

BM#20 "My Soul Is Pained No More" Mosiah 25-28; Alma 36

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I. Introduction

The people of Limhi and Alma were gathered at Zarahemla with King Mosiah II and his people. His people, as you will recall, consisted of those who originally had left the land of Nephi, under the direction of his Grandfather, King Mosiah. Mosiah and his people came to Zarahemla and joined with the Mulekites. The land and city itself had originally been established by the Mulekites and one of their descendants, Zarahemla, served as their King. Under the voice of the people, King Mosiah became of the king of the people of Zarahemla. (see Omni 1:19.) The groups combined and become known as Nephites under the leadership of King Mosiah. Following the reign of King Benjamin, his son, Mosiah II, became the king.

One of the first events to occur once the people of Limhi and Alma had gathered to Zarahemla was the baptism of Limhi and his people. (see Mosiah 25:17.) Shortly thereafter, King Mosiah II authorized Alma to organize the Church of God throughout all the land of Zarahemla. (see Mosiah 25:19.)

All who live in the land were not members of the Church. The unbelievers began to persecute those who were believers and many were led away into sin. Alma conferred with King Mosiah II. He told Alma he was responsible to direct the Church. Alma sought direction from the Lord and it was revealed to him that those who departed from the faith and refused to repent were no longer to be numbered among the members of the Church of God. King Mosiah II issued a proclamation forbidding believers and unbelievers from persecuting one another.

Numbered among those persecuting the members of the church of God were the four sons of King Mosiah II and Alma, the son of Alma, the High Priest of the Church. Through the

prayers and fasting of their loved ones, the lives of Alma and the four sons of Mosiah were changed forever. Alma, the younger, experienced a miraculous conversion. Having each been converted to the gospel, each dedicated themselves to preaching the gospel. (see *Book of Mormon Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 89).

As we proceed with our study of these chapters, we will gain insights that will help us to avoid the pitfalls of persecution and temptation and to be firm in the faith. We are reminded that while we once were all converts, meaning that we each became members of the Church, our baptism, marked the beginning of our conversion, not its conclusion. In order for our testimonies to remain strong, and to be valiant and steadfast members of the church, we need to continue our conversion to the teachings of the gospel and daily strengthen our testimony. As one physical therapist stated regarding our physical muscles, "If we do not exercise them, we will lose their function." In my experience, I have found it to also be true regarding our testimony and membership in the church.

II. Mosiah 25

Mosiah 25:1

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

Bryan Richards states,

"So far in the Book of Mormon, the non-Lamanite people have never been together in one group. At first, the Nephites and the Mulekites were separate, and just as the Nephites joined up with the people of Zarahemla in the days of Mosiah's grandfather, Zeniff took his band to the land of Lehi-Nephi. The history of the last two generations has had Nephites living in at least two, if not three different communities. Now, the people finally are gathered together. This begins the era when Zarahemla becomes the capital for all the Nephites and the Mulekites, when they were all one people." (www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Mosiah-25).

Mosiah 25:3

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

Bryan Richards continues,

"The Nephites and the Mulekites combined did not amount to half of the number of the Lamanites in the land. This is significant because one generation later, a great era of violence and conflict ensues. In their great battles, the Nephites are vastly outnumbered. The Lord and the great general Moroni will be their only salvation, because by numbers alone they are doomed to defeat.

www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Mosiah-25).

In many instances, when your opponent has a greater number of men in their army, we conclude that we have little chance for victory. This conclusion is questioned throughout the Book of Mormon. Victory is not determined by the number of their warriors, but the righteousness of the people.

Mosiah 25:12-13

12 And it came to pass that those who were the children of Amulon and his brethren, who had taken to wife the daughters of the Lamanites, were displeased with the conduct of their fathers, and they would no longer be called by the names of their fathers, therefore they took upon themselves the name of Nephi, that they might be called the children of Nephi and be numbered among those who were called Nephites.

13 And now all the people of Zarahemla were numbered with the Nephites,...

Amulon and his brethren were numbered among the wicked priests of King Noah. They had abandoned their wives and children in order to escape the pursuit of the Lamanites with King Noah. Having abandoned their families, they abducted daughters of the Lamanites, whom they married. They later join with the Lamanites. Having been betrayed by their fathers to the enemy, their children no longer wished to be associated with King Noah's priests. They chose instead to be numbered with the Nephites.

James E. Faust states,

"In the past twenty years, as homes and families have struggled to stay intact, sociological studies reveal this alarming fact: much of the crime and many of the behavioral disorders in the United States come from homes where the father has abandoned his children. In many societies the world over, child poverty, crime, drug abuse, and family decay can be traced to conditions where the father gives no male nurturing...We need to honor the position of the father as the primary provider for physical and spiritual support. I state this with no reluctance because the Lord has revealed that this obligation is placed upon husbands...(D&C 83:2,4; 84:99; 29:48)." ("Father, Come Home," in *Ensign*, May 1993, 35).

Mosiah 25:16

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

It was important for the people of Limhi and Alma, that their deliverance had come about as the direct intervention of the Lord. It was important for them, and for us, to remember the many blessings the Lord has given us. Without the Lord's blessings, neither the people of Limhi or Alma would be freed from their servitude to the Lamanites.

Mosiah 25:17

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

From the time Limhi and his people had become humble "they themselves had entered into a covenant with God to serve him and keep his commandments" (Mosiah 21:31). They had sought for Ammon to baptize them, but as Ammon "considered himself an unworthy servant" (Mosiah 21:33), their baptism was delayed until they arrived in Zarahemla. Through Alma's authority, their baptism occurred.

Mosiah 25:19

19 And it came to pass that king Mosiah [II] granted unto Alma that he might establish churches throughout all the land of Zarahemla; and gave him power to ordain priests and teachers over every church.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

“Mosiah obviously held the keys of the kingdom. That is, the right of presidency, rested with him, and Alma could take no action in organizing various bodies of the church except under his direction.” (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 2*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988, [4th Printing, 1992], 291).

Mosiah 25:23-24

**23 And now there were seven churches in the land of Zarahemla. And it came to pass that whosoever were desirous to take upon them the name of Christ, or of God, they did join the churches of God;
24 And they were called the people of God. And the Lord did pour out his Spirit upon them, and they were blessed and prospered in the land.**

For a period of time, peace and prosperity existed among the people. The people were united and the church had been established again in the land.

III. Mosiah 26

Among those who heard the words of King Benjamin, were little children. As this generation grew older, they “did not believe the traditions of their fathers; They did not believe...the resurrection of the dead, [nor]...the coming of Christ; they could not understand the word of God; and their hearts were hardened” (Mosiah 26:1-3).

Mosiah 26:4

4 And they would not be baptized; neither would they join the church. And they were a separate people as to their faith, and remained so ever after, even in their carnal and sinful state; for they would not call upon the Lord their God.

It must have grieved the parents of these children for they had felt the spirit bear witness to the truthfulness of King Benjamin's words. He had testified to them of Christ's birth upon the earth, and his atonement and resurrection. They had taught these truths to their children, but a sufficient number had rejected the teachings of their parents. Like Laman and Lemuel before them, because their hearts were hardened, they did not "look unto the Lord as they ought" (1 Nephi 15:3). As a result, they were receptive to the "temptations of the devil which blindeth the eyes, and hardeneth the hearts of the children of men,...(1 Nephi 12:17). Bereft of the spirit, the individual is unable to understand the word of God as found in the scriptures.

Mosiah 26:6

6 For it came to pass that they did deceive many with their flattering words, who were in the church, and did cause them to commit many sins; therefore it became expedient that those who committed sin, that were in the church, should be admonished by the church.

Unable themselves to accept the teachings of their parents and the church, it appeared they felt driven to convert those who were members of the church as to the error of their belief. Like apostates before them and after, they could not leave the church alone. They felt obligated to convince others that the teachings they rejected, should be rejected by them also.

Mosiah 26:7, 10

7 And it came to pass that they [the transgressed church members] were brought before the priests, and delivered up unto the priests by the teachers; and the priests brought them before Alma, who was the high priest.

10 Now there had not any such thing happened before in the church; therefore Alma was troubled in his spirit, and he caused that they should be brought before the king.

There was no precedence that had been set, nor revelation from the Lord as to his will in this matter. Alma now went

to his presiding leader for counsel and direction. The king told Alma that he would not act in this matter, but Alma was to judge the transgressor himself. (see Mosiah 26:12.)

Mosiah 26:13

13 And now the spirit of Alma was again troubled; and he went and inquired of the Lord what he should do concerning this matter, for he feared that he should do wrong in the sight of God.

In the Church of Jesus Christ today, each who serves in a leadership position has someone to whom they can turn for guidance and direction. No one stands alone in the responsibilities they have been given. In this important matter, having received counsel from his leader, Alma sought the Lord's direction.

Mosiah 26:14

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

The Lord did not leave his humble servant without guidance or direction. Jesus Christ had called Alma to be the head of his church in Zarahemla. He would be there to give him revelation as the need arose.

The Savior spoke words of gratitude to Alma. "Thou art blessed because of thy exceeding faith in the words alone of my servant Abinadi"; "blessed art thou because thou hast established a church among this people...and they shall be my people"; "blessed is this people who are willing to bear my name"; and "because thou hast inquired of me concerning the transgressor, thou art blessed." (Mosiah 26:15-19). The Lord is pleased with his servants when they strive to do his will.

Mosiah 26:20-21

20 Thou art my servant; and I covenant with thee that thou shalt have eternal life; and thou shalt serve me and go forth in my name, and shalt gather together my sheep.

21 And he that will hear my voice shall be my sheep; and him shall ye receive into the church, and him will I also receive.

Because of Alma's complete obedience to do the will of the Lord, and to keep his commandments without cost to his own life, he received the promise of eternal life.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"The more sure word of prophecy means a man's knowing that he is sealed up unto eternal life, by revelation and the spirit of prophecy through the power of the Holy Priesthood.' (D&C 131:5). Those so favored of the Lord are sealed up against all manner of sin and blasphemy except the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost and the shedding of innocent blood. That is, their exaltation is assured; their calling and election is made sure, because they have obeyed the fullness of God's laws and have overcome the world." (*Mormon Doctrine*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966, [Second Edition], 110).

The Lord in his foresight knows Alma and during this period of his conversion, he has proved himself to be a valiant servant. Alma continued throughout his life to do the Lord's will demonstrating his complete devotion to Him.

Mosiah 26:22-23

22 For behold, this is my church; whosoever is baptized shall be baptized unto repentance. And whomsoever ye receive shall believe in my name; and him will I freely forgive.

23 For it is I that taketh upon me the sins of the world; for it is I that hath created them; and it is I that granteth unto him that believeth unto the end a place at my right hand.

The Lord places his seal upon the church as being his church. As the individual exercises the prerequisites of faith, repentance, and baptism, they will be received as members and their sins will be forgiven. He who will come into the world to take upon himself the sins of all the world; He, who under the direction of the Father, created worlds without number and was present when the Father took it upon himself to create Adam and Eve; He who will have a major role in the judgment of God's children, He grants

unto Alma the power to forgive sins on behalf of his church, even the Church of Jesus Christ.

Mosiah 26:24-27

24 For behold, in my name are they called; and if they know me they shall come forth, and shall have a place eternally at my right hand.

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

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

27 And then I will confess unto them that I never knew them; and they shall depart into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

In these verses the Lord notes two groups of individuals. Those who "know me [and]...those that never knew me..." (Mosiah 26:24-25). The first group consisted of those who heeded his voice, thereby, recognizing the truth when it was presented to them and joining the Church of Jesus Christ. They continued to be valiant in their testimony by striving to follow their Master and keep his commandments.

The second group included those who did not recognize the voice of the Lord when he called them. They were distracted by the things of this world and their pursuit of them. They wanted to be free from any restrictions upon their lifestyle so they could do as they pleased without constraints. Religion was seen by them as a crutch for the weak and helpless of the world.

Charles W. Penrose states,

"There is one class which will be different from all the rest. They shall be brought forth, the Lord says, but they will go back into their own place. They would not receive that which they might have had; they would not obey that which they might have obeyed. They received the light and the truth and then would not use it in the way that God had appointed. They would not go unto perfection by keeping every word that proceeded from the mouth of God, but prostituted the power God had given them, to rise to the highest heights but sunk down to the lowest depths; denying the truth revealed to them; shedding innocent blood;

consenting to the death of Christ; thus sinning against the Holy Ghost and becoming so corrupt and abominable that they cannot be redeemed. But they shall be brought forth from the grave and become subject to the Devil and his angels in eternity." (*Conference Report*, October 1914, 42).

Those who cannot be redeemed by the atonement of Jesus Christ are known as the "sons of perdition." These are they who do not feel remorse or seek repentance for their actions. Like Satan himself, they are openly defiant regarding obedience to the will of the Father or his Son.

Mosiah 26:29-30, 32

29 Therefore I say unto you, Go; and whosoever transgresseth against me, him shall ye judge according to the sins which he has committed; and if he confess his sins before thee and me, and repenteth in the sincerity of his heart, him shall ye forgive, and I will forgive him also.

30 Yea, and as often as my people repent will I forgive them their trespasses against me.

32 Now I say unto you, Go; and whosoever will not repent of his sins the same shall not be numbered among my people; and this shall be observed from this time forward.

This is the word of the Lord to the Prophet Alma. The individuals who are remorseful for their actions, and seek sincere repentance, and confess them to their appropriate church leader, are to be forgiven by the church and the Lord. Those who do not seek repentance from their sins and feel no remorse for their actions, are to have their names removed from the records of the church.

Dallin H. Oaks states,

"In contrast to the punishment that is the intended result of the judgment of a criminal court, the primary purpose of church discipline is to facilitate repentance--to qualify a transgressor for the mercy of God and the salvation made possible through the atonement of Jesus Christ...Church discipline is not an instrument of punishment, but a catalyst for change...The major concern of the laws of God is to perfect the lives of his children." (*With Full Purpose of Heart*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2002, 125).

George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl state,

"One of Satan's most cunning ways to lead men on to wrongdoing is craftily to make them believe in the uselessness of repentance. 'I have gone too far to repent; there is no forgiveness for me.' 'Yea,' the Lord said to Alma, 'And as often as my people repent will I forgive them their trespasses against me.' Of course there is forgiveness for everyone, if it were not so, God's great purposes would fail and this we do not believe. The poor sheep may be lost in the wood, hungry and helpless and cold, hunted by the wolf, falling over the precipice, 'But the Good Shepherd is on His way and is looking for it, and will find it. And will take it into His arms and will carry it to the fold; and will rejoice that the last is found and the dead is again alive.'" (*Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 2*. Edited and arranged by Philip C. Reynolds. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1956, [1976], 268).

Mosiah 26:31

31 And ye shall also forgive one another your trespasses; for verily I say unto you, he that forgiveth not his neighbor's trespasses when he says that he repents, the same hath brought himself under condemnation.

Forgiveness is an eternal principle in the Lord's kingdom. Each of us during our mortal journey fall short in being fully obedient to the commandments of the Lord. Because none of us are perfect, we are all in need of the Lord's forgiveness for our actions. How could we petition the Lord on behalf of our transgressions, if we are unwilling to forgive those who trespass against us? One individual said, "I can forgive, I just can't forget." It seems to me that the essence of forgiveness is forgetting the sin for our neighbor as well as the Lord for ourselves. The Lord himself makes this promise to each of us, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah 31:34). Can we do less for our neighbor?

Mosiah 26:37

37 And it came to pass that Alma did regulate all the affairs of the church; and they began again to have peace and to prosper exceedingly in the affairs of the

church, walking circumspectly before God, receiving many, and baptizing many.

Webster's New Word Dictionary states,

"circumspectly. careful to consider all related circumstances before acting, judging, or deciding, cautious; careful." (*Webster's New World Dictionary, Third College Edition.* New York: Prentice Hall, 1988, [Third Edition, 1994], 255).

Circumspectly, in reference to the affairs of the church, is that all is done in an orderly manner. No one takes upon themselves to act outside of their area of responsibility. In the final analysis, it is the Church of Jesus Christ upon the earth and He, as its head, gives counsel and direction regarding the operation of His church to his servants. The example of Alma seeking the Lord's direction regarding policy that is unclear continues today among his appointed leaders. The heavens are not closed.

IV. Mosiah 27

Mosiah 27:1-2

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

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

It appears that even though those who refused to repent were no longer members of the church, it did not diminish their continued acts of persecution towards those who were members. It became so great that, through Alma, the members sought relief from their king and the right to enact laws that would be binding upon the citizens. After reviewing the matter with his advisors, he issued a proclamation to the people. It was legally binding upon the actions of the people for it was "a strict command throughout all the churches that there should be no persecutions among them"

including "an equality among all men". It continued, "no pride nor haughtiness [should] disturb the peace;...every man should esteem his neighbor as himself; also each individual should labor "with their own hands for their support;" "all their priests and teachers should labor with their own hands for their support, in all cases save it were in sickness, or in much want;" (Mosiah 27:3-5). The last item specifically prohibited church leaders from receiving payment for their ministry, but they were to earn their support by their own labor. As a result of the implementation of the proclamation, peace was restored and the people prospered. However, the actions of the unbelievers continued.

Mosiah 27:8-10

8 Now the sons of Mosiah were numbered among the unbelievers; and also one of the sons of Alma was numbered among them, he being called Alma, after his father; nevertheless, he became a very wicked and idolatrous man. And he was a man of many words, and did speak with much flattery to the people; therefore he led many of the people to do after the manner of his iniquities.

9 And he became a great hinderment to the prosperity of the church of God; stealing away the hearts of the people; causing much dissension among the people; giving a chance for the enemy of God to exercise his power over them.

10 And now it came to pass that while he was going about to destroy the church of God, for he did go about secretly with the sons of Mosiah seeking to destroy the church, and to lead astray the people of the Lord, contrary to the commandments of God, or even the king--

How sad it must have been for the fathers of these young men, and their mothers. King Mosiah II and Alma held respectfully, the reigns of the government and the church. Daily, they labored to maintain peace in the land and righteousness in the church of God. Secretly, their own sons are among those who working to undermine their efforts. One can only imagine the tears that were shed and the prayers that were offered as the actions of their sons became known. Each family trying to determine the best course of action to take regarding their sons.

Mosiah 27:11-13

11 And as I said unto you, as they were going about rebelling against God, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto them; and he descended as it were in a cloud; and he spake as it were with a voice of thunder, which caused the earth to shake upon which they stood;

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

13 Nevertheless he cried again, saying: Alma, arise and stand forth, for why persecutest thou the church of God? For the Lord hath said: This is my church, and I will establish it, and nothing shall overthrow it, save it is the transgression of my people.

The experience of Saul on the road to Damascus comes to mind, however, the major difference is that Saul, later to become Paul, felt he was doing the Lord's work, while Alma and the four sons of Mosiah were motivated by rebellion. Saul was asked by the angel, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts 9:4), whereas Alma was asked, "why persecutest thou the church of God?" (Mosiah 27:13).

Hugh Nibley states,

"To impress people with miracles is one thing; to give them a testimony of the gospel another. As the experience of the Apostles showed, if people will not accept the gospel by the word without miracles, they will not accept it with miracles. 'If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead' (Luke 16:31." (*The World and The Prophets, Vol. 3*. Edited by John W. Welch, Gary P. Gillum, and Don E. Norton. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., and Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1987, 141).

It is the exception, not the rule, when angels appear to men on earth. When an angel is sent from God, it is for a specific purpose, not to develop an individual's faith. Miracles, as spectacular as they are, do not convert people to the gospel. Conversion comes instead through the whispering of the Holy Ghost.

Mosiah 27:14

14 And again, the angel said: Behold, the Lord hath heard the prayers of his people, and also the prayers of his servant, Alma, who is thy father; for he has prayed with much faith concerning thee that thou mightest be brought to the knowledge of the truth; therefore, for this purpose have I come to convince thee of the power and authority of God, that the prayers of his servants might be answered according to their faith.

There are times when we seem to discount the value of prayer and the impact it can have upon the lives of our loved ones. Just as the prayers of the Saints in Damascus were heard, so were the prayers of Alma, the younger's father. Every prayer is heard by God in heaven. No sincere petition goes unheard or unanswered. For Saul and Alma, the younger, the results were miraculous. For others, the answer may be delayed, but in all instances the timing and the answer that is given is the correct one. We have a loving Father in Heaven whose love for his children knows no limits. He knows and understands perfectly our requests as well as our accompanying pain. Someday, we will come to understand just how perfect his answer was and how important the timing was to the answer. Do not give up. All prayers are answered.

Mosiah 27:15-17

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

16 Now I say unto thee: Go, and remember the captivity of thy fathers in the land of Helam, and in the land of Nephi; and remember how great things he has done for them; for they were in bondage, and he has delivered them. And now I say unto thee, Alma, go thy way, and seek to destroy the church no more, that their prayers may be answered, and this even if thou wilt of thyself be cast off.

17 And now it came to pass that these were the last words which the angel spake unto Alma, and he departed.

The affect of the angel's message upon Alma and his companions was that they "fell again to the earth." The effect upon Alma was greater as "he became dumb," and "could not open his mouth...that he could not move his hands...and...[was] carried helpless," to his father (Mosiah 27:18-19). He was in this state for a total of three days and nights. (see Alma 36:10.)

The response of Alma to the altered state of his son, was joy at the manifestation of the power of God. He called the priests, and surely others who were knowledgeable regarding his son, and they began a fast on behalf of his son. The purpose of their fast was "that the eyes of the people might be opened to see and know of the goodness and glory of God" (Mosiah 27:22), as manifested in his son.

After two days of prayers and fasting, Alma's limbs were restored and he was again able to speak.

Mosiah 27:24, 27-30

24 For said he, I have repented of my sins, and have been redeemed of the Lord; behold I am born of the Spirit.

27 ...I was like to be cast off.

28 Nevertheless, after wading through much tribulation, repenting nigh unto death, the Lord in mercy hath seen fit to snatch me out of an everlasting burning, and I am born of God

29 My soul hath been redeemed from the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity. I was in the darkest abyss; but now I behold the marvelous light of God. My soul was racked with eternal torment; but I am snatched, and my soul is pained no more.

30 I rejected my Redeemer, and denied that which had been spoken of by our fathers;...

One should not assume that the three days and nights of the repentance process that Alma, the younger, experienced was any less painful or remorseful than one that occurs over a longer duration. However brief it was sufficient in the Lord's judgment for Alma. Its' effects were powerful as demonstrated by the mighty change upon Alma and the continuation throughout his life of service to the Lord.

Alma spoke at this time of the change that had come upon him as being "born of God" (Mosiah 27:25).

Mosiah 27:24-27

24 ...I...have been redeemed of the Lord; behold I am born of the Spirit.

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

26 And thus they become new creatures; and unless they do this, they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God.

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

This process is similar to the experience that the people of King Benjamin had. (see Mosiah 5:4-13.)

Bryan Richards states,

"Because of denominational inferences, latter-day saints don't refer to themselves as 'born again Christians,' but the Book of Mormon [and LDS Doctrine] teaches us that this mighty change must take place [in each of us] in order for us to enter into the kingdom of God, and thus become new creatures; and unless they [we] do this, they [we] can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God [Mosiah 27:26]...

"...a few characteristics which are important in this passage [are: (1)]...being born again describes a transformation from carnal to spiritual; [and, (2) It] occurs by the power of the Spirit, and the individual...redeemed, become[s] a son or daughter of Christ. This is how Christ is the father, by virtue of his redeeming sacrifice. We become the children of Him who [is]...our elder brother.

"Often the scriptures speak of this mighty change happening over a relatively short time period of a day or two. Benjamin's people, Alma, Enos, and King Lamoni are examples. However, [as noted in BM#16], the vast majority of members make this mighty change over a longer time period---sometimes over months or years."

www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Mosiah-27).

Mosiah 27:32-33, 35

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

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

35 And they traveled throughout all the land of Zarahemla, and among all the people who were under the reign of king Mosiah, zealously striving to repair all the injuries which they had done to the church, confessing all their sins, and publishing all the things which they had seen, and explaining the prophecies and the scriptures to all who desired to hear them.

By traveling throughout the land, Alma and the four sons of Mosiah are demonstrating an important quality of their repentance. Restitution and confession to those whom you have offended are part of the individual repentance process. It cannot be circumvented if full forgiveness is to be obtained. It was necessary that Alma and the four sons of Alma made this part of the repentance public, for their sins had been committed in a public forum. If their transgressions had been personal, the need for public contrition would not have been necessary. (see Doctrine and Covenants 42:90-92.)

Mosiah 27:34

34 And four of them were the sons of Mosiah; and their names were Ammon, and Aaron, and Omner, and Himni; these were the names of the sons of Mosiah.

We now learn the names of the four sons of King Mosiah II. We will learn more about them and their activities following the completion of their repentance process. While

they were not struck dumb, nor did they become helpless following the words of the angel, but they had to undergo their own individual repentance. We may be assured that while the record does not state, the process they underwent was sufficient for them to also receive full forgiveness from the Lord for the sins they had committed.

Mosiah 27:36-37

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

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

Joseph Fielding Smith and Robert L. Millet state,

"The proclamation of the gospel message is the proclamation of peace, those who are called to declare the word are publishers of peace. Peace in the human soul and peace in the world can come only when men and women accept the teachings of the lowly Nazarene and apply his atoning blood in their behalf...

"...Those who present the gospel message act as agents of him through whom 'salvation was, and is, and is to come,...' (Mosiah 3:18). They talk of him, rejoice in him, preach of him, prophesy of his coming, all so that they and those to whom they preach may have the peaceful assurance that he lives; that it may be known with certainty from whence a remission of sins and all the blessings of heaven come. The Lord's legal administrators are those who publish peace, who declare salvation, who echo the testimony of Isaiah-- 'Thy God reigneth!' (Isaiah 52:7)." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 2*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988, [4th Printing, 1992], 237).

V. Mosiah 28

Having completed their own repentance process, the four sons of Mosiah had a request of their father.

Mosiah 28:1-2

1 ...they...returned to their father, the king, and desired of him that he would grant unto them that they

might, with these whom they had selected, go up to the land of Nephi that they might preach the things which they had heard and that they might impart the word of God to their brethren, the Lamanites—

2 That perhaps they might bring them to the knowledge of the Lord their God, and convince them of the iniquity of their fathers; and that perhaps they might cure them of their hatred towards the Nephites, that they might also be brought to rejoice in the Lord their God,...

As noted, there is nothing that can bring peace to an individuals soul or to the nations of the earth, than the preaching of the word of God and the atonement of Jesus Christ. They sought from their father the opportunity to go to the land of the Lamanites as missionaries. They desired to be instrument in the Lord's hand and offer them the joy and peace the gospel of Jesus Christ could bring to their lives.

Mosiah 28:3-4

3 Now they were desirous that salvation should be declared to every creature, for they could not bear that any human soul should perish; yea, even the very thoughts that any soul should endure endless torment did cause them to quake and tremble.

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

It is evident to me that the sons of Mosiah had also undergone a mighty change of heart and had been born of God. They, who had previously been "the very vilest of sinners...could not bear the thought that any human soul should perish...[without it] did cause them to quake and tremble" (Mosiah 28:3-4). Like Alma, they also had "suffered much anguish of soul because of their iniquities, and...[suffered] much and fearing that they should be cast off forever" (Mosiah 28:4). Had not the Lord seen "fit in his infinite mercy to spare them" (Mosiah 28:4), they would have been cast off.

Mosiah 28:6-7

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

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

The sincerity of the pleading of his sons that they be allowed to serve as missionaries to the Lamanites prompted King Mosiah II to inquire of the Lord. The Lord heard his prayer.

Harold G. Hiram states,

"They [sons of Mosiah] pleaded with their father that they might go and do missionary work among the Lamanites. Now father Mosiah feared for his sons' safety in the land of their enemy...(v.6). The first part of the Lord's answer might not have been exactly what Mosiah wanted to hear: 'Let them go up' (v.7). But then followed three marvelous promises: the first, 'For many shall believe on their words,' and the second, 'I will deliver thy sons out of the hands of the Lamanites,' and then the third, 'They shall have eternal life' (ibid.) Now, he did not promise them great wealth, but he did promise the greatest of all the gifts of God, eternal life! The four missionary sons of Mosiah did not choose the easy course. Their choice was neither convenient, nor popular. They gave up the kingship...They were ridiculed even by other members of the Church...(Alma 26:23). 'Their choice to serve a mission was not one of convenience...(Alma 26:29).'" ("Sacrifice in the Service," in *Ensign*, November 1995, 41).

Having received the confirmation of the Lord, King Mosiah granted permission for his sons to serve. (see Alma 17-26 regarding the mission of the sons of Mosiah to the Lamanites.)

Mosiah 28:10

10 Now king Mosiah had no one to confer the kingdom upon, for there was not any of his sons who would accept of the kingdom.

This simple statement is a precursor, as we will learn in BM#21, of a major change in how the Nephites were to be governed. It was inspired by the Lord and put in place by King Mosiah II.

Mormon records that at this time King Mosiah translated the records [24 plates that had been found by the search party sent by King Limhi]. He did so "by the means of...two stones which were fastened into the two rims of a bow,...And whosoever has these things is called seer, after the manner of old times" (Mosiah 28:13, 16).

These instruments of translation "were prepared from the beginning, and were handed down from generation to generation, for the purpose of interpreting languages; And they have been kept and preserved by the hand of the Lord, that he should discover to every creature who should possess the land the iniquities and abominations of his people." (Mosiah 28:14-15).

The LDS Bible Dictionary states,

"Urim and Thummin. Heb. term that means Lights and Perfections. An instrument prepared of God to assist man in obtaining revelation from the Lord and in translating languages. See Ex.28:30; Lev. 8:8; Num. 27:21; Deut. 33:8; 1 Sam. 28:6; Ezra 2:63; Neh.7:65; JS-H 1:35).

"Using a Urim and Thummin is the special prerogative of a seer, and it would seem reasonable that such instruments were used from the time of Adam...Joseph Smith used it in translating the Book of Mormon and in obtaining other revelations." ("LDS Bible Dictionary," in *Holy Bible*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979, 786-787).

Mosiah 28:17, 19

17 Now after Mosiah had finished translating these records, behold, it gave an account of the people who were destroyed, from the time that they were destroyed back to the building of the great tower, at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people and they were scattered abroad upon the face of all the earth, yea, and even from that time back until the creation of Adam.

19 And this account shall be written hereafter; for behold it is expedient that all people should know the things which are written in this account.

Moroni, the son of Mormon who abridged the majority of the records of the Book of Mormon, later abridged himself the record of King Mosiah II's translation. Moroni included it in the Book of Mormon as the Book of Ether. We will address its contents as part of BM#45-46.

Mosiah 28:20

20 And now, as I said unto you, that after king Mosiah had done these things, he took the plates of brass, and all the things which he had kept, and conferred them upon Alma, who was the son of Alma; yea, all the records, and also the interpreters, and conferred them upon him, and commanded him that he should keep and preserve them, and also keep a record of the people, handing them down from one generation to another, even as they had been handed down from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem.

It is likely that due to the age of Alma, as well as his demanding ministerial duties, it was the will of the Lord that Alma, the younger, became the keeper of the sacred artifacts. It was also to be his responsibility to keep the sacred records of the people.

VI. Alma 36

We will address part of this lesson, Alma 36:6-30, as it relates to Alma's conversion. We will again revisit Alma, Chapter 36, [BM#29], when we then focus upon the words of counsel and direction that Alma gave to his sons, Heleman, Shiblon and Corianton.

As Alma gives his final counsel and blessing to his son, Helaman, he personally shares his conversion to the gospel.

Alma 36:6

6 For I went about with the sons of Mosiah, seeking to destroy the church of God; but behold, God sent his holy angel to stop us by the way.

Alma fully acknowledged to Helaman that he and his companions were engaged in trying to destroy the church of God. His actions, along with his friends, were likely acts of youthful rebellion against the work their fathers supported. Due to the public nature of his actions, Alma later told his son, Corianton, when others "saw your conduct they would not believe in my words" (Alma 39:11). Because the work of the Lord was being adversely affected, the Lord sent an angel to deliver a message to these boys.

He confirmed to Helaman that the angel spoke with a "voice of thunder and the whole earth did tremble beneath our feet (see also Mosiah 28:11),...for the fear of the Lord came upon us" (Alma 36:7). When the angel stated, "If thou wilt of thyself be destroyed, seek no more to destroy the church of God...for when I heard these words...I was struck with such fear and amazement lest perhaps I should be destroyed, that I fell to the earth and I did hear no more" (Alma 36:9, 11). Alma told his son that he was also physically affected, for "three days and three nights...I could not open my mouth, neither had I the use of my limbs" (Alma 36:10). It is apparent that Alma had no understanding that their actions were so serious they would result in his destruction!

Alma recounts to Heleman, his experience during that the three days and three nights he was unconscious.

Alma 36:12-16

12 ...I was racked with eternal torment, for my soul was harrowed up [vexed] to the greatest degree and racked with all my sins.

13 Yea, I did remember all my sins and iniquities, for which I was tormented with the pains of hell; yea, I saw that I had rebelled against my God, and that I had not kept his holy commandments.

14 Yea, and I had murdered many of his children, or rather led them away unto destruction; yea, and in fine so great had been my iniquities, that the very thought of coming into the presence of my God did rack my soul with inexpressible horror.

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

16 And now, for three days and for three nights was I racked, even with the pains of a damned soul.

Thomas R. Valletta states,

"What does racked mean? 'Strained to the utmost' (Webster, *American Dictionary*)."
(*The Book of Mormon Study Guide*. General Editor: Thomas R. Valletta. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2015, 481).

Alma, the younger, attempted to describe to his son, Helaman, the exquisite pain that he experienced during this extended period of time. This pain was initially in response to the sins and iniquities he had committed throughout his life.

Ezra Taft Benson states,

"It is not uncommon to find men and women in the world who feel remorse for the things they do wrong...Godly sorrow is a gift of the Spirit. It is a deep realization that our actions have offended our Father and our God. It is the sharp and keen awareness that our behavior caused the Savior, He who knows no sins, even the greatest of all, to endure agony and suffering...This very real mental and spiritual anguish is what the scriptures refer to as having 'a broken heart and a contrite spirit.' Such a spirit is the absolute prerequisite for true repentance." ("A Mighty Change of Heart," in *Ensign*, October 1989, 4).

An acute awareness of his sins was not the only part of Alma's remembrance. He also recalled those individuals whom he and his friends had sought to lead away from the church.

Daniel H. Ludlow states,

"As Alma mentions later to his son Corianton, the murder of a human physical body is a grave sin. However, an even more serious sin is to murder the spiritual life of a person or, in other words, to purposely lead one away from the saving principles of the gospel. Concerning such people Alma says: '...whosoever murdereth against the light and knowledge of God, it is not easy for him to obtain forgiveness.' (Alma 39:6)" (*Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976, 218).

It appears the leading away of others from the saving principles of the gospel being taught by his father and others, had led the Lord to send an angel to call Alma and the sons of Mosiah to repentance.

Alma 36:17-20

17 And it came to pass that as I was thus racked with torment, while I was harrowed up by the memory of my many sins, behold, I remembered also to have heard my father prophesy unto the people concerning the coming of one Jesus Christ, a Son of God, to atone for the sins of the world.

18 Now, as my mind caught hold upon this thought, I cried within my heart: O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me, who am in the gall of bitterness, and am encircled about by the everlasting chains of death.

19 And now, behold, when I thought this, I could remember my pains no more; yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more.

20 And oh, what joy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain!

As Alma, the younger, found himself encompassed within the pain of a soul for which there was no hope, he recalled the words of his father regarding the coming of Jesus Christ who would atone for the sins of the world. It was this thought that prompted him to call upon Jesus Christ in hope of receiving his mercy. For Alma, and all who will repent, Jesus Christ rescued him and exchanged his pain for joy. Like the hiker, whose life is spared as he clings to a root hanging from the crevice in a rock, Alma's life was spared because he grasped on to Jesus Christ.

John W. Welch states,

"I am...impressed with the repetition of the name 'Jesus Christ, Son of God' at the very center of the chapter. This unquestionably had deep significance for Alma. It is one of the best examples of any ancient author succeeding in placing the most important concept at the central or turning point of his passage...For the central turning point of his conversion came precisely when he called upon the name of Jesus Christ and asked for mercy. Nothing was more important than this in Alma's conversion--..." ("A Masterpiece: Alma 36," in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*.)

Edited by John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co. and Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1991, 118).

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Donald W. Parry state,

"What does the 'gall of bitterness' symbolize? 'Gall, a poisonous plant, denotes an extremely bitter thing. The 'gall of bitterness' speaks of hell, or the 'darkest abyss.'" (Guide to Scripture Symbols. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1990, 57).

The contrast between being in the "gall of bitterness" and the "joy" he now felt, Alma shared with his son.

Alma 36:21

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

Thomas R. Valletta states,

"What does 'exquisite' imply? 'Being in the highest degree; complete' (Webster. American Dictionary). The Book of Mormon Study Guide. General Editor: Thomas R. Valletta. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 483).

Alma 36:24

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

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

In word and action, Alma came forth from his state of unconsciousness, strengthened and renewed in his desire to do the work of the Lord. He had been changed from the "carnal and fallen state to a state of righteousness" (Mosiah 27:25). He had been born again.

Marion G. Romney states,

"The experience of each individual who is really born again is similar to this experience of Alma and the sons of Mosiah, although it may not be so dramatic...No person whose soul is illuminated by the burning Spirit of God can in this world of sin and dense darkness remain passive. He is driven by an irresistible urge to fit himself to be an active agent of God in furthering righteousness and in freeing the lives and minds of men from the bondage of sin." (*Conference Report*, October 1941, 89).

Alma 36:27-28

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

28 And I know that he will raise me up at the last day, to dwell with him in glory;...

Some are under the mistaken idea that once one is "born again to God," that their adversities and challenges are behind them. This was not the experience for Alma, or Paul. Following their experience of rebirth, both Alma and Paul experienced persecution, imprisonment, and risk to their lives. What did occur was a dramatic change in their lives. Both changed their course and direction and became committed disciples of Jesus Christ dedicating their energy to a lifetime of service by bringing souls to Him. Neither was able to be silenced as they bore their fervent testimony of Jesus Christ and His atonement.

The lesson of Alma conversion and being born again is a powerful reminder to each of us that change can occur regardless of our present circumstances. The catalyst for , lasting change is only achieved through the atonement of Jesus Christ. It is our hope and action, combined with his mercy, that will then be sufficient to bring about a complete change in each of us, just as it did with Alma.

We conclude our study of these chapters, by including a chart that contrasts the qualities of Alma before and after he was "born of God" (Mosiah 27:25).

Chart I. Qualities of Alma Before and After "Being Born of God" (Mosiah 27:25).

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 the 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).

Reference: *Book of Mormon Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 92.

This chart contrasts the experience Alma, the younger, had during the time he was unconscious immediately following the visit of the angel. One is able to see the contrast between the pain that he experienced and the joy that resulted from his being "born of God" (Mosiah 27:25). While it is necessary we will also undergo this process, its length and intensity will vary for each of us.

VII. Conclusions

These chapters have much to contribute to our increased understanding of the watchful eye of the Lord over his children.

In Mosiah, Chapter 25 we see the coming together of the two groups: the people of Limhi and the people of Alma. They

became united under King Mosiah II and those who were previously Mulekites. Having been deserted by their fathers, the wives and children of King Noah's priests became Nephites. Their fathers and their Lamanite wives joined with the Lamanites. They were reminded that the deliverance of their previous bondage by the Lamanites, came through the blessings of the Lord. Limhi and his people were baptized and became members of the church making their repentance complete.

In Mosiah, Chapter 26, we saw the impact the unbelievers had upon the believers as they sought to lead away members from the church. Seeking to understand the will of the Lord regarding those members who refused to repent, Alma learns that their names are to be removed from the records of the church. Refusal to repent became grounds to have the members name removed. We also learned the importance of gaining forgiveness from the Lord lies in our being able to forgive those who trespass against us.

Mosiah, Chapter 27, is a powerful chapter for we learn that Alma, the younger, and the four sons of King Mosiah II were numbered among the unbelievers. In their rebellion, they tried to lead away members of the church. An angel appeared to them and the process of repentance was initiated with both Alma and the four sons of Mosiah. In Alma, Chapter 36, we learned further details of Alma's experience while he was unconscious during the three days and nights. Alma, and I believe, the four sons of Mosiah, underwent the process of being "born of God" (Mosiah 27:25). Their lives of carnality were changed to lives of righteousness. Each participated in the process of confession and restitution to those whom they wronged as part of their repentance process.

Mosiah, Chapter 28, began with the four sons of Mosiah expressing their desire to their father to go on a mission...to the Lamanites. Through prayer, King Mosiah II, received confirmation from the Lord he will watch over them. We will learn more about their mission in BM#25 and BM#26. King Mosiah II translated the 24 plates that the men of King Limhi had discovered and learned of their contents. This will be addressed in BM#45 and BM#46. As this lesson closes, we learn King Mosiah II had determined to confer the artifacts and the sacred plates to Alma, the younger.

These chapters have many lessons to teach us if we will be diligent and prayerful in our continued study.

Our next lesson, [BM#21] addresses the change in Nephite government instituted by King Mosiah II and the dangers of having a king. Amlici opposes the action and war ensued. All is not well with the church as, due to prosperity, they become prideful and Alma, the younger, resigns his position in the government in order to call the people to repentance.