we are prepared in all things to enter the presence of the Lord. It is the center of our spiritual lives.

"Like ancient Israel, Benjamin's people "pitched their tents round about the temple, every man having his tent with the door thereof towards the temple" (Mosiah 2:6). As the word tent can also mean household, or people (Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible 4:572), in a very real sense the families of Benjamin's colony turned toward the temple." ("Benjamin and Noah: The Principle of Dominion," in The Book of Mormon: Mosiah, Vol.5. Edited by Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr. Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1991, 50-51).

We learn in Mosiah 2:7-8, that the people were so numerous that it was necessary to build a tower. Even with the tower, all the people could not hear his words, so his words were written so those who could not hear him could read his words.

John W. Welch and Stephen D. Ricks state,

"With the exception of the words of Christ himself no speech in sacred literature, in our opinion, surpasses that of King Benjamin. Delivered at the temple in the city of Zarahemla around 121 B.C., this text is a treasure trove of inspiration, wisdom, eloquence, and profound spiritual experience and insight. Little wonder that Mormon saw fit to include this speech, as he compiled the most significant Nephite records into the Book of Mormon. Mormon abridged many Nephite sources, but not Benjamin's speech. Mormon may well have copied the text directly from Benjamin's original or from one of the copies that Benjamin caused to be "written and sent forth among those who were not under the sound of his voice" (Mosiah 2:8). That oration was a landmark in its own day, and it still stands as a shining beacon of truth and goodness in our day.

"What kind of a text is Benjamin's speech? Is it a prophetic text? A coronation text? A covenant renewal text? A farewell speech? Is it a religious exhortation? A doctrinal discourse? A judgement speech? A temple text? Is it a royal confession? A personal testimony? It is all of these things, and more." ("Introduction," in *King Benjamin's Speech*. Edited by John W. Welch and Stephen D. Ricks. Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1998, ix).

Overview of Benjamin's Speech [Mosiah 2:9-3:27]  
[\*While Benjamin's Speech covers Mosiah 2:9-6:3), we will only address the first half during this lesson.]

- "1. All are indebted to God  
(2:9-28).  
First break (2:29-30).  
Coronation announcement
  
- "2. Consequences of obedience or disobedience  
(2:31-41).  
Second break (2:41-3:1)  
Remember, remember, the Lord has spoken  
Benjamin calls again for attention
  
- "3. The Angel's testimony of Christ's deeds  
(3:2-10).
  
- "4. Sanctification by the atonement of Christ  
(3:11-27).  
Third break (3:27)  
Thus hath the Lord commanded, Amen.

(John W. Welch. "Parallelism and Chiasmus," in *King Benjamin's Speech*. Edited by John W. Welch and Stephen D. Ricks. Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1998, 326-327).

Mosiah 2:9

**9 And these are the words which he spake and caused to be written, saying: My brethren, all ye that have assembled yourselves together, you that can hear my words which I shall speak unto to you this day; for I have not commanded you to come up hither to trifle with the words which I shall speak, but that you**

**should hearken unto me, and open your ears that ye may hear, and your hearts that ye may understand, and your minds that the mysteries of God may be unfolded to your view.**

Two words stand out as I read King Benjamin's introductory remarks. They are "trifle" and "mysteries of God." He also instructs them to open their ears, hearts, and minds so that they may receive and understand the words that he is going to give them through the spirit of the Holy Ghost.

Monte S. Nyman states,

"Those who trifle with the words spoken by the servants of God are making intellectual judgments rather than receiving spiritual insights. The desire of King Benjamin was for his people to know and understand the mysteries of God; those things revealed to the faithful." (Book of Mormon Commentary, Vol.2. Orem, Utah: Granite Publishing and Distribution L.L.C., 2003, 198-199).

Bryan Richards states, regarding the mysteries of God,

"The term *mysteries of God* as used in the Book of Mormon denotes the saving principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. They are termed mysteries because they are unavailable to the natural man, not because they are mysterious or difficult to understand. They must be revealed from God through faith and obedience. They are designed to lead God's children to eternal life." ([www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Mosiah-2](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Mosiah-2)).

The "natural man" is one who is unable to feel the whisperings of the spirit for their minds are focused upon the temporal pursuits of the world and, in turn, satisfying the carnal desires of their body. When we are willing to forsake the world, control their passions, and to be obedient to the commandments of God, we too will be in a position to understand and receive the mysteries of God. These are available for all of God's children to know when we are willing to meet the requisite qualifications.

King Benjamin reminds his people that he is like them, "subject to all manner of infirmities of body and mind." Nevertheless, he was chosen to be their ruler and king and he has served them "with all the might, mind and strength which the Lord hath granted unto me" (Mosiah 2:11).

He has not sought gold or silver, nor riches for his service, but has ruled in righteousness. He has enforced the laws including preventing slavery, murder, thievery, and adultery. Neither has he suffered any to commit any manner of wickedness, but to keep the commandments of God. (see Mosiah 2:12-13).

He has also labored with his own hands for his substance rather than imposing taxes upon the people in order to support himself or his family. It was his desire not to impose on his people anything that would have created a burden upon them. This he did, not to boast, but so he could stand without blame before God. (see Mosiah 2:15).

Mosiah 2:16-17

**16 Behold, I say unto you that because I said unto you that I had spent my day in your service, I do not desire to boast, for I have only been in the service of God.**

**17 And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God.**

Here are two principles King Benjamin is trying to teach his people. The first is his example of service. If he has spent his life in service to them as their king, then could they not also better serve one another? The second is our motives when we serve others.

Dallin H. Oaks states,

"When we think of service, we usually think of the acts of our hands. But as shown...[elsewhere in the scriptures], the Lord looks to our hearts as well as our hands. He is concerned not only with our acts, but also with our motives. One of his earliest commandments to Israel was to 'love the Lord your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul' (Deuteronomy 11:13).

"In order to purify our service to God and to our fellowmen, it is, therefore, important to consider not only how we serve, but also why we serve.

"People serve one another for different reasons, and some reasons are better than others. It has been said that "the biggest gap in the world is the gap between the justice of a cause and the motives of the people pushing it' (John P. Grier, in Lawrence J. Peter, comp, *Peter's Quotations*. [New York: William Morrow and Co., 1977, p.340)." (*Pure in Heart*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1988, [5<sup>th</sup> Printing, 1989], 38-39).

King Benjamin taught that not only is it important that we serve one another, but the importance of expressing our gratitude to God for all that he has given us.

Mosiah 2:20-21

**20 I say unto you, my brethren, that if you should render all the thanks and praise which your whole soul has power to possess, to that God that created you, and has kept and preserved you, and has caused that ye should rejoice, and granted that ye should live in peace one with another--**

**21 I say unto you that if ye should serve him who has created you from the beginning, and is preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath, that ye may live and move and do according to your own will, and even supporting you from one moment to another--I say, if ye should serve him with all your whole souls yet ye would be unprofitable servants.**

There are many who feel that they have no need of God in their lives. They feel that they are able to manage their own lives without the crutch of religion that some individuals seem to need. Little do they comprehend the many blessings that God, the Father of their Spirits, has bestowed upon them. And, were He to withdraw his continual support, they, alone, would fall flat on their faces. God is the creator of both our spirits and bodies. He also preserves us from day to day by lending us breath which enables us to move about and to do according to our own choice. He even supports us each moment by lending us breath. How foolish we are when we think that we don't need God in our lives. Someday, we will come to realize how fully dependent we are upon our Creator.

Hugh Nibley states,

"An unprofitable servant is somebody who consumes more than he produces. You can't possibly produce what you consume. You can't produce even a blade of grass. No one can pay their own way in this world. If you say you've paid your own way, you can't. He is even supporting you from one moment to another—I say, if you should serve him with all your whole souls yet ye would be unprofitable servants.' So much for being independent. You are dependent on him every minute. You should know that and realize that other people are too. What he wants you to do is to help them. He doesn't need your help." (*Teachings of the Book of Mormon, Semester 1. Lecture 28, Mosiah 1-2. Transcripts of lectures presented to an Honors Book of Mormon Class at Brigham Young University, 1988-1990. Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1993, 455*).

Mosiah 2:22

**22 And behold, all that he requires of you is to keep his commandments; and he has promised you that if ye would keep his commandments ye should prosper in the land; and he never doth vary from that which he hath said; therefore, if ye do keep his commandments he doth bless you and prosper you.**

The singular request that God makes of us is that we keep his commandments. It seems so little to ask of us, when He is offering so much in return. Our keeping God's commandments, however, then opens the door to our receiving even further blessings.

Mosiah 2:24

**24 And secondly, he doth require that ye should do as he hath commanded you; for which if you do, he doth immediately bless you; and therefore he hath paid you. And ye are still indebted unto him, and are, and will be, forever and ever; therefore, of what have ye to boast?**

Joseph Fielding Smith states,

"Do you think it will ever be possible for any one of us, no matter how hard we labor, or even if we should suffer martyrdom, 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. We have been bought with a price beyond comprehension. Not with gold or silver or precious stones, 'But with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish, and without spot.' (1 Pet 1:19)" (*The Way to Perfection*. Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1951, [Ninth Edition], 224).

Mosiah 2:25

**25 And now I ask, can ye say aught of yourselves? I answer you, Nay. Ye cannot say that ye are even as much as the dust of the earth; yet ye were created of the dust of the earth; but behold, it belongeth to him who created you.**

Daniel H. Ludlow states,

King Benjamin is not saying, like Mormon after him [Helaman 12:7], "that...men are worth even less than the dust of the earth. Rather...[each] is saying that men sometimes appear to be less wise than the dust of the earth. When the Lord tells the dust of the earth to move, it obeys, whereas when the Lord tells men to do something, they frequently do not obey." (*A Companion To Your Study of the Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976, 246).

King Benjamin informs his people that he is also of the dust of the earth and thus no better than they. He is old and will soon die. He has brought them together in order to fulfill the commandments of the Lord for he has done all that he has been commanded. Like the prophets before him, King Benjamin desires to rid his garments of the blood of his people. (see Mosiah 2:26-28.)

Joseph Fielding Smith and Robert L. Millet state,

"As God's messenger, Benjamin had no prerogative other than to deliver the message he has received. The principle applies alike to all to whom the message is given...Should the messenger fail to deliver the message, he then assumes a responsibility for the sins of those who went unwarned because he was derelict in his duty. (See 2 Nephi 9:44; Jacob 1:19.)" (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol.2*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988, [4<sup>th</sup> Printing, 1992], 140-141).

Mosiah 2:30-31

**30 For even at this time, my whole frame doth tremble exceedingly while attempting to speak unto you; but the Lord God doth support me, and hath suffered me that I should speak unto you, and hath commanded me that I should declare unto you this day, that my son Mosiah is a king and a ruler over you.**

**31 ...even so if ye shall keep the commandments of my son, or the commandments of God which shall be delivered unto you by him, ye shall prosper in the land, and your enemies shall have no power over you.**

Certainly one of the purposes King Benjamin had in speaking to his people was to declare his son, Mosiah II, was now to serve as their king and ruler. It is important to understand that Mosiah II, and Benjamin, perceived themselves only be the servants of the King who is in heaven. It is His commandments that they deliver to the people, the keeping of which, promises they as a people will continue to prosper against their enemies.

King Benjamin now warns them of the consequences that will follow if they do not obey the commandments of God.

Mosiah 2:32-33

**32 But, O my people, beware lest there shall arise contentions among you, and ye list to obey the evil spirit, which was spoken of by my father Mosiah.**

**33 For behold, there is a wo [judgment/punishment] pronounced upon him who listeth to obey that spirit; for if he listeth to obey him, and remaineth and dieth in his sins, the same drinketh damnation to his own soul; for he receiveth for his wages an everlasting punishment, having transgressed the law of God contrary to his own knowledge.**

Ted L. Gibbons states,

"My dictionary defines the word 'list' in this way: 'To incline; to bend toward; to tilt'...This listing is not the same as the 'open rebellion' in Mosiah 2:37; it is rather a subtle drifting, a slight inclination, a nearly invisible attraction to the enticements of sin, one that might go almost unnoticed without the right tools...a plumbline...[Amos 7:7-8]. The purpose of a plumbline on a wall is to see if

the wall is bending or tilting or inclining--to see if it is listing. God told Amos that he meant to measure Israel with a plumbline to see if they were guilty of the thing Benjamin warned his people about--listing to obey the evil spirit.

"How would you recognize such a dilemma in your life or in the lives of your children? What signs would you look for that might indicate inclining? Bending? Tilting? We have been commanded not to 'list' but to 'walk uprightly before God.'

"We ['walk uprightly before God'] as we hear the truth and give heed to it--the truth of the scriptures, the truth of the intimations of the Spirit, the truth of the living prophets. These are the things that will prevent us from 'listing; from leaning and tilting and bending. And listing is a dangerous pastime: 'For every man receiveth wages of him whom he listeth to obey' (Alma 3:27)." (BOM, Lesson 15, Mosiah 1-3, April, 2004. ([www.ldsliving.com/gospellelessons](http://www.ldsliving.com/gospellelessons))).

Mosiah 2:36-37

**36 And now, I say unto you, my brethren, that after ye have known and have been taught all these things, if ye should transgress and go contrary to that which has been spoken [and do not repent], that ye do withdraw yourselves from the Spirit of the Lord, that it may have no place in you to guide you in wisdom's paths that ye may be blessed, prospered, and preserved--  
37 I say unto you, that the man that doeth this, the same cometh out in open rebellion against God; therefore he listeth to obey the evil spirit, and becometh an enemy to all righteousness; therefore, the Lord had no place in him, for he dwelleth not in unholy temples.**

King Benjamin now addresses the individual who chooses not to repent of his sins to the point that he publicly denounces the Lord and the Church, he once espoused. He gives this warning so that all may know the fate of those who turn from their testimony of the truth.

Mosiah 2:38-39

**38 Therefore if that man repenteth not, and remaineth and dieth an enemy to God, the demands of divine**

justice do awaken his immortal soul to a lively sense of his own guilt, which doth cause him to shrink from the presence of the Lord, and doth fill his breast with guilt, and pain, and anguish, which is like an unquenchable fire, whose flame ascendeth up forever and ever.

39 And now I say unto you, that mercy hath no claim on that man; therefore his final doom is to endure a never-ending torment.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

"When someone has committed himself to the kingdom of God and then falls prey to an evil spirit, it is no longer possible for him to remain neutral. He becomes an enemy to the Church and wars against its doctrines. He may leave the Church but he cannot leave it alone. Such is the spirit of the adversary, once a bright and shining star; who rebelled against God and his Only Begotten Son. Satan came out in open rebellion against God and all those the Father had chosen to be his rulers (D&C 76:25-29); he brought accusations against 'them before our God day and night' (Revelations 12:10)." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol.2*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988, [4<sup>th</sup> Printing, 1992], 143).

Joseph Smith states,

"A man is his own tormentor and his own condemner. Hence the saying, They shall go into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone [see Revelations 21:8]. The torment of disappointment in the mind of man is as exquisite as a lake burning with fire and brimstone. I say, so is the torment of man." (*Teachings of the Presidents-Joseph Smith*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2007, 224).

Mosiah 2:40-41

40 ...I pray that ye should awake to a remembrance of the awful situation of those that have fallen into transgression.

41 And moreover, I would desire that ye should consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God. For behold, they are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual; and if they hold out faithful to the end they are

**received into heaven, that thereby they may dwell with God in a state of never-ending happiness, O remember, remember that these things are true; for the Lord God hath spoken it.**

Elray L. Christiansen states,

"The laws and conditions prescribed for the welfare of mankind cannot be changed nor circumvented, because they are divine, and were established before the foundations of the world were laid. They are, in fact, the only means by which we can have peace of mind here and gain eternal life hereafter. This is expressed in a great revelation given to the Prophet Joseph, as follows: 'For all who will have a blessing at my hands shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing, and the conditions thereof, as was instituted from before the foundation of the world' (D&C 132:5)." ("Laws of God Are Blessings," in *Ensign*, May, 1975, 23-24).

These are King Benjamin's final words spoken just before the second break of his remarks.

#### **IV. Mosiah 3**

The words contained in this chapter are those given to King Benjamin as delivered in person by an angel of God.

Mosiah 3:2-3

**2 And the things which I shall [now] tell you are made known unto me by an angel from God. And he said unto me: Awake; and I awoke, and behold he stood before me.  
3 And he said unto me: Awake, and hear the words which I shall tell thee; for behold, I am come to declare unto you the glad tidings of great joy.**

These words were of such a nature that God saw fit to send one of his representatives to the earth in order to personally deliver the message to King Benjamin. The angel states that he had come to "declare unto you the glad tidings of great joy...and that thou mayest declare unto thy people that they may also be filled with joy" (Mosiah 3:3-4).

Mosiah 3:5-6

**5 For behold, the time cometh, and is not far distant, that with power, the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity, shall come down from heaven among the children of men, and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay, and shall go forth amongst men, working mighty miracles, such as healing the sick, raising the dead, causing the lame to walk, the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear, and curing all manner of diseases.  
6 And he shall cast out devils, or the evil spirits which dwell in the hearts of the children of men.**

When the angel appeared to the selected shepherds in the fields near to Bethlehem on the night of the Savior's birth, he spoke these words, "I bring you good tidings of great joy" (Luke 2:10). It is to King Benjamin that an angel delivers these words, "I am come to declare unto you the glad tidings of great joy." In this manner, the angel declare the message of the Savior's birth and ministry, approximately 124 years before its occurrence.

The angel speaks of the Lord Omnipotent and his willingness as a gloried being to come to earth in a mortal body and perform miracles among the people, including the casting out of evil spirits. That is not all he will do while he is on the earth.

Mosiah 3:7

**7 And lo, he shall suffer temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death; for behold, blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people.**

At the conclusion of his mortal life, he will suffer both temptations and pain to the extent that his blood will be spilt in response to his anguish regarding the "wickedness and abominations of his people" (Mosiah 3:7).

Mosiah 3:8

**8 And he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all**

**things from the beginning; and his mother shall be called Mary.**

So there will be no misunderstanding by the people of Zarahemla, the angel identifies the individual as Jesus Christ, citing both his pre-mortal glory and the name of his mortal mother, Mary.

Mosiah 3:9-11, 16

**9 And lo, he cometh unto his own that salvation might come unto to children of men even through faith on his name; and even after all this they shall consider him a man, and say that he hath a devil, and shall scourge him, and shall crucify him.**

**10 And he shall rise the third day from the dead; and behold, he standeth to judge the world; and behold, all these things are done that a righteous judgment might come upon the children of men.**

**11 For behold, and also his blood atoneth for the sins of those who have fallen by the transgression of Adam, who have died not knowing the will of God concerning them, or who have ignorantly sinned.**

**16 And even if it were possible that little children could sin they could not be saved; but I say unto you they are blessed; for behold, as in Adam, or by nature they fall, even so the blood of Christ atoneth for their sins.**

The reason for his condescension, his suffering, crucifixion, and resurrection is so that he may bring about the atonement. His atonement fully atones for three groups of people.

Daniel H. Ludlow states,

"...the atonement of Jesus Christ fully atones: (1) for the original transgressions of Adam and Eve, (2) for the sins of unbaptized infants who die before they are accountable, and (3) for the sins of all people who die without having an opportunity to receive the "will of God concerning them" (Mosiah 3:11)." (*A Companion To Your Study Of The Book Of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976).

Regarding the doctrine of original sin as it pertains to unbaptized infants and little children, the doctrine taught

by the angel is that infants and little children do not need baptism, but instead are saved through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Mosiah 3:12

**12 But wo, wo unto him who knoweth that he rebelleth against God! For salvation cometh to none such except it be through repentance and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ.**

Dieter F. Uchtdorf states,

"It is not repentance per se that saves man. It is the blood of Jesus Christ that saves us. It is not by our sincere and honest change of behavior alone that we are saved, but 'by grace that we are saved, after all we can do' (2 Nephi 25:23). True repentance, however, is the condition required so that God's forgiveness can come into our lives." ("Point of Safe Return," in *Ensign*, May 2007, 100.)

By our being unwilling to repent of our sins, we then shut the door regarding our receiving God's forgiveness, despite his willingness to do so.

Mosiah 3:14-15

**14 Yet the Lord God saw that his people were a stiffnecked people and he appointed unto them a law, even the law of Moses.**  
**15 And many signs, and wonders, and types and shadows showed he unto them, concerning his coming; and also holy prophets spake unto them concerning his coming; and yet they hardened their hearts, and understood not that the law of Moses availeth nothing except it were through the atonement of his blood.**

Because the children of Israel were slow to be obedient to the law which they had received, the higher law was taken from them. The Law of Moses or the Law of carnal commandments was designed to prepare them for His coming and the atonement which He would offer. Because of the hardness of their hearts, the children of Israel were unable to discern that the purpose of the law of sacrifices was to prepare them for His final blood sacrifice. Salvation could only come through His atonement.

Mosiah 3:17

**17 And moreover, I say unto you, that there shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent.**

In the pre-existence when the Father presented His plan, only two Spirits had progressed sufficiently to be considered as the designated Savior. These two were Jesus Christ and Lucifer. Due to his desire for glory and reward, Lucifer was denied the honor. When Jesus Christ was accepted by the Father, in his anger, Lucifer challenged the power and glory of the Father and openly rebelled against his plan. He was dismissed from Heaven for his rebellion. (See Isaiah 14:12-15; Jude 1:6; Revelations 12:7-12; Moses 4:1-4; Abraham 3:27-28.) Since that time, he and his followers have sought to destroy the Father's plan including Jesus Christ in his role as Our Savior. It is only through the atonement of Jesus Christ, fulfilling his role as Our Savior, that we may receive salvation. There is no other way.

Mosiah 3:19

**19 For the natural man is an enemy of God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord, and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.**

Bryan Richards states,

"Our relationship with God is described by several terms, and there is a spiritual progression--from enemy, to servant, to son or daughter, to friend. We begin with the natural, or carnal man, who is far from God and cares only for the things of the flesh (Rom.8:5). He receives not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him (1 Cor.2:14). As we turn to the Lord and become baptized, we become his servants. The baptismal applicant

must be willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, have a determination to serve him to the end (D&C 20:37). Next comes the process of spiritual rebirth which makes us a son or daughter of Christ, ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold this day he hath spiritually begotten you (Mosiah 5:7). The last stage is that of friendship with God. It is to be paid the great compliment that few have received, to be referred to as the Lord's friend, 'I say unto you, for you are mine apostles...ye are they whom my Father hath given me; ye are my friends' (D&C 84:63). The Lord explained further, 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you (John 15:14). Therefore, our journey is to make that great transition, from the natural man to the spiritual man--from the enemy of God to the friend of God."

[www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Mosiah-3](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Mosiah-3)).

Mosiah 3:20

**20 And moreover, I say unto you, that the time shall come when the knowledge of a Savior shall spread throughout every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.**

Surely the angel was speaking of the days since the restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ in 1830. Since that day, until the present, the missionaries have gone throughout the world with the message that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Promised Messiah, and his teachings are now to be found within his restored Church, even the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

Mosiah 3:24

**24 And thus saith the Lord: They shall stand as a bright testimony against this people, at the judgment day; whereof they shall be judged, every man according to his works, whether they be good, or whether they be evil.**

The words of the angel, whether they are taught by Benjamin to the people of Zarahemla or in our day by the Lord's authorized servants, will stand as a witness as we come to the day of judgment. For those who upon hearing them, sought to understand and apply its' message in their lives, it will be a blessing. To those who rejected them or dismissed them as having no meaning in their lives, they

will stand as a curse. They are the words of God spoken by his servant.

Mosiah 3:27

**27 And their torment is as a lake of fire and brimstone, whose flames are unquenchable, and whose smoke ascendeth up forever and ever. Thus hath the Lord commanded me. Amen**

Monte S. Nyman states,

"The angel's warning of 'their torment as a lake of fire and brimstone' (Mosiah 3:27; emphasis added) is symbolic of the mental anguish they would suffer. The Doctrine and Covenants call this punishment being 'delivered over to the buffetings of Satan until the day of redemption' (D&C 78:12; 82:21; 104:9-10; 132:26)...Wherefore, those with knowledge who commit sin still have hope for salvation after having been through endless punishment and having paid the demands of justice. This punishment is the difficult way to pay for sin...Christ has paid for our sins through his Atonement. We need to obey the commandments to receive the benefits of his Atonement." (Book of Mormon Commentary, Vol.2. Orem, Utah: Granite Publishing and Distribution L.L.C., 2003, 232).

King Benjamin has just concluded sharing the words of the angel with his people. We will return to this point of his speech as we commence our next lesson [BM#16].

## **V. Conclusions**

These three chapters provide powerful lessons for our benefit.

In Mosiah, Chapter 1, just as we learned in the beginning pages of the Book of Mormon, Benjamin, like Lehi, understood the importance of teaching his children in righteousness. It was not only important to him they learned the skills necessary for them to succeed in life, but also they received an understanding of the scriptures. He understood that the scriptures could have a powerful effect upon their lives assisting them so that they "did not dwindle in unbelief" (Mosiah 1:5).

King Benjamin shared his testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. Not only did Benjamin know it was true, but others can also know. In order to do so, it is necessary for them to have both a desire to know the truth and a willingness to keep the commandments.

King Benjamin directs his son, Mosiah II, to gather the people to the temple where he would announce that his son was to be their new king, and he would give them a new name.

In Mosiah, Chapter 2, the people gather at the temple in Zarahemla. They have come not only for the coronation of their new king, but also to be fed spiritually as their beloved king addressed them.

King Benjamin began his speech noting that all are indebted to God. We show our gratitude to Him by serving our fellowmen. All he asks of us is that we keep his commandments for which he immediately bless us. (see Mosiah 2:24.)

He announced to them that his son, Mosiah II, would be their next king. They would be blessed as a people if they would keep the commandments, but if not, they would perish.

In Mosiah, Chapter 3, King Benjamin delivers the words given him by an angel of the Lord. They learn of the ministry of Jesus Christ and his atonement on behalf of his people. Those who rebel against his commandments, if they do not repent, will not be able to receive salvation in Our Father's kingdom. It is only through the atonement of Jesus Christ, fulfilling his role as Our Savior, that we may receive salvation. There is no other way.

The day will come when we will be judged "according to our works, whether they be good or whether they be evil" (Mosiah 3:24). If our works are good, we will find joy and happiness. If not, we will realize great regret and personal torment. Now is the time to make our choice.

In the next lesson [BM#16], we will continue to explore the words King Benjamin spoke to his people. We will note the effect his words, as given by the Spirit, had upon his people, along with their receiving a new name.