

Gospel Doctrine Lesson 20: “My Soul Is Pained No More”

(Mosiah 25-28, Alma 36)

LESSON GOAL: To inspire us to continually apply the principle of repentance, become converted, and share the gospel.

Bruce R. McConkie: “Like the Bible, it [the Book of Mormon] is a volume of holy writ that speaks forth the mind and will of the Almighty. Like the Bible, it invites men to forsake the world and live as becometh saints. Like the Bible, it has such an impact upon the hearts of men that they are prepared to die in defense of their beliefs. Already the ten thousands of Ephraim and the thousands of Manasseh have left Babylon and come to Zion with songs of everlasting joy because of it. And before the end of the world, which is the premillennial destruction of the wicked, and before the end of the earth, which shall not occur until after the Millennium, the Book of Mormon shall so affect men that the whole earth and all its peoples will have been influenced and governed by it” (*The Millennial Messiah*, 170).

1. Limhi’s and Alma’s people join Mosiah’s people in the land of Zarahemla.

At the end of Mosiah, the Nephite nation consisted of the Mulekites, the Nephites of Zarahemla, the people of Limhi, the people of Alma, and the children of the Amulonites (Mosiah 25:12). These five groups became one group, the Nephites, under the leadership of king Mosiah, son of Benjamin. But “there were not so many of the people of Nephi and of the people of Zarahemla as there were of the Lamanites; yea, they were not half so numerous” (Mosiah 25:3).

2. Many Church members are led into sin by unbelievers.

Bryan Richards, (commenting on Mosiah 26:6—“*They did deceive many with their flattering words*): “The enemies of the church use flattery to deceive the very elect. Flattery is to preach that which is pleasing unto the carnal mind (Alma 30:53). Today, we have many examples of modern-day flattery designed to destroy the members of the church. Like the dissenters of Alma’s day, many find pleasure in fostering apostasy among the members. The following quotes are taken from websites designed to “enlighten” Mormons and encourage those who are struggling in the faith. The first two promote fear and paranoia about the massive, power-hungry Church, the next two are the battle cry of the atheist, and the last is the sectarian warning about Moroni 10:4:

“The Church is not a benign organization. It believes in using tactics similar to McCarthyism of the 1950’s.”

“I am very concerned about the Mormon church gaining more political power. The church ‘owns’ parts of Idaho, Arizona and practically all of Utah. Utah also has a very powerful senator in Orin Hatch.”

“I had been exposed to the idea of evolution before, but usually in a negative light. But in this class, we were required to read a lengthy passage from Darwin’s ‘*Origin of Species*.’ It detailed the basic arguments of evolution and some of the evidence. It was like a light had gone on in my mind. I began to read everything I could about evolution, and the more I read, the more it made sense to me.”

“I refuse to believe in a god that would drown his children, allow untold suffering and injustice to others, give the truth to a few and then damn to hell the rest of them who refuse to believe and do what he says. I’m sorry, but that does not compute.”

“Asking a potential new convert to pray to God to reveal to them feelings of confirmation that the Book of Mormon is true is a ‘a form of positive hypnosis’.”

All of these statements make sense to the carnal mind and, therefore, are a form of flattery. This has been the tool of the adversary for millennia. It worked for him in the days of Alma and it continues to work for him now.

3. Alma the Younger and the sons of Mosiah are visited by an angel.

Among the youthful unbelievers tormenting the Nephites were the son of Alma and the sons of Mosiah. Alma gets special attention in the verses of Mosiah 27. Notice the descriptions of the wickedness of this man:

G (27:8) “very wicked”

G (27:8) “an idolatrous man”

G (27:8) “he led many of the people to do after the manner of his iniquities”

G (27:9) “he became a great hinderment to the prosperity of the church”

G (27:9) he was guilty of “stealing away the hearts of the people”

G (27:9) he caused "much dissension among the people"

G (27:9) he provided "a chance for the enemy of God to exercise his power over [the people]"

G (27:10) "he was going about to destroy the church of God"

G (27:10) he was "seeking to lead astray the people of the Lord"

G (27:11) he was "going about rebelling against God"

G (28:4) he and his companions were "the very vilest of sinners"

G (Alma 36:14) he had "murdered many of his children, or rather led them away unto destruction"

The Lord doesn't send an angel to rebuke every rebellious soul because many of these would still not repent even if they saw an angel. The witness of the Holy Ghost is more powerful than the visitation of an angel.

Heber J. Grant: "Many men say: 'If I could only see an angel, if I could only hear an angel proclaim something, that would cause me to be faithful all the days of my life!' It had no effect upon these men that were not serving the Lord, and it would have no effect today." (C R, Apr. 1924, 159). This is seen in the life of Lyman Johnson.

"Lyman Johnson...reportedly apostatized after having seen an angel...'I remember hearing **President Snow** say on more than one occasion,' recalled Mathias Cowley, 'how determined Lyman E. Johnson was to see an angel from the Lord. He plead [sic] with and teased the Lord to send an angel to him until he saw an angel; but President Snow said the trouble with him was that he saw an angel one day and saw the devil the next day, and finally the devil got away with him'²⁶" (FARMS, vol. 2, no. 2-Fall 1993, 171).

Hugh Nibley: "Brigham Young said, 'Pray that you never see an angel.' He was talking historically. Almost everybody who saw an angel left the Church. They came back, but they had these terrible problems. It gave them inflated egos, etc. They thought they were somebody special. They were, but they couldn't take it. It would be very dangerous if we were exposed to the other world to any degree. Only people that are very humble can do that. Not us, we can't do that. We are not that humble." (*The Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, Lecture 41, 193)

4. Alma and the sons of Mosiah dedicate themselves to preaching the gospel.

Spencer W. Kimball: "To every forgiveness there is a condition. The plaster must be as wide as the sore. The fasting, the prayers, the humility must be equal to or greater than the sin. There must be a broken heart and a contrite spirit. There must be 'sackcloth and ashes.' There must be tears and genuine change of heart. There must be conviction of the sin, abandonment of the evil, confession of the error to properly constituted authorities of the Lord. There must be restitution and a confirmed, determined change of pace, direction and destination. Conditions must be controlled and companionship corrected or changed. There must be a washing of robes to get them white and there must be a new consecration and devotion to the living of all of the laws of God. In short, there must be an overcoming of self, of sin, and of the world" (*Miracle of Forgiveness*, 353).

James R. Moss: "As Lehi, Enos, the Sons of Mosiah, and Adam and Eve felt the joy of the gospel, they all wanted to share it with others. When we are as truly converted we will want to share the gospel with others as they did. That is a true measure of our personal conversion. When we are converted and we will feel the joy of the gospel, we desire to share it with others. If we feel no joy and/or have no desire to share the gospel with others, we probably are not truly converted." (Peterson & Tate, *The Pearl of Great Price: Revelations from God*, 43-44).

John Taylor: "There are many things that seem to us trials and difficulties, that perplex, annoy, and harass our spirits; yet these very things, as one justly observed, are blessings in disguise, so many helps to us to develop our weaknesses and infirmities, and lead us to put our trust in God, and rely upon Him to give us a knowledge of ourselves, of our neighbors, and of the work of God; they have a tendency to develop principles of worth to our minds, and thus they serve as schoolmasters, helps, and instructors, and are to us as many blessings in disguise. In fact all things that we have to do with in the world, whether they are adversity or prosperity, whether they relate to ourselves or to others, if rightly appreciated and understood, may teach us a lesson that will be to our joy, probably not only in time, but in all eternity" (*Journal of Discourses*, vol. 1, 366).

Marion G. Romney: "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*, Oct. 1941, p. 89)

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