

# Nibley's Commentary On The Book of Mormon

Sharman Bookwalter Hummel, Editor

Selections from all Four Volumes  
**Teachings of the Book of Mormon**  
by Hugh W. Nibley

Volume 1  
(Edited from Semester 1, 2)

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# *Dedication*

To the Ancient Prophet Moroni, the last Editor of  
The Book of Mormon, who knew through prophecy  
the problems of our day, and who as an Angel was  
assigned to restore the Gospel at the hands of a  
Modern Prophet Joseph Smith.



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## Preface

The Purpose of this Book is to make easily available selections from the four volume lectures transcribed and published as ***Teachings of the Book of Mormon*** by Hugh W. Nibley, Professor at Brigham Young University.

I have made an effort to add ***Scripture References*** to each paragraph, when applicable, including chapter and verse. The original books only had occasional verse references. This effort along with greatly expanded **Lecture Topics** at the beginning of some of the Lessons will be helpful to teachers of the Book of Mormon classes.

The numbers at the beginning of each paragraph refer to the page number of the First Edition of each of the four volumes. These numbers will give the reader a clue as to where I have made extensive omissions. Total omissions approximate 50%.

All document text was scanned from the first editions of the four volumes. Foreign language printed in italics in the original books were converted by me to capital letters to distinguish them. Text scanning to word processing could not retain foreign characters. Refer to the earlier editions for these words using the page references mentioned above.

I have occasionally used brackets to clarify omissions or where necessary for understanding. Most of the brackets were added by other editors. Occasionally I have recast some sentences without changing the meaning.

Omissions are always controversial. It is my hope that this volume will entice the reader to read the original volumes. My objective was to leave only comments by Brother Nibley directly relating to the scriptures.



## About Hugh Nibley

**H**ugh Nibley (1910-2005) was one of the most gifted scholars in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. His linguistic abilities, his concern with detail, and his brilliant mind combined to make his efforts productive and meaningful. He was a prolific writer and a popular lecturer. Dr. Nibley graduated summa cum laude from the University of California at Los Angeles and completed his Ph.D. as a University Fellow at the University of California at Berkeley. He taught at the Claremont Colleges in California before serving in military intelligence in World War II. He joined the faculty of Brigham Young University in 1946, where he spent most of his time in research and writing as a professor of history and religion. Dr. Nibley has been honored as the recipient of many awards, including the David O. McKay Humanities Award in 1971 and Professor of the Year in 1973. He served as a missionary for the Church in Switzerland and Germany and concluded his mission in Greece. He and his wife, the former Phyllis Draper, are the parents of eight children.



# Lecture 1 Introduction

**The Book of Mormon—Like Nothing Else  
[Greatest Miracle is the Sudden Appearance of the  
Written Word]  
[Few Ancient Documents Existed at the Time of  
Joseph Smith]  
[Book of Adam]**

1 Now the shocking thought comes to us: Is it possible that nobody is doing what he should be doing? The answer is yes. It's not only possible; that's the situation. When the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to Joseph Smith in the Grove, according to the oldest and best account of all—that of Frederick G. Williams, written in 1832-33 and dictated by Joseph Smith when he was only 26 years old. It's different from the one we have in the Pearl of Great Price here because the Lord speaks in the first person. In the account we have here, it's an indirect quotation (what the Lord told Joseph), but here the words to the Prophet when he was only fourteen years old are, "The world at this time lieth in sin, and there is none that doeth good—no not one. Mine anger is kindling against the inhabitants of the world to visit them in this ungodliness." There are those who do well and have good intentions, but that is not what it means. It means to do what they should be doing—the best possible thing. If you break an arm, I might with the best of intentions try to mend it, but I could be doing a lot of damage. I'm not doing any good. I'm doing more harm probably, though I mean well and get credit for that. The

fact is we are not in a condition where anybody can do what he should be doing because we are not living by the heavenly order anymore. We are not living by the order for which the earth was designed and created; we are a million miles away from it, completely independent. So the Lord says, “There is none that doeth good, no not one and mine anger is kindling.”

2 The thing is that this is where the Book of Mormon comes in. It’s like nothing else. It’s the only answer you are ever going to get to that question [why read the Book of Mormon] in this dispensation. In reading the Book of Mormon no one is ever doing something he shouldn’t be doing. Most of the time he would be doing probably the best thing he could possibly be doing. If it is not itself the best thing to be doing, it will quickly put you onto the best thing to be doing because it will have a direct effect on you. It will change you; it will work on you. It is a personal, intimate document. It will hit you. You can’t just read the Book of Mormon and nothing else. It immediately puts you on the high road to what you should be doing, like no other book. And it will lead you directly into a course of thought or a course of action of the greatest significance to yourself and to the world you live in. In other words, it will enable you to break loose as nothing else can. Only the Book of Mormon breaks loose because it does break loose. It’s like nothing else. Now we have the direct revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants, etc., but the Book of Mormon was brought by an angel, a tangible thing. He gave it to Joseph. He gives this clinical description of how the angel was. This is something completely different.

2,3 The Book of Mormon is like nothing else. It is totally different from the Bible by virtue of its genesis. Look at the Bible. It took hundreds of years to give us the Bible—thousands, actually, if you include the Old Testament, of course. The documents had to trickle in from different times, different places, and different writers. The Tanakh, the Torah; Nebiim, the prophets; and the Kethubim, the literary writings. These are the three things that make up the Bible—all from different authors. Some parts are poetry,

some parts are prophecy, and some parts are history. There are lots of chronicles, etc. Some parts are the law from different times and different places—hundreds of different manuscripts.

3       Until the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered, the oldest manuscript we had of the books of Moses (the first five books) was from the ninth century A.D., the Ben Asher Codex. There are eight thousand different old manuscripts of the New Testament, no two alike. So there is a lot of collating, comparing, and arguing about which passages are which and what order they come in. Then when you have translation, there is no agreement about that. Year after year there are new revised translations coming forth. Well, if the last translation is reliable, why the new revised, improved Cambridge, or Anchor, or whatever it is, edition of the Bible? It's processing all the time. The Bible is a very human document, of course it is. So is the Book of Mormon. It covers thousands of years. It has many authors; it was edited, etc. But it was handed to us in a single passage. Bang, just like that, the whole thing—all edited, all in order, all translated. We don't have to argue about any of that stuff. If it is true, it comes to us whole, and there is nothing to slow us down on it—nothing to hold us up until we have decided what this passage means, or what that is. It was translated directly by the gift and power of God. There is no need to argue about it. It is in words of exceeding plainness, in a very small vocabulary. We may treat that later. But here it comes to us in this package all at once. It is not only like no other book, of course; it's like nothing else. It's like no other thing. It was either brought by an angel, or it came out of nowhere, this single shot— instant scripture and instant history of a thousand years, just like that.

4       We are talking about the Book of Mormon in an unbelieving world. Eduard Meyer was by far the greatest critic of Joseph Smith, the one to judge him. He was a great German historian who died in 1927. He was fascinated by the Book of Mormon. So Eduard Meyer says, "Well, obviously it's easy to explain." It's not easy to explain, but

you have to explain it this way: that the angel and the plates were a hallucination. But the Book of Mormon is not a hallucination; that's the trouble. And he wouldn't read the Book of Mormon. That's very interesting because he was criticizing it. He said things like, "I've explained it now; don't bother. The English is too primitive, too crude. It can't possibly be anything but just made up by a hick." But he never found out what was in it because he never bothered to read it; imagine that, the great Eduard Meyer.

5        So it is in an unbelieving world, you see. How do you account for the Book of Mormon in a world that can't believe in another world, or other possibilities? If you don't believe in it, what's your alternative? There are no alternatives, absolutely none. Joseph couldn't have got it anywhere is the point. That's why no one will take it up. They ask some very searching questions and they should, but they never wait for the answers, you notice. They always leave the room as soon as you start showing that it is possible that this happened.

5        This is a fact of enormous significance that the book can't be explained. It is what you would call a singularity, so we will write "singularity" on the board. (Boy, this is education! Tell me if I spell it right; it would be singular if I spelled it right.) A singularity is a thing that does exist but should not exist, as you know. It cannot be described or comprehended, like the universe before it started expanding, or like quasars or black holes. Astronomers and physicists are absolutely sure they exist, no doubt whatever. Yet they cannot describe them, they cannot conceive of them, they cannot imagine what they would be like. Yet they exist. Now that's a singularity. The Book of Mormon is such a thing if you won't accept Joseph Smith's story. Like black holes and quasars, its presence forces us to reassess all our ideas of reality. We are not just talking about philosophy or esthetics, or even theology or ethics, here—the usual matter of religion. Nor are we talking about happiness, the good life, success, and that sort of thing that TV preachers, Norman Vincent Peale, and others talk about. That has nothing to do with it; we are talking about real things here,

no Christian allegory. This stuff is to be taken literally, and therefore we are supposed to take it very seriously. It has been given to us because it concerns us, and it comes to us full of instructions on how to use it. As a book, of course, it will turn most of us off because people don't read books anymore. We have other ways of learning things (we think they are good). But it comes to us as a written text.

6,7 The book is the most remarkable invention ever made, as Galileo says. It is the miracle of miracles. "If anything is to be hailed as the greatest of all miracles, it would certainly be writing," he said. In 26 simple symbols you can convey not only what happened and what people's names were, but what they did (you can do that with TV), but their innermost thoughts and most sensitive feelings can be conveyed by these 22, 24, or 26 letters of an alphabet. That's all it takes. Nothing else can do or ever has done that. So writing comes to us as a special message and special emissary. That's where you get this emphasis all the time in the Book of Mormon. They talk about the importance of the record, how it's transmitted, how it's handed down, the characters it's written in, the trouble they have writing it (preserving the pages, etc.), because as they tell us, "This is the only way our knowledge can be preserved." That's why they had to go back and get the brass plates. The only device that has defeated time and space—and it does that, as Galileo says. But it's not a human invention, of course. We are told it is a superhuman invention. Writing is so minimal, so extremely simple. Any instrument that will make a scratch on any surface will record the most subtle message for any period of time over any amount of space. That's astonishing what you can do. Of course, it has to be a rather permanent surface and things like that, but it's so simple. All you have to do is scratch something on a surface, and you have done it. To read it again you don't need elaborate electronic equipment or anything like that. But the price is this (this is where it comes, of course): How do you unravel it? You don't need an elaborate electronic machine to feed it back into. You have to feed it back into yourself. You have to riddle (to read means to riddle; it's the same word). You have to unriddle what is written there.

That's up to you; this is the thing. Reading is an act of faith. When you read, you riddle. You use your wits. That's why to say you've read the Book of Mormon doesn't mean a thing. It's how much you have applied to it here. You have to extract the meaning, and you have to do almost all the work. There's an immense lot of meaning in most of the verses of the Book of Mormon, an enormous lot. I've never noticed it until this year.

7,8 When you read the Book of Mormon, every sentence is a whole proposition, and it presents a number of possibilities. It may or may not contain a vast amount of information (that's for you to find out). So all reading is a miracle actually. It's like the flight of the bee; there's no reason why it should take place. There's no reason why you should be able to read, except that there's something takes place in your mental processes that's transferred from that. Last night I was reading an Arabic text. Now this is quite remarkable. In an Arabic text you don't have any vowels written. You do not separate the words. There's just the flow of consonants, nothing else. You do not have any capital letters. There is no punctuation whatever. There is no division between paragraphs, sentences, things like that. It is all just a stream of consonants and nothing else, and it's the easiest thing in the world. When they start dividing up the words and start putting in the vowels to help you out—which is required for the Koran because you can't take risks of giving your own interpretation—it is much harder to read (when they try to help you along). It's the same thing with Hebrew. A pointed Hebrew text is an annoyance. It gives you a headache. Take away all those shaddas [Arabic diacritical mark indicating the doubling of a consonant], all those little dots and things, and it's much easier to handle. Then you hear the sound; then it speaks to you. But why does it speak to you? This is just the way you react to it; these things are intuitive. But when you are reading, it is just the same thing. What marvels might be there that you are not aware of at all?

8 So I'm going to make three points which are quite relevant to the Book of Mormon from something I wrote 1



years ago: “Few people realize that in Joseph Smith’s day no really ancient manuscripts were known [none at all]. Egyptian and Babylonian could not be read; the Greek and Latin classics were the oldest literature available, preserved almost entirely in bad medieval copies no older than the Byzantine and Carolingian periods [at the earliest].” (Of course, today it’s a different story entirely, but not in Joseph Smith’s time.) “If Joseph Smith is right, the written records should be as old as the human race itself, for he tells us, ‘a book of remembrance was kept... in the language of Adam’ (Moses 6:5). . . . And what does the actual state of the documents attest? If writing evolved gradually and slowly as everything was supposed to have done, there should be a vast accumulation of transitional scribblings [people trying this out, trying that out, throwing them away, etc.] as countless crude and stumbling attempts at writing would leave their marks on stone [that was predicted], bone, clay, and wood over countless millennia of groping trial and error [that’s the way it’s supposed to have happened]. Only there are no such accumulations of primitive writing anywhere.” No such records exist anywhere, though they should. And slate palettes (Egyptian palettes beginning with the palette of Narmer—the hunting palette, the predynastic palette) you find in Egypt with pictures that are supposed to be the most primitive, stumbling writing. It’s very funny that the oldest one, the palette of Narmer, has a picture of the Pharaoh, and he is accompanied by his scribe. The scribe is carrying the two ink wells of red and white ink that a scribe uses to write on paper. This is supposed to be a crude scribbling on stone, but he has his scribe there and the scribe has been writing. This is realized today. “Given the evolutionary hypothesis, any healthy, normal, growing boy can describe in convincing detail how long ago ‘the naive child of nature’ everywhere drew crude pictures to convey his simple thoughts, and how out of this process moved ‘everywhere inexorably ... toward the final stage, the alphabetic writing.’ “

8,9 “But if it really happened that way, we would find traces of evolving writing ‘everywhere’ [as the man says]; veritable middens of scratched rock and bones and shells

would attest the universal groping toward the inexorable final stage over tens of thousands of years, while the clumsy transitional forms should outnumber proper writing by at least a million to one [but no transitional forms have ever been found; that's a surprising thing; they would last, too]. But the vast accumulations of attempts at writing simply do not exist; there is no evidence whatever of a world-wide groping toward the goal. Having made his lucid and logical statement, the author of our last quotation observes with perplexity that 'it is surprising that the ultimate stage in evolution ... was only achieved in a very few spots on the globe [not everywhere; he said it happened everywhere, but you don't find it]. We find 'only a very few systems of writing,' says [the German scholar] David, 'and even these are so much alike and are so closely related in time and space that their independence appears to be at least problematical.' "

9       The chances are there is only one system of writing known in the world, and it comes all of a sudden, and it comes full blown. It had to be otherwise because Doblhofer (a work on the subject) defines "pictorial writing," which he says is "incredibly ancient," as "a series of images which can possibly be 'read' accurately by any spectator." See, I draw a series of little pictures and they are crude and simple, but anybody can tell what they mean because a simple, childish mind wrote them. It's simple and childish to read them. Kurt Sethe, the great Egyptologist, agrees with that. He says that a "pure" picture writing is one which "could be read in any language at sight" (because it is pictures; it's not a language). "And right here the issue is settled [that there is no picture writing]: if ever there was a true picture writing it has not yet been discovered. Where on earth is a single inscription to which any and all beholders, scholars and laymen alike, regardless of their own language and culture, would give the identical interpretation?" There have been such, but no two people interpret them alike. In other words, they are not simply picture writing. "Doblhofer himself confirms this when he assures us that 'the most primitive pictorial writings ... translate ... abstract ideas with the aid of symbolical signs.' " When you are showing

abstract ideas instead of a simple house, a tree, a man, a dog, a horse, and are conveying not with a picture of a house, a dog, a horse, but with symbolical signs that have to be memorized, or recognized by somebody else, that's not picture writing at all. That's the only kind you find, he says. Where you are using the most primitive pictorial writings, they are just symbolical signs and abstract ideas. That's a strange conclusion to come to. No wonder they don't agree on that sort of thing. What I'm saying here is that we have this thing as a gift from heaven. It has been handed down—this keeping of the records, which is such an obsession in the Book of Mormon, and especially in the book of Ether, as you know. They have been handed down from the beginning to come forth in their purity. If they hadn't been handed down, we wouldn't have them at all.

10 Moses 6:5 “Like the earliest Egyptian documents, the Babylonian tablets bearing ‘the oldest written signs thus far known’ are highly stylized and cannot be read.” And so it goes. This is an important thing, too: “If Joseph Smith was right, books and writing are a gift to man from heaven, ‘for it was given unto as many as called upon God to write by the spirit of inspiration.’ (Moses 6:5).” God gave that knowledge to man. It's a very simple knowledge—but very subtle, very complex. As I say, it was the most sophisticated, the most marvelous invention ever to come forth. But did anyone invent it? “The Egyptians believed that writing was a sacred trust to be given to the king as ‘high-priest and scribe’ to keep him and his people ever in touch with the mind and will of heaven.” That's the whole idea. G. Widengren wrote a book on this subject, *The Apostle and the Heavenly Book*. He said, “And so the knowledge is communicated to the king, it is of a mysterious character, bearing upon the great mysteries of heaven and earth, the hidden things, and is a revelation of the hidden knowledge by the gods [the god]. Can we style it ‘primordial revelation?’” So there is a primordial revelation, and the purpose of writing is to hand down this primordial revelation. In other words, there was a Book of Adam. And a great deal has come out in recent years about this Book of Adam that has come forth recently.

10 Incidentally, the oldest writing is used for business, for counting bales of wool, kegs of beer, and loaves of bread—but always in the temple, only in temple accounts. They call it the *Gebrauchsschrift* (business writing) and the *Kultschrift* (holy writing). So the temple is where you find it. As Sethe says, “Hieroglyphic is correctly named, for only on the walls of temples is its survival from prehistoric times.” So wherever you find it, “from first to last, ancient writing remains in the hands not of businessmen but of priests; it is a holy and secret thing, imparted only to the elect and zealously withheld from all others. ‘He who divulges it,’ we read of a typical holy book, ‘dies a sudden death and an immediate cutting-off. Thou shall keep very far away from it. It is to be read only by a scribe in the workshop, whose name has been duly registered in the House of Life/ [that’s from a very old writing (Papyrus Salt 825A)]. ‘Only the prophets may read and understand the holy books’ is the rule. Each system of writing itself is an effective seal on the holy books, a cryptogram, ‘a secret formula which the profane do not know.’ [it’s hermetic—this idea is common]: The idea of a holy book that is taken away from the earth and restored from time to time [the Book of Mormon, you see], or is handed down secretly from father to son for generations, or hidden up in the earth, preserved by ingenious methods of storage with precious imperishable materials to be brought forth at a later date and more righteous generation is becoming increasingly familiar with the discovery and publication of ever more ancient apocryphal works, Jewish, Christian and others.” So this is the idea.

11 Now, the letter by itself. It takes a process like the flight of a bee, a miraculous process that can’t be explained. But you will notice how you put things together. A letter by itself is meaningless; it has to go into a word. Of course, it’s symbolic. The whole Cabala is based around that. There’s a whole gematria, a whole technique, a whole science based on the significance of single letters and the combinations—not only to form words, but in any combination—what they mean, that they have a mystic combination—forming words, as numbers, or anything else. But the letters have to be put together to make words. The words have to be put together

to make phrases or single-word sentences. There is such a thing as a single-word sentence. A. H. Gardiner, the great Egyptologist and author of the big grammar, wrote a book on the nature of the sentence. He gives the example "rain" as a sentence. Here's where your luck comes in. The single word is "rain," and that's a sentence. It tells a whole story, but it depends on how it is said or how you react to it. If I say "rain?" it means "is it raining again; are we actually having rain?" If I say disgustedly, "rain!" that means "it's raining again." All it is is "rain" and an exclamation point. It depends on the context in which it is found. You have to supply that. If I say "rain?" (Can it possibly be raining again?) If I say "rain!" (At last we are having rain.)

11 So it goes on. There are dozens of ways in which that one word will make a sentence. But it doesn't make sense until you have put it in a sentence, the sentence you want it to mean. You see what you can get away with when you are interpreting the scriptures, if you do that way. If you say a thing like alas, it means a certain situation is implied here, and you get into the situation. But the word by itself has to be in a phrase; the phrase has to be in a sentence. Any self-contained message is a book. The sentence is part of a message; the message is a book, no matter how short it is. It can just be three sentences. With the ancients, length has nothing to do with it. But books were meant to be put in libraries. It's a funny thing that writing began with libraries; it didn't begin with single letters, which are put together to make a word, which are put together to make a sentence, etc. No, it began with the library. It's the hermetic concept of the hologram that contains all knowledge. You start out at the top, just like Adam. You begin with the perfect pattern and run downhill from there. That seems just the opposite of what we say when we evolve; we get a little better as we go on and on and on. That was the delight of the Victorian Age.

13 Mosiah 4:11-12 We have in writing here for us a most choice document [the Book of Mormon]. It's not like any other book in existence. It's not like anything else. It is a standing revelation, a standing miracle, as we have it here.

No one could have produced this book of a thousand years, covering every phase of the cultural, historical, intellectual, literary aspects. What a miracle of condensation, as we will see! But the point is that it's not just written as a tour de force to show it can be done. Every word of it is significant. It's meant for us, it's directed to us, and it's very urgent that we know this. "This is directed to you, ye Gentiles, that ye may learn to be wiser than we have been." We are in a very powerless state, and this tells us what it is in the Book of Mormon. If you start to panic, grab for the Book of Mormon and it will be all right. We will end with my slogan for the class, Mosiah 4:11-12. Oh, what choice words here! "If ye have known of his goodness and have tasted of his love, and have received a remission of your sins, which causeth such exceeding great joy in your souls [notice, his goodness and his love; he means to do best] even so I would that ye should remember and always retain in remembrance, the greatness of God and your own nothingness. . . . And behold, I say unto you that if ye do this ye shall always rejoice."

13,14 You will have nothing to worry about if you realize God's greatness, what his intentions are, and what his power to carry out those intentions is. And don't worry about yourself—your career and all that sort of rot. Remember, we should always hold in remembrance our own nothingness. I remember my nothingness, so I don't have anything to worry about. And then I remember God's goodness, and I have something to cheer about. So it's quite marvelous, this Book of Mormon. It has everything in it which we hope to find out.

# Lecture 2 Introduction

## **Nephi's Heritage** **[Recurrent Scenarios]** **[Egyptian Language Evolves]** **[Nibley Summarizes Early History]**

15 The Book of Mormon is an inexhaustible encyclopedia of knowledge, so it would take us forever to get through it. But there are certain things we must notice at the beginning to get off on the right foot. These are things that concern us. We think today, as never before, in terms of world politics. The opening of the Book of Mormon concerns our people (I mean that literally, biologically), and it concerns also our world, the world we live in. So this is going to take a historical resume of some sort.

15 1 Nephi 1:1 It starts out by saying, "I, Nephi." You notice it is an autobiography, "I, Nephi." Now, at this time the only style of writing was autobiographical. Everybody wrote autobiographies, and there's a great autobiographical literature in Egyptian. There are some famous autobiographies, and we will refer to some because they are so very close to the Book of Mormon. They take place in Palestine, even at this time. Well, "And Nephi started out saying, "I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents." Then Kai goes on to talk about himself here. Incidentally, I notice he referred to himself down here as HD-HR (white of countenance), NFR BL T (excellent of character), PHS H T (clean of body and in moral habits). And he shunned everything that was SNK-WT The word is very interesting.

It means “black of countenance,” and it also means “greed or anything that is evil.” Notice, in the Book of Mormon, that peculiar thing: “a white and delightsome people” and “a dark and loathsome people.” It doesn’t refer to skin color at all, but there’s a lot about race in the Book of Mormon. That comes in here already; we can see that. But here, you notice he used those peculiar terms. He was HD-HR. He has a picture of a white face (white of countenance). And he was clean of body, and he eschewed snk-wt (what is greedy or what is dark of countenance).

16,17 1 Nephi 1:1-3 We have hundreds of these autobiographies, but also literary biographies. The You’ll notice the very strong Egyptian note here in the Book of Mormon. Nephi’s writing in the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians. That is referred to again and again. So this background of the autobiography is a very interesting thing. We have a lot of this in the Book of Mormon too. And Nephi is talking about his goodly parents. Notice, what do goodly parents do? They teach you: “Therefore I was taught [this is a very interesting thing; the greatest favor he could have was great knowledge of the mysteries of God] somewhat in all the learning of my father.” That means the standard education—the going culture of the time. Verses two, three, four, five, six, etc. will do the same thing. Notice, they always mentioned having suffered many afflictions. Well, the purpose of writing a story (whether it’s A Thousand and One Nights, or anything else) is to tell what the hero has to go through. That’s the way the Book of Mormon starts out [being led to the Promised Land]. This leads us to a very interesting phenomenon that we find in the Book of Mormon and everywhere else. That is what I call the recurrent scenario. The same things are happening all the time, and you will find them happening all the time in the Book of Mormon. This is a very good check, a very good control on things (the recurrent scenario) because things do recur at various levels. Well, we have plenty of chance to recur to that theme.

17 1 Nephi 1; Moses 1:41 Let’s go back here: “Nevertheless, having been highly favored of the Lord.”



Notice, in spite of all their sufferings, they were highly favored, and they end up usually happily (they get their promised land). “Having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God, therefore . . .” This is an extremely interesting use of the word “mysteries” here. What were the mysteries? These were the mysteries of God. Well, at this time (around 600 B.C.; tomorrow we will refer more to the cultural history of it) this word “mystery” spread everywhere. Of course, this is the Greek word “mysterion.” It means “a thing that you don’t talk about.” A mystery is a thing you cannot find out or learn about by your own resources. Since it’s a thing you can’t possibly find out for yourself, it must have been revealed—either as a primordial revelation in the beginning and handed down, or it has been revealed to you or somebody else. And when you hear about it, you are always warned, “Don’t talk about these things.” This is a typical mystery when Moses talks with God face to face in the final words of Moses (Moses 1:41). “And in a day when the children of men shall esteem my words as naught... they shall be had again among the children of men—among as many as shall believe” (meanwhile, you keep this very secret). The mysteries are always handed down secretly.

17,18 1Nephi 1:1,2 At this particular time everywhere in the world there were cults and sects springing up and spreading, all connected with each other in a very interesting way. These were the mysteries. Everybody wanted to get in on them, but you had to be initiated to get in on them. Well, he is talking about the mysteries of God in their proper sense here. The mysteries of godliness are what we learn in the temple and in the gospel. He said, “I make a record of my proceedings of my days.” So Nephi said an interesting thing here, “Yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the mysteries of God, therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days [of what I’ve been through].” Having been through the mysteries of God, I’m under obligation to preserve that knowledge.

18 1 Nephi 1:2 Then he says, “in the language of my father.” He uses language throughout. It’s used very often

in the Book of Mormon in these earlier books, especially by Nephi, as meaning the manner of speech and the message delivered. This was his language; it means this was the message he delivered. The other meaning of language is, of course, tongue or speech. It's very interesting that the Egyptian word for it is just a picture of a mouth, and it's as broad as you can possibly imagine. It means language, it means speech, it means utterance. It can mean a chapter. No two people translate it alike when it appears in the Book of the Dead. Does it mean a spell? Does it mean a chapter? Does it mean a recitation? Speak the following words? All it is is a picture of a mouth with a stroke under it. But you can't get away from this very odd thing, "the language of the Egyptians," because the book recurs to it on a number of occasions. What would they be doing with the language of the Egyptians? This is the subject of our theme now. Incidentally, at that very time (the generation that Lehi was living) was the time that Reformed Egyptian (Demotic) became the official government language. In the twenty-sixth dynasty, the time of Semiticus II and of Lehi, it became the official way of writing. It was this new reformed type of Egyptian known as Demotic. And at the very same time, the priests who used to be in the former royal court at Napata fled farther to Meroe. There they produced a new type of Egyptian at this time which was Meroitic (I've got a picture of it here). When you compare the Anthon transcripts with Meroitic, it's very impressive. In fact, Brother Bushman back at Brown University (which is one of the four universities in the country where Egyptian has always been a big thing), showed them the Anthon transcript, and Parker immediately recognized them as Meroitic. He said, "They're the closest thing you can get to Meroitic." Here are the Anthon transcripts, and here's Meroitic. (You can't see them; they're too small; I guess we should have slides, or something like that.) This is the new Egyptian which was invented way up the Nile, way up in Meroe, which is even south of Napata. That's the Nubian kingdom. It's very interesting that so many Book of Mormon names come from way up there. In a minute maybe we will see why that is.

19 But the point is that Palestine was Egyptian at that time. It always had been; it always would be. Of course, Egyptian is a Semitic language with much the same words, the same counting, that you have in Hebrew.

20,21 We've got to get some Jews in the picture. Remember, Abraham came to Egypt, and this is Abraham's Pharaoh. (Nearly all people say he is, but I would argue about it. Argue about everything; that's the name of the game.) But Abraham came. Then he had Isaac, and Isaac stayed in Egypt a while. His sons went down to Egypt. Because Jacob's son, Joseph, went to Egypt, he went to Egypt. Whom did Joseph marry? (I suppose we should ask questions and all that sort of thing.) He married Asenath, and this takes us right into the Book of Mormon. Asenath had two sons, you know. One of them was Manasseh, and the Book of Mormon tells us that Lehi was a direct descendant of Manasseh. The other was Ephraim of whom we claim to be descendants. They were the sons of this Asenath who was the daughter of the high priest of Heliopolis. Jacob set up columns like that when he was in Palestine. But Jacob came down, as I said, and his son Joseph became the vizier of Egypt, the second most important man to Pharaoh. Joseph married Asenath, who was the daughter of the high priest of Heliopolis and a direct descendant of Ham. And we are descendants of Ephraim, while Lehi's people are descendants of Manasseh. So we are getting into the picture right at the beginning here. It's very important how these things all tie up together.

22 All the cities had names similar to their names today. Beirut was called Bayrut (it hasn't changed much). And there were the same riots in the streets that there are today. The picture does not change; this is the point. As Heraclitus (the greatest of the really early Greek philosophers) says, "A man's character is his fate." You determine what happens to you. It's your character that will decide that. It's the same thing: Whether people have riots or not is built into them. It's built into their characters and their culture. And it is a two-way sort of thing. The culture will reinforce the character, and the character will reinforce the culture. If

you once start fighting, it mounts exponentially and you end up being wiped out.

22,23 The next wave of this, less than a century later, are the famous peoples of the sea, or the sea people. They were western Mediterraneans, and they came from as far away as France, Central Europe, etc. We have a very interesting writing on that (a Central European thing) recently. But these are called “the people of the sea.” They came in around 1200 B.C., and they destroyed the whole world here. This is what happened. There was a great Hittite empire. Remember, Abraham was concerned that his sons not marry Hittite daughters, but they married them anyway. What did the Hittites speak? They spoke a language like Welsh, very close to our own language. The Minoans over here and the Greeks on the mainland, the Mycenaeans, were speaking something that you would almost recognize as English. At the same time here, the Medes and Persians way up here were still savage tribes (they haven’t become dangerous yet, but they would soon enough). They had a language closest of all to English. Anyway, the sea people came in, and they went by the name of Shardanu, which were the people from Sardinia; Siculi (the Sicels) the people from Sicilia; the Tyrrhenians which are related to the Etruscans of Italy. We have their blood in our veins, every one of us. They were a great mix of people. They weren’t really sea people, but they were described as coming along the coast both ways (a squeeze play) carrying their wagons, their children, and all their possessions on these big lumbering ox carts, while the ships accompanied them by sea. Later in the eleventh and tenth centuries the Vikings did the same thing in the North. They advanced the same way. The Vikings advanced more by land than by sea actually, though they were the great sea rovers, as we know. These sea people moved in, and they destroyed the Hittite Empire. It disappeared all of a sudden. It was a great rival of Egypt up until then. Egypt was driven out and didn’t have anything to do here. This broke up into a lot of little kingdoms (you can see this already happening). This was the sea people in 1200 B.C. Everything changed when they came in, and the story really begins there as far as Lehi is concerned.

26,27 Now it was time for the big powers to get in with everything weakened here. The Egyptian Empire and the Hittite Empire were out. They had been great, mighty and huge. By 1200 B.C. they were finished (the fall of Troy is supposed to be 1174). The Egyptians were out, so it was a chance for the ambitious Orientals to move in on the scene. That, of course, was the Assyrians. They were uncompromising, cruel absolutists. They had certain virtues, great artistic gifts, etc., but they believed in absolute monarchy with a vengeance. They were notoriously cruel in advancing. So the Assyrians moved in, and in 722 B.C. they took Jerusalem (they had taken Israel already). That was Sargon of Nineveh, capital of Assyria, who came in there. Now he had taken all Israel, all Palestine, who could save Egypt from Sargon. It was Taharka who moved up there. Taharka was a black and a great ruler. He moved up with an army from Nubia, and he reoccupied Thebes and Memphis. Memphis was the nearest to Heliopolis. Memphis was the ancient capital, and Heliopolis the sacred capital. Thebes had been the political capital most of the time. Taharka moved up and took everything over again. He was in Thebes in 790 B.C.

27 This takes us up to Lehi now. In the west delta here at Sais (this is Tanis where the desert kings were) was a prince called Necho. He ruled, and he was going to make himself very strong. The best way for him to make himself strong would be to join up with the Assyrians, which he did. Now you have Necho on the Assyrian side. When the Assyrians were smashed, he would change sides.

27 From this time all the Egyptian armies were Greek. Palestine, including Jerusalem, was swarming with Greeks. You'll find Greek names in the Book of Mormon (you should) because they were popular at this time. The Jews were always willing to adopt foreign names.

28 Now we have the situation that's set up in the Book of Mormon for the big squeeze-play. Is it going to be Asia? Is it going to be Egypt? Is it going to be the East, the Babylonian Empire, or is it going to be Egyptian? Lehi's

family were split down the center as to which side to follow. You can see the situation here, all these shifting loyalties, etc. Overnight, a battle can change the whole picture, and you can be in grave jeopardy where you were on top of the world the day before. So there was this great tension. It's typical of the Middle East as it has always been. I forgot to mention the geographical significance of the Middle East as the cockpit of the world, but we can mention that in passing the next time.

# Lecture 3 Introduction

## **Geopolitics and the Rule of Tyrants [Importance of 600BC] [Great Assembly of the Nation]**

29 There is nothing more remarkable, in fact, more miraculous, about the Book of Mormon, than its Kulturgeschichte, culture history. It is just loaded with the details that give us an insight into the culture of a particular people. It describes three distinct cultures, and it describes them very vividly. We have been talking about the Near East (the Old World) at the time of Lehi. Remember, the first book of Nephi all takes place in the Old World (one of the most important books), and it describes the ancient civilization of the New World in great detail, a totally different civilization. It also describes the present culture, which is as far removed from Joseph Smith's day as the other cultures are. Who ever dreamed of the culture of the 1980s, which he has so vividly described. Well, that's all in the Book of Mormon.

29,30 1 Nephi 1:5,6 He couldn't have chosen a better year to have things begin than the year 600 B.C. (a nice round number). Historians call this the pivotal year. Everybody noticed that around the year 600 B.C. everything pivoted, everything changed. The whole world turned on a pivot, and very suddenly there was an entirely new culture and civilization among nations throughout the entire world. We saw that this also happened in 1200 B.C. (600 years before the same sort of thing happened. All the early books

of the history of Israel have to do with the conflicts, and agreements and friendships, between the Philistines and Israel because they were very close together. The Philistines were Greeks, and they settled there back in 1200. That's why it's called Palestine. It's named after the Philistines because they settled in Palestine. The lands were named after the places where they settled, not the places where they came from. In 600 was the passing of the old sacral kingship (that culture). Before that kings were sacred and so was the temple. The king was never crowned in the palace; he was always crowned in the temple. Kingship was sacred. The kingly line was sacred; it was the patriarchal line. This was so in almost all cities. There is a great deal on this subject. But all of a sudden the sacral kingship passed away, and the question arose, "Who's in charge around here?" Anybody who could grab the power, and so you have the age of tyrants, and you have the new and ambitious age of emperors, and things like that. But first, why? And all this is relative to the Book of Mormon because it's the same thing. You see, as the Book of Mormon starts up everything is in upheaval. Poor Lehi didn't know what to do; he prayed desperately. He went out about his business, and then he had a vision and came home. There was nothing to do. He had to leave and get out (we'll talk about that the next time, his means of departure, etc.). But everything was in upheaval. His own family was split down the middle. We saw the last time that one side was for supporting Babylonia, and the other side was for Egypt. They had been otherwise; they had shifted positions. At this time, you see, no one had any particular loyalties. It was free enterprise everywhere, and money was behind everything here. We will see why this was literally the case. The twenty-sixth dynasty was the great last dynasty of Egypt and the dynasty under which Lehi lived. Israel was a protectorate of it, as a matter of fact.

30     1 Nephi 1:4 How does the Book of Mormon start out? In the first year of King Zedekiah. Well, Zedekiah was put in by Necho II. His name wasn't Zedekiah; Necho II, the Pharaoh, gave him that name. The king of Egypt put him in, who is Necho II. How could Necho II do it? Because he had a lot of money. Where did he get it? He got it from



Gyges. Who was Gyges? He was the big man in Sardis, which was the capital of Lydia where they had just invented money (it had been coined in the eighth century). Don't think that didn't make a difference. Money was necessary; the situation required it. That freed everybody to go in and do pretty much what they wanted to.

30 What happened to the sacral kingship in 600 B.C., what wiped them out? Now we have to go into a little Geopolitics here. This is important because it goes on all the time. Notice, it can only happen in Palestine which is the cockpit of the world. It is today, and it always was. It was in Lehi's time and before in 1200 B.C. Why? Because that is the only place in the world where the sea invades the land mass to a great extent. See, it goes right into the middle of the great European/African mass that comes together.

31 This is called Geopolitics, and it's what pushed Hitler into World War II. We wouldn't have had World War II if it weren't for Geopolitics. Well, his idea was that it was behind everything—the doctrine of Geopolitics. It's good we have this here because this shows the role that Palestine plays—why this is so extremely important along here. Geopolitics was invented by Alfred MacKinder, a Scottish geographer, in the early twentieth century. It was taken up by Karl Haushofer who was Hitler's official geographer. The theory was very plain. It had already been expounded long ago. Well, it's this idea: Central Asia is controlled by the land people—the great land mass of Central Asia. It's called the Asiatic Shield. The shield is that part which is covered by snow about half the year, so you can see it from space. It's shaped like a shield too. Here are the great people of the plains. This is the clock, the driving force of history. Whenever there is trouble, it begins there. Why does it begin there? Because these are nomads in the vast, central part of Asia, living on grass. Their economy, therefore, is quite sensitive. It's a marginal economy. In a bad year they have to move, and they are able to move because they are nomads. They tour all the time. And where do they go? Naturally, they move to the richer and more prosperous

civilizations on the periphery. All the world civilizations lie on the periphery—in India, in Egypt, and in Europe. Notice, in every case there is a literal wall; they build a literal wall to keep the nomads out.

41 Mosiah 4:11 It's the same thing in the Book of Mormon. The greatest patriotic celebration they had was the celebration of the triumphant rule of King Benjamin in which they had victory, triumph, and prosperity throughout. He held a great assembly of the nation, and all he did was tear them down, put them in mind of their nothingness. He said, "I would that ye should remember [keep in mind] ... the greatness of God, and your own nothingness. ... I say unto you that if ye do this ye shall always rejoice" (Mosiah 4:11). He had to teach them to rejoice. These four stages that the Greek tragedians repeat (they are repeated in quite a number of plays) are the four that we follow. We follow them in the Book of Mormon too. They are (1) OLBIA (2) KOROS (3) HUBRIS (we all know what that is) and (4) ATE. This is what you go through. OLBIA is happiness and prosperity, having what you want (and not necessarily getting it dishonestly). Prospering in the best possible sense is OLBIA. But when you have that, then you get koros. That means full. When you've had all you can eat, and you insist on eating more, that's bad—that's KOROS, that's overfilling, that's force eating. You have eaten too much when you have KOROS. That leads to hubris, overconfidence. You think you are so important. You automatically feel that you are the good guy, and what you do is all right. You take advantage of others, and then you start playing the game pretty rough. That's the way powerful people always do. The final stage is ATE, the point at which you participate in ending the play as fast as possible. When you have reached the point of no return, there is no, LA COMMEDIA EFINITA no point to continuing the play. Things will just get worse. As the Book of Mormon puts it often, you are either ripe in iniquity (if you get any riper than that you rot, as Shakespeare says), or the cup of iniquity is full. You cannot dilute it anymore; there is nothing you can do about it. If it's full, you can't add anything to it. Take something from it is what you're going to have to do—tip it over. But when the cup is full

and when the fruit is ripe, you can't go anywhere after that. That is the point of ATE. The other point is to end the play and not let the misery drag on. The person walks as if he were sort of hypnotized, and the things he says and does are destructive. He is subconsciously aware of what he is doing; he is trying to get rid of himself. It's almost a death wish that you have there. You want to end the play as fast as you can, and that's ATE. You see, that will seize upon a people.

42 These great forces all came out among the contemporaries of Lehi in the year 600 B.C. This whole thing came to a head and got lost at that time. There was no better period in which to launch a new civilization than in the time of Lehi because he was a colonist, a patriarch, and a father leader. He was driven out of a city that collapsed. He was a victim of the great powers, etc. But we have another element in here, and this makes quite a bit of difference. This is so much like our own time and our own world, and the point is that he had the gospel. Remember, he went out and he prayed right at the beginning of the first chapter. He was absolutely sick; he couldn't stand it. Then he went out and had a sun stroke (or whatever it was out in the desert). He ran home to his house in Jerusalem and threw himself on the bed. Then he thought he was carried away, and he saw what happened. He saw the Council of the preexistence. He saw the plan, the Lord coming down, and the twelve apostles. He saw how it all worked out. From then on he was one happy man. He could do nothing but rejoice after that. He went out and tried to preach, ran into real trouble, and had to leave town. Well, this is another story which we will take up later. But this picture is a real one, and it includes ourselves. So everything is being hastened now. There's an acceleration. You notice throughout the Book of Mormon there's a great sense of urgency. This book was brought at a particular time for a particular place, addressed to a particular people. "This comes to you, oh ye Gentiles, that ye may be wiser than we have been." You don't have much time, but do what you should do, and don't do what you are doing. It keeps telling us that. So the Book of Mormon has a real message for us.

# Lecture 4 Introduction

## Setting the Stage, 600 B.C.

43 One thing we've got to make just a short remark about here is the evidence for the Book of Mormon. They talk so much about archaeological evidence; that always comes up where the Book of Mormon is mentioned. If you want proof of the Book of Mormon, you must go to the Old World. You won't find it in the New World. You can see why. In the Old World we have massive, legible sources. Remember, the vitally important first book of Nephi all takes place in the Old World; it doesn't take place in Central America or anywhere else, except in the Old World. Of course, New World archaeology won't cut anything because it covers this vast area of the Western Hemisphere, and we have only an infinitesimal sampling. Nobody knows what was going on a thousand years ago in this hemisphere; they haven't the vaguest idea. Moreover, archaeology gives no specific answers anyway; you have to speculate about them. The greatest archaeological progress and programs for centuries were in Egypt. That's where they started digging already in the Middle Ages because it fascinated them. So for hundreds of years archaeology has been at work in Egypt. Twenty years ago everything we had found out about it was thrown away. Through the years they had built up a standard, accepted account (the approved school solution) of what happened in Egypt—how the kingdoms of the North and the South conflicted, then came together and were united in the crowns. That isn't so at all. The things we regarded as the most basic Egyptian history (the

result of ages of archaeology and immense expense) don't hold up at all anymore.

43,44 Well, we must get on here, but not until we have looked more curiously at a few things that the authors of the Book of Mormon want us to see. A syllabus is a list of things that should be studied. Usually, you end up by studying the syllabus. You study the things you have to, and you are eager to get on from one point to the next, etc. But how do you study these things in the Book of Mormon? The teacher has just one purpose: to save the students time. I can save you a lot of time (here's where we get the books on the shelf). You could have discovered these things for yourselves, but it would take you much more time. We are constantly reminded in the Book of Mormon that they have cut things down, that things have been very carefully edited and reduced to only the things most vital that the authors want us to have. It is a digest of a vast amount of records that they have gone through and edited for our benefit. They are going to save us time, so I invite you to look up the things that interest you. There will be books on reserve for this class. It's foolish, but most of the things for the time being will be mine because they are the things I've been talking about. That's where you find them. Oh, there are others, but the Book of Mormon itself is what you need to learn. This is a strange class on a strange subject. It's not like anything else; this is the point. It's a crash course, an emergency course. It's what they call a "quickie course" in the army. We haven't got long to learn; we haven't got long to go. If you had seen the newspaper this morning, you might say, "Great guns, what's happening now!" This is so. The situation is very urgent today. It's not like it has been at other times.

44 Where do you research in the Book of Mormon? This is the point: you must research in yourself. I'm not talking in the abstract sense; I'm talking in the historical sense here. Actually, you must see yourself in the book. That's one thing students have always been able to do very easily. They can find themselves in the book. The Arab students always identified themselves with Nephi. Boy, he was their

man. The Book of Mormon was their book, and Nephi was their hero. They were all for him. But you do find it in yourself. The Book of Mormon is unique, and it has been a great converter. It has been irresistible. It has done more than all the missionaries put together because it involves the reader like no other book. You do identify with it; it grabs you if you read it carefully. You don't even have to read it carefully. So many people are impressed on first reading it.

45,46 Consider the circumstances under which the Book of Mormon was composed—the tremendous work that has gone into it over centuries. Then an angel bothered to bring it down and personally hand it over. Then Joseph Smith risked life and limb right from the beginning because of the Book of Mormon. Since we are told how carefully it has been edited, with a particular audience in mind, we must assume that every sentence in it has significance for us. They couldn't afford to waste anything. So, we get going. Here's a saying of Joseph Smith that I like (two of them): "The things of God are of deep import, and time and experience and careful, ponderous, solemn thoughts can only find them out." Who is engaging today in careful, ponderous, and solemn thoughts?. "Thy mind, oh man, must stretch as high as the utmost heaven. The Saints ought to lay hold of every door, obtain a foothold on earth, and make all preparations within their power for the terrible storms that are now gathering in the heavens. The angels of heaven have taken council together. They have passed some decisions. These decisions will be made known in their time."

46 So the Book of Mormon is our guide for these particular times, and it is essential to know, for example, that this was Jerusalem where it began. It was the first year of King Zedekiah when it began. There we have a specific time and place. As soon as we get to the New World, it is wide open. Anybody's Book of Mormon geography will go, and they just argue forever about Book of Mormon geography, which is worthless. I wouldn't touch that—never have touched Book of Mormon geography. There's no point to it

whatever— except they move north, they move south, they meet somebody, etc. But we do know specifically where this was (it was Jerusalem) and when it was (the first year of Zedekiah). This launches us on a sure footing. We know who installed Zedekiah.

47 As we mentioned before, in the year 600 B.C., the pivotal year, everything turned on its hinges and there was an entirely new world. The sacral kingship went out of the window, and there was revolution everywhere. Suddenly, the founders of most of the world's great religions appeared. They are all strictly contemporary with Lehi. This book is *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, and it has a chapter on this. We can read some things from here, "Lehi counted among his contemporaries not only the greatest first names in science, politics and business, but also the most illustrious religious founders known to history: Gautama Buddha, Confucius, Laotze, Vardhaman Mahavira (the founder of Jainism), [we had a Jainist in the class a while back], Zarathustra, and Pythagoras were all of Lehi's day." The top men, they were never exceeded, and they founded these religions. So you can see it was going to be a new world. They were all contemporary with Lehi (did they know Lehi?). This reminds us of another situation. In Lehi's day was when the Seven Wise Men lived. The Greeks talk about them, and they were all contemporaries of Lehi. These were wise men who had been rich and successful in the manner of Lehi and all left their homes to wander in the world, looking for wisdom. There are all sorts of stories about them. Once a year they would come together at a banquet feast and share their ideas and discoveries. They were seeking only for wisdom. They were the Sophoi, the wise men. They were succeeded by the Sophists, phony wise men who completely took over the scene a little while after by cultivating the art of rhetoric (that's something else). But the wise men were contemporary with Lehi.

50 Since we mentioned that idea of evidence in archaeology, one thing is very important here in this particular regard—the general nature of the ruins found in Central America and elsewhere. Robert Heine-Geldern

started out studying the archaeology of Southeast Asia—the great temples, Angkor Wat, etc. Then he saw the great resemblance to those in Central America, and he became an American archaeologist. He started comparing them. Then he went back to the Near East and compared them. He calls attention to the often stunning resemblance (you’ve noticed this yourself) between the exotic remains of Cambodia, India, Mexico, and Guatemala. They look very much alike.

51 “But there is something seriously wrong here for the whole Southeast Asian complex doesn’t arise until the ninth and tenth centuries after Christ [that’s a thousand years after the Nephites disappeared; what are we going to get here?] so they could not have inspired the American cult centers, built a thousand years earlier.” Krickenberg says on page 572, “The only explanation is to look for a common source somewhere, [they look alike because they came from the same place] which Heine-Geldern finds in the Near East [at a much earlier time, of course, both in its American and Asiatic forms].” They were both brought from the Near East; that’s why they look alike. They came from the same center, and it was the Near East. That happens to be where the Book of Mormon people came from.

51 Now, this is the thing I was getting at about the culture, religion, etc. “If the people came from Asia, there’s a puzzling lack in the New World of Asiatic cultivated plants and domestic animals from the Old World. There is the absence of the plow, the potter’s wheel, the bellows [all the essential implements of culture they should have brought with them] glass, iron, stringed instruments, the true arts.” They didn’t bring any of that with them. What is wrong? Well, they did bring something entirely different with them, and this is why these places look so much like ceremonial centers. There is a religious center in everything. “This is more than outbalanced by the more important cultural items, such as political patterns, cosmology, art, religion, symbolism, and ceremonial architecture. They are alike, far too much alike in the two hemispheres to be explained by the recent and farfetched theory of convergence. How to explain a super-



abundance of one type of cultural accoutrements, along with a complete deficiency in the other kind of stuff.” Well, it’s the kind of people who made the migration; that’s it. So this is what Heine-Geldern concludes here: “The solution is the type of migration indicated. The people who crossed the sea were not artisans or technicians ... [the kind that were spreading all around the Mediterranean at that time].” We have their poems, their diaries, etc. from Lehi’s time—the great time of colonization and business expansion. No, these were people of a religious and intellectual, a priestly persuasion. What is indicated, according to Heine-Geldern is “a carefully planned and prepared undertaking, primarily with missionary goals, a religious group of people that fled across the sea.” That’s what their centers are. What was the first thing Lehi did when he landed? He built a replica of the temple. It was small and didn’t have as much expensive stuff in it, but it was a temple. They planted that Near Eastern culture right here as soon as they got here and made a replica of Solomon’s Temple, as the Jews were doing. So it’s an interesting cultural pattern we have here in the Book of Mormon.

52 In Lehi’s day, as I said, the barriers broke down. It was wide open; it was another swarming time. Samuel N. Kramer has written the best study of that subject, a monograph on “The Swarming Time.” In the year 3,000, in 1,700, in 1,200, and 700 B.C. everything turned. Also in 300, 800 (the Vikings), and A.D. 1,200 it happened again. I’ve written a number of articles on that. When we get to the Jaredites (as we surely shall in a couple of weeks), we will talk about that sort of thing. This is what happens when society breaks down. It’s a matter of survival, and everybody scatters. They move as tribes and as individuals; things break up. It’s a heroic age.

52,53 So things are stirred up in Palestine all the time, and they are mixed and blended. Now, the point is, where is security? Who is in charge around here? We talked about tyrants. If anyone could get the power, it was his. But who wasn’t corruptible; who didn’t have a price? Who could you count on? There are just two great men we think of whom

you could count on. They probably knew each other, and they were Solon and Lehi (the immortal Solon). Solon left Athens in 595 B.C., five years after Lehi left Jerusalem, for the same reason. We talked about the Seven Wise Men. Well, Solon was always considered to be wisest of the Seven Wise Men. He became archon of Athens in 600 B.C., so this puts him in the same bracket with Lehi. Moreover, his family had lost their wealth. He was too honest. He went into the business of trading in olive oil and pottery. He would sail back to the Levant and visit places like Sidon (he loved to travel). It used to be common in the newspapers to designate members of Congress as Solons (there's real irony in that). We mustn't forget this: he is the father of modern democracy. He gave us the first democratic state, and it stuck. The great Solon, the wisest of the Greeks, gets the credit for founding Western democracy. So we have Solon and Lehi, and what a man this Solon was.

54,55 Now here we are in Lehi's world. [Quoting Professor Linforth] "The general character of the seventh and sixth centuries is well known. It was an age of colonization." This is just the time, you see, for Lehi to set out. He would have in his baggage the whole equipment of the culture. Right at the beginning, Nephi reminds us he was well educated. His parents insisted that he learn Egyptian and all this. So they were in a position to take with them across the ocean all they would need to get a new culture launched. And other people were doing the same thing. One single, concrete thing had an incalculable influence, the invention of coined money [right at Lehi's time; it has the same influence in the Book of Mormon]. The fundamental transformation in human society wrought by the invention of money is sufficiently well known. With these general characteristics of the age in mind, we can see what probably took place."

57 So the Book of Mormon starts out one hundred percent with a completely authentic ring to the situation and the setting. If you were composing it, is that how you would have started it out? Would you have put all those nice little details in it? Where are we now—the fourth verse of the first chapter? Oh, we are just moving right along here.

## Lecture 5 (Jeremiah)

### Insights from Lehi's Contemporaries: Solon and Jeremiah

58 The Book of Mormon tells us “for whom the bell tolls. “Lehi and his great contemporaries started a lot of chain reactions. We don’t mention them just because they were interesting curiosities, or anything like that, but because we are still living on their capital.

62 Mosiah, in chapter 29, gives a long sermon to his people on this subject [men sinking into slavery under a single lord]. His sons refuse to become kings. He says if you make a man king, you can’t replace him. Remember the case of King Noah; it’s going to be awfully tough. “Now is the time to be observant of all these things. If ye have suffered the melancholy consequences of your own incompetence, do not attribute this evil fortune to the gods. You have yourselves raised up these men to power over you and have reduced yourself by this course to a wretched state of servitude. Each man among you individually [this is the way it goes; this is your free enterprise] walketh with the tread of a fox, but collectively you are a set of simpletons. You don’t act together at all, but for yourself you’re all out to get it.” Now this is the fatal thing. Rhetoric is the secret of the whole thing. We get it in the Book of Mormon too: “For ye look to the tongue and play of a man’s speech and regard not the deed which is done before your eyes [the skillful rhetoric, the skillful speech].” This reminds us that the Book of Mormon has characters that are concerned

with this philosophical rationalism and atheism, such as Nehor and Korihor, who are also men of great ambition. There's a whole string of them in the Book of Mormon who are very skillful in speech and do the same sort of thing. The people "look to the tongue and play of a man's speech." Remember, he was "skillful in many words," we are told; he led all the people, and they just loved him. King Noah was extremely popular that way.

62 But what about the religion? This man has had experience. This is a theme you get in all the Greek tragedies. Remember, the Book of Mormon is a tragic book; it is "a voice from the dust." It's very sad, as you know. It begins on a note of destruction and ends on a note of destruction. It begins with lone survivors in the wilderness and ends with a lone survivor. There's nothing more sad than survival; it's a dirty word. "Thus all men of mortal mold, good and bad, think by straining every nerve to win a fair name, each man for himself by his own unaided efforts, until something befall him from without. Then straightway cometh pain. Until then, like gaping fools, we amuse ourselves with empty dreams. He who is worn by cruel disease [this is the American dream too; I can give you many cases] pondereth how one day he will be whole [our constant preoccupation with medicine and cures, miracle and otherwise]."

64 1 Nephi 7:14 Let's go on to somebody who's going to tell the same story exactly, but should be required reading for anyone who intends to study the Book of Mormon. If we put nothing else on the reading list, this is number one, two, three, four, and five. Of course, it's Jeremiah. As we read 1 Nephi 7:14, it appears that Jeremiah must have been a close personal friend of Lehi (he mentions him personally). "For behold, the Spirit of the Lord ceaseth soon to strive with them; for behold, they have rejected the prophets, and Jeremiah have they cast into prison [this is contemporary; it's Nephi speaking to his people]. And they have sought to take away the life of my father, insomuch that they have driven him out of the land." So they imprisoned Jeremiah, and they drove Lehi out of the land, who belonged to the party of Jeremiah. Now, we have very good contemporary sources

which we will soon mention here that put us right into the scene—discovered between 1935 and 1938. No one believed him, as you will see from the book of Jeremiah, they didn't want to believe him. They knew he was right, as he said, but they didn't want to believe him. He had no large following at all, but he had some who were faithful to him, including prophets in the city and in the country (a faithful band). One of those was certainly Lehi. Being a very influential man and being of the party of Jeremiah, Lehi would have known Jeremiah (they were certainly contemporary). Jeremiah tells us about the situation in Jerusalem

68 1 Nephi 22:23 These are the four things men are after. The Book of Mormon tells us there are four things that everyone is after. First Nephi says it, and the younger prophet Nephi says the very same thing. The four things everybody seeks for in the Book of Mormon are: wealth, power, popularity, and the lusts of the flesh (plenty of sex and all the rest of it). This was Lehi's world, this was Jeremiah's world, and this was Solon's world. And there were these very developed societies with everything relatively peaceful at times. But there was great tension between Egypt in the West (in which Israel is putting its trust) and Babylon in the East (the great Asiatic power).

68 Mosiah 4:11 This takes us back to Mosiah 4:11: "I would that ye should remember ... the greatness of God, and your own nothingness, and his goodness and long-suffering towards you." Then you "shall always rejoice [there's nothing to worry about]." But it keeps everything churned up if people are after the power, the gain, and the celebrity.

72 So this is the Jerusalem of Jeremiah. There's a lot more, of course. This is the second longest book in the Bible (52 chapters). Isaiah is 66 chapters. In Jeremiah you will find the story of what was going on. But what you find in the Book of Mormon is not a rehash or a paraphrase of Jeremiah at all. It's a much fuller picture of the specifics of what was going on. You get a marvelous picture of what was happening. We'll talk about that next time and his getting out.

## **Lecture 6 Omitted By Editor**

# Lecture 7 1 Nephi 1; Jeremiah

## [People Form Groups] The Days of King Zedekiah:

91 Well now, we have to get Lehi out of Jerusalem. With all these stories and all these other notes and things, I turn and read that first chapter of 1 Nephi, and it's miraculous—the condensation, the prose, the simplicity, the directness. He has the four qualities that Matthew Arnold attributes to Homer. The Book of Mormon has them; I don't know anything else that has them. If you were to be asked on a test, for example, "What is the significance of the Lachish Letters for the Book of Mormon? They are immensely important. They are contemporary records—first-hand records, not records that have come down to us. They are the original documents, and they name names. They don't name Jeremiah. It's interesting that Jeremiah is never named in the Bible except in the book of Jeremiah. In Jeremiah's time the person they were all consulting as a prophet was Huldah, a woman. She was the prophetess; it's very interesting. Like Lehi, Jeremiah was an amateur prophet. You can see that he was engaged in business dealings and things like that. He moved around a lot, preaching as he went. The same thing happened with Lehi; it's very clear there in the first chapter. But it [the Lachish record] mentions Uriah who was a friend to them both. It mentions some other people and what went on, and various places.

91,92 1 Nephi 1:4 They are leaving, and the situation is

so close to the Book of Mormon. It's very dramatic and very intense. This is quite clear in both documents. But here we have something with which we can check the Book of Mormon story step by step. So we go on: "The Lachish letters center on the activities of the prophets. They are causing grave concern to the government; they are subversives." We read in 1 Nephi 1:4, "In that same year there came many prophets, prophesying unto the people that they must repent, or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed." That was subversion; that would never do, you see. So the government was after them. Torczyner, the editor of these Lachish Letters, said, "It must certainly be admitted that there was more than one prophet at this time. There were prophets circulating around." Israel usually has a chief prophet at a particular time, like Isaiah or Jeremiah, but Jeremiah wasn't even the chief one at this time. Uriah was an important man. He had been preaching perhaps longer than Jeremiah had. As I said, the prophetess was Huldah. She was the center of attention if they wanted the big stuff. Torczyner says here, "The central figure, of course, was Jeremiah, but it is only by chance we know about him. He is not even mentioned in the book of Kings; it's the Prophetess Huldah, an otherwise quite unknown figure, whom Josiah consults." Well, that was back in Josiah's day, but now we are down in the time of Zedekiah. We are told that Uriah's religious influence had been great. Uriah prophesied, "according to all the words of Jeremiah" (Jeremiah 26:20). So he was spreading Jeremiah's message. Lehi did the same thing, so this was the Jeremiah party, you might say. And they were not popular, remember. Nobody wanted them with all this doom and gloom. They were running from the police everywhere.

92 Question: You tell us that Jeremiah was a little-known prophet, and this prophetess was well known. When you say the word "prophet" to me, I think of the hierarchy in the Church that we have today. Was it like that at all back then? Answer: No, that has nothing to do with it. As Brigham Young said, "Prophecy is not an office; it's a gift. Some people have it and some don't." We are told that anyone who has a testimony of Jesus Christ has



the gift of prophecy. But you have no right prophesying for the Church. There are various people who have the gift very strongly. No president of the Church ever had it more strongly than Eliza R. Snow. She made some marvelous prophecies, but she didn't speak to the world and to the Church. This is given as a special gift, like healing, etc. There are some interesting stories on that.

92,93 1 Nephi 1:5-18 Uriah was a prophet and had this particular gift. He went around and Jeremiah was authorizing him. You notice how Lehi took up the activity later on. Lachish Letter number six tells us, "The words of the prophets are dangerously undermining morale of both the military and the people. Behold, the words are not good, both to weaken the hands of the country and the city everywhere." Jeremiah 38 says the very same thing, "For thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war [soldiers, YEDE ANSHE HA-MILHAMAH] that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people [KOL HA-CAM]" (Jeremiah 38:4). This is what we are told in the Book of Mormon, that many prophets came prophesying doom, and the people must repent. Nephi said that there were many prophets. "Lehi, as he went forth prayed unto the Lord, yea, even with all his heart, in behalf of his people" (1 Nephi 1:5). In the fifth verse already; things move fast in that first chapter. In reply to his prayer, he received a vision which sent him out to join the prophets. Nephi said, "My father ... went forth among the people, and began to prophesy" (verse 18). This was as a result of this vision. What happened? He wasn't a prophet before, but then he joined the prophets. He went forth among the people. You notice that every mention of the prophets here says that they were discouraging the people—that they were spreading dissent (repentance) among the people. It worried the ruling party, of course; it made them look bad. Verse 18: "... and began to prophesy and to declare unto them concerning the things which he had both seen and heard" (his vision). Well, he got into real trouble then, as you know. In 1 Nephi 7:14, Nephi tells us, "For behold, they have rejected the prophets, and Jeremiah have they cast into prison [this is not by revelation; he knows this by the news]. And they have sought to take

away the life of my father, insomuch that they have driven him out of the land.” Such is the situation.

93 And we find Lehi doing the same thing [political opposition]. It’s very interesting here that “Uriah’s story is being told,” as Torczyner points out, “only as a parallel to Jeremiah’s not less dangerous position.” Uriah’s story is a parallel; they were both doing the same thing (this is where you get the characteristic repeated scenario, etc.). Well, that’s exactly what Lehi’s story is, a parallel to Jeremiah’s. That’s what his son said. Nephi said, “They put him into prison and cast my father out.” Like Uriah’s story, his is a parallel to Jeremiah’s “not less dangerous position.” So we can add Lehi to this as a thoroughly typical figure of the time. Then there’s the name yahu, etc.

93,94 You see groups working together (little circles). We read about clandestine flights from the city in both the Book of Mormon and here, involving friends and family (going back to talk with Laban, etc.). Nephi and his brethren go back to town to persuade Ishmael, a friend of the family who had a family of daughters, to come down and join them. Nephi gets Zoram, the servant of Laban to come. They go up to strike a deal with Laban who knew them. He knew the boys when they came there, and he knew they had this great wealth. Well, they brought it up and showed it to him. They found out in the plates that they were related to Laban. So we have this sort of aristocracy in the town, and this is where the trouble is. This is clearer in the book of Jeremiah than anywhere else. It was long believed that it was only a few of the chief families that were taken away into Babylon, We know today that it was very different. They took everybody except that relatively small group of poor people. Nephi and his brethren went back, and they began to split up right off. When they went on their first mission to get the brass plates, they split up. Later, they took sides in the family. Laman and Lemuel and two daughters of Ishmael wanted to go back and give up the whole operation. They said, “We are fools to leave Jerusalem.” Remember, he said, “The people of Jerusalem were a righteous people, for they kept the law of Moses.”

Then Nephi said, "If the former inhabitants of this land had been righteous, do you think the Lord would have allowed our ancestors to move in here and drive them out? No, it was because they were unrighteous, and that's exactly what's happening today." When they were going through Arab country there, he said, "Do you think if those people had been righteous, it would have happened?"

94 1 Nephi 17:22 It was the same thing that happened here. Here's what they said in 1 Nephi 17:22: "And we know that the people who were in the land of Jerusalem were a righteous people; for they kept the statutes and judgments of the Lord,... they are a righteous people; and our father hath judged them." They got so prejudiced that they even planned to murder their father if they got chance. They were especially disgruntled at having to defer to their father in a very interesting quality.. [Lehi] was a PIQQEAH, and that's what they accused him of being, "visionary." These are exactly the qualities that Lehi revered and treasured, and he had them himself.

96 The essence of tragedy is not the good guys against the bad guys; it's not black against white at all. It's the incompatibility of two good things.

96 The brothers [Laman and Lemuel] say, "We have to respect these people [in Jerusalem]; they are living the Law of Moses very strictly. They are going to church and all that sort of thing." Nephi says, "That isn't enough; that doesn't count." So what's going to happen? Their father is visionary. It's great to be visionary, but they are not going to follow him.

97 Lehi supported the anti-Egyptian party, and that's a strange thing. It's a strange thing also that the prophet Uriah was fleeing to Egypt, not to Babylonia. He had been supporting the Babylonian party and had been against the Egyptian policy of the government. Why should he flee to Egypt? Torczyner said, "That's a paradox." He can't figure out what was going on. Why did Lehi's people flee toward Egypt? [Brother Nibley gives no answer.]

98 1 Nephi 3:31; 1 Nephi 4:1 It's interesting that we read in the Amarna Letters from the earlier time when Jerusalem was being besieged that the military governor commanded fifty men in the city for patrolling the streets, etc. and ten thousand men in the field. Well, that's the very same thing you find in the Book of Mormon where the brothers say they don't dare go back and face Laban: "How is it possible that the Lord will deliver Laban into our hands? Behold, he is a mighty man, and he can command fifty, yea, even he can slay fifty; then why not us?" (1 Nephi 3:31). Nephi replies, "Let us be faithful in keeping the commandments of the Lord; for behold he is mightier than all the earth, then why not mightier than Laban and his fifty, yea, or even than his tens of thousands?" (1 Nephi 4:1). It's like the normal setup of a division, a brigade, or a platoon today which has so many men. It's very stable and lasts for centuries.

99,100 1 Nephi 4:8-18 I might as well tell you the story about Nephi's successful encounter with the drunk Laban and his deception of Laban's servant to gain access to the treasure in the archives. Notice his night mission. He went where the Spirit led him. We see that Zoram, the servant, had been out with the elders by night, and he was scared stiff when he found out who Nephi was. Then Nephi found Laban lying drunk after the meeting. He was out there dead drunk in the streets, in his full ceremonial armor. Nephi wondered what he was supposed to do. Then he had a long debate with himself (we should mention that).

100,101 1 Nephi 4:36 Lehi's son takes Laban's servant with him "that the Jews might not know concerning our flight. . . lest they pursue us and destroy us." (1 Nephi 4:36). Remember, they tried to pursue them, but they lost them.

103,104 We're told in the Book of Mormon that the Mulekites left Jerusalem eleven years after Lehi. That figures very closely, doesn't it? The "company escaped from Jerusalem bearing with them the youngest son of Zedekiah, the only member of the family not put to death when Jerusalem was taken. From the descendants of

these people in the New World, the Nephites learned that Jerusalem actually did fall as was prophesied.” Remember, the Mulekites figure in the Book of Mormon; they are more important than the Nephites actually. Zarahemla wasn't a Nephite city at all; it was a Mulekite city. Remember, Mosiah was voted king when he came there because of his great ability, etc. But it was always a Mulekite city, and we are told that the Mulekites were far more numerous than the Nephites at all times. The two of them together weren't half as numerous as the Lamanites. So we have some very interesting mixtures here. They were dealing with each other all the time, too. We tend so to oversimplify the Book of Mormon. “Will you dispute that Jerusalem was destroyed? Will ye say that the sons of Zedekiah were not slain, all except it were Mulek? Yea, and do ye not behold that the seed of Zedekiah are with us, and they were driven out of the land of Jerusalem?” Nowhere are we told that Mulek was the leader of the community. Why did they bear his name? There was a Mulek, and they were called the Mulekites. Because of his apparent youth this would be unlikely. “But as the sole survivor of the royal family, naturally he would be the most distinguished member of the troop, Mulek, the little king.” But that name is very interesting. They don't call themselves the “king people”; they call themselves the “Mulekite people.” This would be Mulekites. That's the way we do it—Mulaikum. These are the diminutives. The word is Mulek. The word for king is malik. You see the word malik all the time, and it means king. But mulayk means little king. It's an affectionate term that means “our dear little king.” We have Melek and Melchites and Malakians and all sorts of people in the Book of Mormon, but only one group of Mulekites. That's a diminutive, but it occurs very often. It means a king, a leader and that sort of thing. So the name tells us everything here. Mulek is not found anywhere in the Bible, but anybody who has had first-year Arabic knows that a diminutive takes the form/Mcay/. So Malek, the king, would be Mulayk or Mulek. And anyone who belongs to a society or is a follower is an IYYA—MULAYKIYYA. It would be translated in the Bible as Mulekite. So they called themselves Mulekites because they were the people with the little king, and they were

proud of him. They don't give him credit for being king or anything like that, but they call him "little king."

105   Mormon 9:31 We are told that the Book of Mormon is meant for us, and we had better read it. "This comes to you, oh ye Gentiles, that ye may be wiser than we have been." [paraphrased] So we'd better see what they were up to and what happened to them. Well, we know what happened to them. Now we are being told why. But these letters show how beautifully documented the Book of Mormon is. Read that first chapter. He says everything. It's an abridgement, but it hits all the high points, touches all the bases, and gives us these character pictures. That's the way it is.

# Lecture 8 1 Nephi

## **Escape from Doom [Summary from Early Lectures] [Mostly Omitted by Editor]**

106 Let's review quickly the first book of Nephi. In the first verse we saw the family well loaded with cultural baggage at the time of a major cultural transplant. The key name to Lehi's period for all Western civilization is Zarathustra. In the 1920s Professor Werner Jaeger was the first one to point out that the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle are replete with the teachings of Zarathustra, who was another contemporary of Lehi. From the Avesta and Iranian centers, his teachings spread to the East, and already were completely at home in the schools of the West. Incidentally, we read in the Midrash (this is the typical legend, of course) that Zarathustra followed the teachings of Abraham. But you all know Nietzsche's famous work *Also Sprach Zarathustra* [Thus Spake Zarathustra] and you all know the introductory phrases to 2001, when Straus does that miraculous thing with a simple C-major chord. Remember how it starts out? Well, that's *Also Sprach Zarathustra* right out of the Book of Mormon.

106 1 Nephi 1:4 We saw that Nephi had good parents and a good representative education. His education included not only his own culture and religion (the learning of the Jews) but also the language of the Egyptians, which was the dominant world language in all that area at that time to a far greater degree than people have realized heretofore.

Now refer to the Book of Mormon, 1 Nephi 1:4, “There came many prophets, prophesying unto the people that they must repent, or the great city Jerusalem must be destroyed.” Now that’s the alternative offered us throughout the Book of Mormon. Here is a computer printout of all the passages calling for repentance in the Book of Mormon. They go on and on and on; the word destruction appears 456 times. That’s the theme. As it opens, they will be destroyed, and it ends on that theme. You find it all the way through. Repent appears 360 times. They [repent and destruction] are almost always mentioned in the same breath, as they are here. You have your choice: You can repent, or you can be destroyed.

106,107 This is [the] way the Lord deals with his chosen people. Others are not bound by that rigid rule. They go on forever, and this is a surprising thing. We think about Zarathustra, etc. The Iranians (Persians) are just as crazy today as they were in his day. He talked about them, rebuked their stupidity, etc. That’s the main theme that Nietzsche took up when he wrote *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. But other nations are still there. The Greeks are still there and just as Greek as ever. But anyway the Greeks are still going, and the Egyptians are still going. They are as Egyptian as they can be; that’s why they are such lovable people. They never resort to violence if they can help it, and they get along beautifully with each other. It’s the oldest, most stable civilization in the world—thousands of years and the same Egyptians. The Arabs are the same lovable, obnoxious Arabs—the same as they have always been (fighting each other). With the people of the North it’s the same thing (in the sagas). There were the same troubles up there, but they’ve gotten more civilized than the others. But the point is that those nations were old when Lehi left Jerusalem; they were ancient then.

107 But Lehi’s people and everything on this continent is gone. The promise here is when they are fully ripe in iniquity they will be completely swept from the land; they will be utterly destroyed—swept from off the face of the land. That’s the rule for the Promised Land. Of course,



this continent and the Western hemisphere are covered with ruins. Nobody has the vaguest idea who was here or anything about them at all; they are gone without a trace. The Mayan people are still there among the Mayan ruins, but there are a lot of guesses about what was Olmec, etc., when you go along the coast there at Hermosa. Nobody knows to this day. When you summarize everything that's known it's ridiculous, and it's all purely speculative. The thing is that the people here disappeared, and they disappeared without a trace, just gone.

108 "Does this apply to us?" we ask. Let me read a statement of Joseph Smith here. This is what he said in 1833: "I have been carefully viewing the state of things throughout the Christian land. I have looked with feelings of the most painful anxiety. Upon one hand, I behold the manifest withdrawal of God's spirit and a veil of stupidity." There's the sentence of doom. It's not wickedness, but you know you're gone when you're stupid. "It was worse than the cry that it was a mistake," as Talleyrand said. It's a veil of stupidity, and you see it everywhere.

108 Now, here's our Book of Mormon story: "Christ proposed to make a covenant with the Jews, but they rejected him and his proposal. The Gentiles received the covenant, but the Gentiles have not continued, but have departed from the faith. They have become high minded and have not feared; therefore, but few of them will be gathered [few were, actually]. The nations of the Gentiles are hastily preparing, getting ready for the first stage of the part allotted to them when the Lord rebukes the nations. The Lord declared to his servants some eighteen months since that he was then withdrawing his spirit from the earth. The governments of the earth are thrown into confusion and division, and destruction to the eye of the spiritual beholder seems to be written by a finger of an invisible hand in large capitals upon almost everything we behold." Destruction is the word again.

## Lecture 9 1 Nephi 1-3, 15

### **In the Wilderness [Must Keep the Commandments to Prosper] [Lamanites are to Keep the Nephites in Remembrance**

122 But let's consider now just the second chapter. In the first chapter they go down very rapidly. We are not going to linger in the desert now. Eight years is too long for the course, so we will have to get through fast. But there are some things to notice here. He took all his stuff and went down to the borders. It mentions "the borders" twice in the fifth verse. That should be capitalized because that's what that area has been called, the Jabal, which means "the Borders." Joseph Smith didn't know that. Neither did Oliver Cowdery, so they left it uncapitalized. But that area in which they went was the Jabal. Jabal is the range of mountains that separates one country from another. This had that name, Jabal. So they went down into the Borders. Notice they found here, after three days, a valley beside a river of water. Why a "river of water"? Because usually it's a "river of sand," NAHR RAML. But this is a river of water. Well, how would they find a river of water in the desert at that time?

123 1 Nephi 1:4 . When you find a wadi that has water in it, that's a "river of water" and is considered something very unusual. It tells us in 1 Nephi 1:4 that it was at the commencement of year. So this was the winter time when there was water running. The sight of it sent Lehi into fits of

ecstasy, as we will see. (That's what an Arab does whenever he sees water.) This is the way they came down.

123,124      1 Nephi 2:8 We are not lingering on geography. It's points of doctrine we are interested in now. We have to mention the qaslda though. "And it came to pass that he called the name of the river, Laman, and it emptied into the Red Sea; and the valley was in the borders near the mouth thereof (1 Nephi 2:8). There's the Borders for the third time—this area called "the Jabal." It's a mountain range. So it emptied into the Red Sea. We know where they were, and he renamed them. That's what the Arabs do when they go down here. After all, if you are going in strange territory, you give names to things as you go. The pioneers did that. Certain things like Chimney Rock have been named various things. Timpanogos has quite a number of names. They have renamed Mount McKinley now. It's back to Denali, its old Indian name. Different people give things different names, so he named it that.

124,125      1 Nephi 2:9 but notice the ecstasies he goes into: "And when my father saw that the waters of the river emptied into the fountain of the Red Sea." That expression, "fountain of the Red Sea," is the one that is used. Remember, the ancients believed that the sea was the fresh fountain and it fed all the rivers of the land; it was the other way around. This one up here is called "the fountain of the Red Sea." There's a writing called "The Victory over Seth" that was read in all the temples of Egypt every day, in which this expression occurs. As I said, we won't linger over these things.

124      1 Nephi 2:9 "[Then] he spake unto Laman [his oldest son], saying: O that thou mightest be like unto this river, continually running into the fountain of all righteousness!" (1 Nephi 2:9). The sea was never stagnant for the ancients. If any water runs for more than half an hour, it is considered continual (practically perennial) by the people of that area. But it is seasonal. Notice, it says this was at the commencement of the year when the waters would be running. Then he spoke to his other son, Lemuel (who has

a good, pure Arabic name, incidentally), and said, “O that thou mightest be like unto this valley, firm and steadfast, and immovable in keeping the commandments of the Lord!” Again, why would a valley be “firm and steadfast”? We say mountains are firm and steadfast. Well, where does the Arab find life, security, and safety? It’s in the valleys where there is water and vegetation. Anywhere else you are a dead man. Nobody wants to go up on a mountain there.

125 1 Nephi 2:11-13 Laman and Lemuel didn’t want it. They were against their father. We mentioned his being a PIQQEAH, a visionary man. They didn’t want to leave the land of Jerusalem and their inheritance. That’s very interesting. Notice, it says, “... led them out of the land of Jerusalem, to leave the land of their inheritance [we will come to “inheritance” presently], and their gold, and their silver, and their precious things, to perish in the wilderness. And this, they said he had done because of the foolish imaginations of his heart. And thus, Laman and Lemuel ... did murmur against their father ... because they knew not the dealings of that God who had created them. Neither did they believe that Jerusalem, that great city [from the first they were disillusioned], could be destroyed according to the words of the prophets.” (1 Nephi 2:11-13).

125 1 Nephi 2:13 Notice it didn’t say taken but destroyed. Jerusalem had already been taken in 950, 720, 605, and 597 B.C. but it was spared every time. Sometimes it was taken by the Babylonians, sometimes by the Assyrians, and sometimes by the Egyptians. Nobody wanted to ruin Jerusalem; they wanted to take it so they could have it as a base, etc. Remember, Nebuchadnezzar had been very forbearing. He had spared the people. He had been kind to Necho and sent him back to Egypt to be Pharaoh there and serve his interests. When Necho turned against him, he got very angry. It was the same thing with Josiah. He was willing to cooperate with the Jews, but they played “footsy” with the Egyptians. When he took it in 597, he spared the city and went back. But when he came back this time, he was really mad and destroyed it completely. They [Laman and Lemuel] said the city couldn’t be destroyed because

nobody ever wanted to destroy it. They didn't say it couldn't be taken, but it couldn't be destroyed. They felt secure all the time. They had the wealth and all that sort of thing. They had all these things in common with others. As I said, it was a world civilization; they shared these things. So they didn't believe that.

125,126      1 Nephi 2:14-17      But now we come to a surprising thing! After all these years, this is a thing I have never noticed myself. (You have to bring the Book of Mormon; anybody who doesn't bring it doesn't get a gold star next time.) "And it came to pass that my father did speak unto them ... and he did confound them" (1 Nephi 2:14). They couldn't complain anymore, but they still didn't change their minds. "I, Nephi, being exceedingly young [listen to his condition there], nevertheless being large in stature, and also having great desires to know of the mysteries of God, wherefore, I did cry unto the Lord; and behold he did visit me, and did soften my heart that I did believe all the words which had been spoken by my father ..." But he had to have a special revelation himself. He didn't like the idea at all. Then he had to work hard on his brother Sam to convince him. Nobody liked the idea of leaving Jerusalem. Nephi liked it just as little as the others. After he prayed and cried unto the Lord, the Lord visited him and softened his heart so he would go along with his father. He wasn't "gung ho" to go out and have some fun in the desert. He didn't want it, and his brother Sam didn't want it. Then he talked to Sam, "making known unto him the things which the Lord had manifested unto me by his Holy Spirit [he conveyed his special revelation to Sam]. And it came to pass that he believed in my words" (1 Nephi 2:17). But he had to be convinced too. So everybody had to be sold on this trip in the first place, including Nephi and Sam. I hadn't noticed, but it is plain that nobody wanted to go out into that desert. That would be something.

126      1 Nephi 2:20-24      Then we come to the theme of the Book of Mormon in 1 Nephi 2:20-24. You might say, "Why do we linger so much on this part? We are not going very fast." We mustn't go fast because it is here, and right here

we have the whole Book of Mormon. This theme is repeated throughout the book in different ways and different situations. It's a sad story, this story from the dust, as we will see presently. It's for us. Alas, alas, I wish it wasn't, but this is it—the rule for the promised land: “And inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper, and shall be led to a land of promise; yea, even a land which I have prepared for you; yea, a land which is choice above all other lands.” We dwell on that.

126,127      1 Nephi 2:21-24 Remember the migrations at this time. They were all looking for promised lands. Tyrtaeus was looking for a promised land, and he told his people about it. Hesiod, the great Greek poet and contemporary of Homer, was looking for a promised land. He told how they looked and found nothing but bad places wherever they went, and they just had to keep on the move. And, of course, at the beginning of the [Aeneid], Vergil says, “Through many disasters and trials, many close calls, we are making our way toward Latium where there awaits us a seat in a promised land.” They were going from Troy clear over to Italy to find a promised land. So at the time of Lehi, most people were looking for promised lands. Everybody was shaken up because of world revolution. So this was it. They [Lehi's family] would find their promised land. But if “thy brethren [Laman and Lemuel or anybody else] shall rebel against thee, they shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord. And inasmuch as thou shalt keep my commandments, thou shalt be made a ruler and a teacher over thy brethren. For behold, in that day that they shall rebel against me, I will curse them even with a sore curse, and they shall have no power over thy seed except they shall rebel against me also” (1 Nephi 2:21-24). The Lamanites are never the problem in the Book of Mormon. When the Nephites rebel also, the Lord wants the Lamanites to be there in place to stir them up. “And if it so be that they rebel against me, they shall be a scourge unto thy seed, to stir them up in the ways of remembrance.” In other words the Lord is saying, I want them breathing down your neck all the time. You will not solve your problem by getting rid of the Lamanites. They tried to do that and failed, and it

was their own undoing, as we know. So who is the enemy? There is no conflict or battle in the Book of Mormon between the righteous and the wicked. We will see that. It is always when people are equally wicked that they collide. So this is the promise, and this is the theme of the Book of Mormon.

127 1 Nephi 3:1-20; 2 Nephi 1:3 Then we come to the third chapter of 1 Nephi. Notice he “returned from speaking with the Lord, to the tent of my father” (1 Nephi 3:1). He returned to the tent. They are living in the bayt al-sha’r. Then his father said, “Behold I have dreamed a dream, in the which the Lord hath commanded me that thou and thy brethren shall return to Jerusalem” (1 Nephi 3:2). Then they have to go back to Laban and fetch the plates. Well, we talked about Laban and the character of Jaush in the Lachish Letters. He was the military governor, and he kept the records. Although this chapter is vitally important, we are going to have to flee. “It must needs be that we flee out of the land.” They must flee out of the land; sometimes you can’t stay. Lehi said, I don’t have the vaguest idea why we have to obtain the records, except it may be to preserve the language of our fathers [paraphrased]. It turned out that wasn’t the main reason. They contained “the words which have been spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets ... since the world began [the holy prophets before them—quite a record]” (1 Nephi 3:20).

127 1 Nephi 4:1 As I said, I want to get off the first book, so we are going to move right on. I’m going to go right over to the Bar Kokhba Letters and the Dead Sea Scrolls which are enormously important for the Book of Mormon. But notice this in the fourth chapter: “Let us go up again unto Jerusalem,... for behold he [the Lord] is mightier than all the earth, then why not mightier than Laban and his fifty, yea, or even than his tens of thousands?” (the garrison of fifty and the troops of ten thousand). The regular division in the army is ten thousand, as it was at the Hill Cumorah and in the Battle Scroll, too.

131 As you go in the Scroll Room at Jerusalem, you turn to the left, and the first document you see is this document

which has a light behind it. It's a contract to the ownership of a farm down there. One of the owners of the farm was this man here Alma ben Yehudah, which Professor Yadin rendered "Alma [without any apology], son of Judah." People have laughed for years about that name Alma, because it is a Latin word and a woman's name. It means soul, alma mater and that sort of thing. They tried to figure out some Hebrew name that means a "coat of mail" or another word meaning a "young man." But this is just A-L-M-A, like that, so Yadin properly made it "Alma, son of Judah." You know he was a man, and you know he was a Jew if he is Alma, son of Judah

133 Joseph Smith-Matthew 1:20 Remember, until very recently (in the 1840s and 1850s) all the Christian churches absolutely insisted that the Jews would never return to Jerusalem because the veil of the temple was rent, and the Lord said the temple was destroyed and the Jews would never go back to Jerusalem. It was like that all the time up until 1948 when Harry Truman sent an ambassador. He visited the pope on the way, and the pope said, "Absolutely nothing doing; the Jews must never go back to Jerusalem. It would frustrate all prophecy." They thought the Jews would never go back. I have an article on that in the Encyclopedia Judaica. I had to look up a lot of this stuff, and, believe me, the Christian world was against it. The only people that ever believed the Jews would go back to Jerusalem, of course, were the Mormons. We always preached that they would go back to Jerusalem, just as we would have Zion over here. "And except those days should be shortened, there should none of their flesh be saved [and, of course, they would have been wiped out completely time and again]; but for the elect's sake, according to the covenant, those days shall be shortened" (Joseph Smith-Matthew 1:20).

136,137 1 Nephi 15:27 This is another one of these cultural notes. This is 1 Nephi 15:27 (we have to jump around so here). "And I said unto them that the water which my father saw was filthiness; and so much was his mind swallowed up in other things that he beheld not the filthiness of the water. And I said unto them that it was



an awful gulf, which separated the wicked from the tree of life." Remember that enormous gulf. You walk along in the desert and you come to one of those huge gulfs. You see them in Canyonlands, etc. I spend a lot of time down there. You noticed that Roman camp. There was a 2,000-foot drop between it and the caves on the other side. They were right together, but you couldn't get from the one to the other. He said that's exactly what happens to the wicked. There's an awful gulf between them, and down that gulf comes this filthy water and sweeps them away. "An awful gulf, which separated the wicked from the tree of life, and also from the saints of God. And I said unto them that it was a representation of that awful hell which the angel said unto me was prepared for the wicked ... the justice of God did also divide the wicked from the righteous" (1 Nephi 15:28-30). So he compares it to this very thing. "And they said unto me: What meaneth the river of water which our father saw?" (1 Nephi 15:26). He said the water was filthy water and it ran down the gully and swept away the wicked.

137 So when it became extremely important to keep a record, they kept it on bronze. You'd say, "the brass plates." Remember, "brass" is a new word. It is only used in English since the end of the nineteenth century. "Bronze" is the French word. We always said "brass." You won't find the word "bronze" in the Bible at all, though the Old Testament is a Bronze Age document. But we always called it "brass." When he says "brass plates" it's perfectly safe to think of those as "bronze plates" because brass is a mixture of copper and nickel, whereas bronze is copper and tin, and much more common and easy to make. As I said, throughout the Old Testament the word "bronze" never occurs because it is always "brass." A copper alloy is always "brass" in English, and that was seventeenth century English. It makes no difference; the main thing is that it's copper based.

# Lecture 10 (Dead Sea Scrolls)

## The Book of Mormon and the Dead Sea Scrolls

142 2 Nephi 26:16 See the pictures of the caves. They are in dust up to their ears there because these things were actually buried under the dust. They weren't just left there casually. These documents were buried. That's important—and still being able to read them on the spot. They were able to pick them up and read them right off. Nephi said, "For those who shall be destroyed shall speak unto them out of the ground, and their speech shall be low out of the dust, and their voice shall be as one that hath a familiar spirit; for the Lord God will give unto him power, that he may whisper concerning them, even as it were out of the ground; and their speech shall whisper out of the dust" (2 Nephi 26:16). That's exactly the effect you have here. They were absolutely awed and overwhelmed when they could read these records of their own ancestors—open them and read them as if they had been written the day before. "These texts were deliberately buried. The people who left these records died soon after they buried them, and died on the spot, the victims of a savage religious war. And 2 Nephi 26:16 says, "For those who shall be destroyed shall speak unto them out of the ground."

143 The practice of fleeing to these caves [from Jerusalem] is far older than Lehi's day. Of course, this comes seven centuries after Lehi's day. But we know they were doing it three thousand years before—going to these same caves [the Cave of Letters], bringing their household effects,

storing their valuable temple vessels, etc., in these caves. It was the usual practice. So the Lord tells them, when the “abomination of desolation” comes, then flee to the mountains and don’t turn back. You stay there; it’s going to be worse than ever [paraphrased].

143,144      These people who fled from Jerusalem to save themselves, and Lehi among them, did it for freedom. Remember what they told Zoram? Come down to us where we are in the desert, and you shall be a free man. So it is here. And compare this with Moroni’s standard: “In memory of our God, our religion, our freedom, our peace, our wives and children.” We’re talking about the Title of Liberty and the like in the Cave of Letters. We talked about Alma, son of Judah.

144      Alma 60:1,7      Here’s a very interesting thing. “This is a correspondence between Bar Kokhba and a general commanding up north,” he says. Bar Kokhba had to deal with just such characters as those Alma had to deal with, and he did it in the same way. “To the brothers [for he called them his brothers, as Moroni always called them his brothers when he wrote his letters] in the city of Engedi [from the Cave of Letters that’s just a half-hour walk] he personally wrote a letter in Hebrew that survives to this day: ‘In comfort you sit eating and drinking from the property of the House of Israel and care nothing for your brothers.’ “ Thus Yadin says. Then we read in Alma 60:1, 7, “Behold I direct mine epistle to Pahoran in the city of Zarahemla ... and also to all those who have been chosen by this people to govern and manage the affairs of this war.... Can you think to sit upon your thrones in a state of thoughtless stupor, while your enemies are spreading the work of death around you? Yea while they are murdering thousands of your brethren.” It’s the same situation, and the same answer too. The answer was that Moroni was wrong: Pahoran hadn’t betrayed, and he had actually been driven out himself. The crooked crowd had taken over the government, and he was in hiding himself. So it was misunderstood.

145 This is Masada thirty miles down here. These deposits were made in the year A.D. 70 when the Romans under Vespasian were besieging the city. The Jews were driven out, but they came back and settled. Then they revolted under Bar Kokhba. They were beaten finally and were banished from ever coming back to Israel again. They could never come back to Jerusalem again. After A.D. 130 it was a death sentence for a Jew to be found in Jerusalem. They left documents all along here from the whole period. These aren't the documents of some little sect, which, as Pliny says, was only four thousand people. These represented the prevailing Judaism at Jerusalem before the rabbis took over.

147 But what were they teaching before A.D. 70? That's what we find in the Dead Sea Scrolls. It's very clear that it's not just the teachings of some little sect in the desert. This represented, on this broad front, people retreating by the thousands and bringing these documents. They tell us what was really being taught by the Jews in the time before the fall of Jerusalem. Here's where we check with the Book of Mormon because these writings have been very unpopular. (I notice I had some articles here that I attached to this one.) I said that Allegro lost his job at Oxford because he pointed out in 1960 that from 1950 to 1960 the scrolls were suppressed. Anyway, Joseph Fitzmeyer said that not five percent of them had been translated. They wouldn't touch them with a forty-foot pole.

149 They call it the Serekh Scroll now because that's what the Hebrews call it. Isn't it lucky though? What a break! If we hadn't found this, we would still be wondering to this day what this could all possibly be about. But in the very first cave they opened there were seven jars against the wall. In these seven jars were manuscripts. In this was the manuscript that is the explanation of what the whole thing is about. This tells us the order of the church, why these people are here, what their object is in coming out here, etc. And it's not sectarian here. This is a very interesting thing why they have come out here. These records have been hidden, but they were written in Jerusalem-not written out

here apparently, as Golb says. There wasn't a scribe. They only had two desks and one ink bottle, and that was it. No pens or anything like that.

154 A rabbi will tell you, "Well, we don't have eternal life. Heaven is a philosophical concept." But this is the sort of language we use, isn't it? This is not orthodox Judaism. You can see why they didn't want [the Dead Sea Scrolls]. It's not orthodox Christianity either—this eternal progression thing and getting the crowns, and being tested while you are here. Then we get to the preexistence, the plan as it was made in the beginning.

154 We are going to go on with the text of the Book of Mormon next time. But this is important: "For they are the chosen of God for an eternal covenant, and to them is all the glory of Adam." This has upset everybody. They say, "Well, it means man" But it's not HA-ADAM; there's no article. It's a very interesting thing. When Jastrow translated it he wrote, "all the glory of man." Then in a footnote in the back he said, "This reads 'the glory of Adam,' but, of course, we can't accept that because Adam fell and he didn't have any glory. He brought 'death into the world and all our woes.'" "They don't like Adam. But when it says "theirs is all the glory of Adam," you can see why they didn't like to publish any more scrolls. They don't want them, and they've not been published. You don't read about them, and there isn't much excitement about them. They haven't translated even a fraction of them yet. They know what's there. It's amazing, but they don't like it very much.

154 This is very important for the Book of Mormon. You can see that because this is the religion of the Book of Mormon. This is the language that Moroni and Nephi use. This was just the beginning. All of these documents use that particular literary genre, the revelations and the histories, etc. And it's right out of Lehi's people; yes, indeed.

# Lecture 11 1 Nephi 4-7

**Scripture and Family**  
**[The Serekh Scroll]**  
**[13 Steps before Nephi Killed Laban]**  
**[Zoram Joins Lehi's Family]**  
**[Old Testament Mostly Unavailable**  
**in Ancient World]**  
**[Lehi's Vision of the Tree of Life]**

156 There are just two short passages I want to read from that Serekh Scroll we discussed before. These are some that are particularly jarring to both Christians and Jews. They show why the scrolls have been neglected and how much they mean for us. This is the Serekh Scroll, the first one. It's from the eighth plate. They are rolled up and have pages like a book, but they are put together side by side. You never read a scroll like this as they do in the movies and on the stage. You never do it that way; you have to roll it this way. It's twenty-three feet long, so you have to keep rolling it and unrolling it.

156 This one [the Serekh Scroll] says, "And in the council of the church there shall be twelve men in charge. And there shall be three priests [at the head of everything] who shall be perfect in all things that have been revealed from the Torah [the law] and in doing righteously and in judgment, loving mercy and being humble in their ways—each man walking with his neighbor—to be firm in the faith while they are upon this earth, with a strong sense and resolve and

with a contrite spirit.” That sounds familiar: a presidency of three, the council of twelve, and the qualifications. They have to be perfect in just about everything. Along with that, they have to be humble, not pull rank or anything like that, and walk with a contrite spirit. Then it quotes here where they come out. It says, “When those times will come in Israel to establish a new order of things, they shall go forth from the midst of the company of men of iniquity [CIWEL is iniquity, apostasy, going the wrong way; they shall go forth out of the midst of the wicked] to go out into the desert [the MIDBAR of the desert is not complete desert; it is always the area between the desert and the sown, where you go out; you can graze cattle there; you can't farm there, but neither would you starve there if you are careful] and to prepare there a way for the Lord [and they write Jehovah in code here] even as it has been written by the Prophet Isaiah in 40:13, ‘In the wilderness make straight his paths. Prepare a highway in the wilderness for our God. That is according to the teaching of the scriptures. When they are there, they shall observe all the laws that have been given by Moses from the beginning and all the commandments which have been given from time to time, from dispensation to dispensation in the church as it has been revealed to the NEBFFM B\*-RUAH QEDOSHD, by the Holy Ghost.”

157 It's very interesting; they often refer to the Holy Ghost. I've had some Israeli students in the class, and they really sat up when they heard that, “Does it say that?” [they said]. Yes, it says “Holy Ghost” all right; that's what we have here. Then this ordinance that is in the supplement to the Serekh Scroll (found at the same time). In this one about the order of the church, there is just one section we want to read, “And this shall be the order of all the community (YAH AD) of Israel in the last days when they shall organize themselves into a church in order to walk according to all the ordinances of the sons of Zadok [Melchizedek, the righteous].” Then there's the description of the sacrament at the end here. “And when they are met for the table of the church [the SHULHAN HA-YAHAD, the sacrament or special meal] or to partake of the new wine [firosh], and the table is all properly set and everything in order, and the wine has

been properly mixed for drinking, no one shall put forth his hand [it's the syntax here] upon the bread or reach it out to drink the wine until the priest has first blessed it. He must bless it before all. He blesses the bread and then he blesses the new wine. Then he reaches forth his hand and puts it on the bread. He's going to pass it, or he partakes of it first. Then it isn't just describing part of the ritual, but it says hereafter: "Hereafter, the Messiah of Israel shall reach forth his hand upon the bread. After he has blessed all the community of the church, the sacrament shall be passed to each man according to his office in the church. And this is the order of the church for all the meetings of the quorums whenever ten men shall come together."

157,158      Whenever as many as ten come they must have the sacrament is the point, and it must be done in this way. The bread and the wine should be blessed because after comes the Messiah. Well, of course, that's why we have the sacrament. This has no resemblance at all to the eucharists of the Christian churches, etc., or anything the Jews do. St. Basil, one of the eight great doctors of the church, wrote (and Origen said the same), "We know that they baptized, but nothing in the scripture tells us how they baptized. We know they married, but we have no examples of what a marriage ceremony should be. We have none of these rituals handed down. We know they had the sacrament, but we don't know how it was administered. There is nothing said about that. The last supper is one thing, but how do you do it in the church?" So here we have the way it should be done in the community. Of course, it's the way we do it. Why? Because the Messiah will be with them. In Matthew 14 and Mark 26, after the Lord has had the sacrament he says, "I will not partake of this wine again with you until I partake of it anew in my Father's kingdom" (then we'll have it again). Every time he appears after his resurrection, he orders bread and wine to be brought and has the meal with them, as he does with the Nephites in 3 Nephi. He administers the sacrament to them; he blesses it personally. If the Messiah of Israel does that, why do we do it? One purpose: "That they do always remember Him." Why? "That they may have His Spirit to be with them."



Right now. This represents the presence of the Messiah—the time when he shall come. When he was with us before he had this meal. When he shall be with us hereafter, he will have this meal. We are remembering both of them right now. We are looking forward to him. “That they always have His Spirit to be with them and they always remember him.” So this is what the sacrament is. You can imagine how this has upset both the Christians and the Jews. They say, “Well, we don’t have anything like this. What’s going on here?”

158 In chapter four they are going back to Jerusalem again. Notice, it talks about Laban and his city patrol of fifty and his tens of thousands in the field because he was high commander—exactly the same position that Jaush held in the Lachish Letters. You notice that Nephi is a very powerful speaker and a terrific persuader. What a salesman he would be! There are a number of speeches by him here, and he is great in the SUASORIA. He is very strong in the protreptic type of oratory, which is urging somebody to do something. He has a line of reason that builds up to a climax and then just forces you into it.

158 He said, Back to Jerusalem, phooey [paraphrased]. They’ve had a bad enough time. They were chased out the first time and didn’t get anywhere; now they have to go back. “Therefore let us go up; let us be strong like unto Moses; for he truly spake unto the waters of the Red Sea and they divided hither and thither” (1 Nephi 4:2). They would accept that tradition, you see. Then he argues in a line, “Ye know that this is true; and ye also know that an angel hath spoken unto you; wherefore can ye doubt?” Well, now wait a minute. They saw an angel and they can doubt? “Wherefore can ye doubt?” Why weren’t they completely overwhelmed by the angel? Why didn’t that convince them for the rest of their lives? This is an interesting phenomenon. Brigham Young said, “Pray that you will not see an angel, because everyone who has seen an angel has apostatized from the Church.” Nearly all of them did. “Wherefore can ye doubt?” When the angel is gone, you are still there. That’s the point. You are still yourself; you haven’t changed your

character. You may see ten angels, but that doesn't make any difference. There was the glory of Moses on the children of Israel, but as soon as he left them they immediately were up to their old shenanigans—the golden calf and all the rest of it. Do these things leave a permanent imprint? A person goes back to his normal life, and in this life the earth has a very strong hold on us. Nothing is more powerful than gravitation—the weakest form in the universe.

159 1 Nephi 4:3,5 Well, he goes on here. He says, You know the angel spoke to you. Why can you doubt that? [paraphrased]. “Let us go up; the Lord is able to deliver us, even as our fathers, and to destroy Laban, even as the Egyptians” (1 Nephi 4:3). Here is already a very interesting anticipation of Laban's fate. He's going to destroy Laban (the Lord will). It's Nephi's subconscious speaking here, I suppose, but you see what an argument he has. Then this fifth verse is interesting too. In an old Saints Herald where Emma Smith was being interviewed after the death of the Prophet, she said when they got to this passage (Joseph Smith was translating with the seer stones), he looked up with surprise and said, “Emma, did Jerusalem have walls?” He didn't even know the city had walls. He didn't know anything about what he was writing here. Yes, Jerusalem had walls.

159,160 1 Nephi 4:6,9 Nephi goes on. He was led by the spirit. This passage reassures anybody. “And I was led by the Spirit, not knowing beforehand the things which I should do” (1 Nephi 4:6). This is a very popular passage in the Book of Mormon because inside of all of us there comes that time when you are led by the Spirit not knowing what you should do. Yet you are willing to be led. What does your own judgment have to do with it? You don't know the situation. They don't know the situation in Jerusalem. What are they going to do? Well, he finds Laban drunk, etc. Then it takes thirteen steps for him to rationalize with himself. He doesn't do it; it's the Spirit. But he is so reluctant to kill Laban. I told you the story about the two Arabs, where little Fayek Salim said, “There's something wrong with this story.” It's always criticized: “This is such a bloody thing

that should never have happened. This shouldn't have been put in here," [people say]. But this is the way Arabs do things. After the class Fayek and [another student] were really quite worried. They said, "Why did he wait so long to cut off his head? That was not according to Arab custom or behavior. It was his chance." But he had waited a long time. He had a real struggle here, you'll notice. "The hilt thereof was of pure gold,... and the blade thereof was of the most precious steel" (1 Nephi 4:9). Steel is always precious. They had plenty of steel in Lehi's day, but it was very precious—Cordova steel and Damascus steel. A sword was worth thousands of dollars they were so valuable. It could cut through an anvil it was such marvelous stuff. Seven hundred years older than this is the purest steel blade of Tutankhamen with a pure gold handle. The blade is pure steel, and that's what he said here—a very precious and very valuable weapon.

160 1 Nephi 4:11; Ether 8:19 Here's Laban dead drunk in the street, a disgusting figure. But you are hardly going to attack a sleeping man. As we are told in the ballad of Clerk Saunders, "For shame to slay a sleeping man." We don't do that sort of thing. He didn't want to do that either, but he was "constrained by the Spirit." He had the impulse to kill Laban. "But I said in my heart: Never at any time have I shed the blood of man." That's the first thing. He wouldn't do it because that's the first rule: "For the Lord ... neither doth he will that man should shed blood, but in all things hath forbidden it, from the beginning of man," as we read in Ether 8:19. So he shrunk and wouldn't do it. That means he was sick at his stomach. He wasn't going to do it at all. "And the Spirit said unto me again: Behold [notice the next reason] the Lord hath delivered him into thy hands" (this is your chance). Like other high military officials in our time, Nazi criminals, etc., Laban was a murderer. Nephi knew he was a murderer and a lawless man because he had robbed them. He was a thief. He made them a promise. When they went to deal, he chased them out, tried to kill them, and took all they left with him. That was the end of the deal. That's the sort of a person he was dealing with, so he thought of that as a pretty good reason.

Then there's another reason: "Yea, and I also knew that he had sought to take away mine own life; yea, and he would not hearken unto the commandments of the Lord [another argument]; and he also had taken away our property" (1 Nephi 4:11).

160,161      1 Nephi 4:12-18      Well, it's about time. No, he still won't do it. Then verse 12: "And it came to pass that the Spirit said unto me again [after all this holding back]: Slay him, for the Lord hath delivered him into thy hands [then another argument]; Behold the Lord slayeth the wicked to bring forth his righteous purposes. It is better that one man should perish than that a nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief." (You've got to get that record.) "And now, when I, Nephi, had heard these words, I remembered the words of the Lord which he spake unto me in the wilderness, saying that: Inasmuch as thy seed shall keep my commandments [So it's the commandments. This is a special order, you see. This isn't just an impulse and a chance. He wouldn't be justified in doing this on his own, but now he gets a special order], they shall prosper in the land of promise [another argument]. Yea, and I also thought that they could not keep the commandments of the Lord according to the law of Moses, save they should have the law. And I also knew that the law was engraven upon the plates of brass [he wouldn't get them otherwise]. And again, I knew that the Lord had delivered Laban into my hands for this cause [it had a definite purpose; this has taken thirteen steps to convince him that he had better go ahead with it]—that I might obtain the records according to his commandments. Therefore I did obey the voice of the Spirit." Well, he was a skilled hunter, as you know, with a bow. When he was in the mountains there, he was pretty good. But after an agony of debate, he finally did it. Then he put on Laban's garments and girded on his armor.

161      1 Nephi 4:22-18      Well, it's about time. No, he still won't do it. Then verse 12: "And it came to pass that the Spirit said unto me again [after all this holding back]: Slay him, for the Lord hath delivered him into thy hands [then another argument]; Behold the Lord slayeth the wicked to

bring forth his righteous purposes. It is better that one man should perish than that a nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief.” (You’ve got to get that record.) “And now, when I, Nephi, had heard these words, I remembered the words of the Lord which he spake unto me in the wilderness, saying that: Inasmuch as thy seed shall keep my commandments [So it’s the commandments. This is a special order, you see. This isn’t just an impulse and a chance. He wouldn’t be justified in doing this on his own, but now he gets a special order], they shall prosper in the land of promise [another argument]. Yea, and I also thought that they could not keep the commandments of the Lord according to the law of Moses, save they should have the law. And I also knew that the law was engraven upon the plates of brass [he wouldn’t get them otherwise]. And again, I knew that the Lord had delivered Laban into my hands for this cause [it had a definite purpose; this has taken thirteen steps to convince him that he had better go ahead with it]—that I might obtain the records according to his commandments. Therefore I did obey the voice of the Spirit.” Well, he was a skilled hunter, as you know, with a bow. When he was in the mountains there, he was pretty good. But after an agony of debate, he finally did it. Then he put on Laban’s garments and girded on his armor.

1 Nephi 4:22-29 Then an interesting thing happened in the treasury. As they were carrying the engravings out, he met the servant of Laban. Here you get a typical glimpse into the Lachish Letters, don’t you? 1 Nephi 4:22, “And he spake unto me concerning the elders of the Jews, he knowing that his master, Laban, had been out by night among them.” Holding night sessions with the elders has a great sense of danger and tension here. He was wearing his ceremonial armor. It was a crisis. “And I spake unto him as if it had been Laban. And I also spake unto him that I should carry the engravings, which were upon the plates of brass, to my elder brethren, who were without the walls. ... And he, supposing that I spake of the brethren of the church ...” (When I said “the brethren,” he thought I meant “the elders” and that they were outside and wanted to get the plates out of the city.) This is an interesting situation,

you see. As they went along, the servant babbled to him. “And he spake unto me many times concerning the elders of the Jews, as I went forth unto my brethren, who were without the walls.” The servant kept up a steady stream of talk and filled him in about the elders and what was going on in town, etc. He was a very conscientious secretary. When Nephi and Laban’s servant appeared in the dark, they [Laman and Lemuel] ran for their lives. They thought it was Laban. He called after them and said, “It’s only me.”

161,162      1 Nephi 4:20-33    Then Laban’s servant was terrified. Nephi grabbed him, held his mouth, and persuaded him to come with them. He was large and powerful. Here we get a bit of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were happening at that time. We have scrolls from this earlier time along the Dead Sea now in the Cave of Letters, etc. Verse 33: “And I spake unto him, even with an oath that he need not fear.” Remember, Zoram was the servant of a man who was not very easy to get along with; you can be sure of that. You know what type of a man Laban was by now. There are the best little character sketches in the Book of Mormon. Zoram, I am sure, was very glad to do this. His name is very interesting (it’s a Canaanite name) being a servant and probably not an Israelite. Throughout the Book of Mormon, the Zoramites always retain a special ethnic identity. They are always Zoramites and always by themselves. Zoram is of another blood (Ishmael is probably related; he comes later) and he would be a free man. That’s why he would go into the desert. “He should be a free man like unto us if he would go down in the wilderness with us.” That’s the only way you can do it. They’ve gone forth into the wilderness, as we just read. When the time comes, the Sons of the Covenant shall leave the world of the wicked and go out into the desert to prepare His way. This is the idea, you see.

162,163      1 Nephi 4:34      “Surely the Lord hath commanded us to do this thing; and shall we not be diligent in keeping the commandments of the Lord?” If you are going to keep the commandments of the Lord and be diligent, you have to do what they were doing. You have to come out of the midst of the wicked. Remember the passages we read

last time: "They have come to plan a temple, a true temple, for Aaron and for Israel until the Messiah of Israel shall come." They are preparing His way in the wilderness. "Shall we not be diligent in keeping the commandments of the Lord? Therefore, if thou wilt go down into the wilderness to my father thou shalt have place with us." That means being accepted as a member of the society. When you are fleeing from the enemy (and this comes later in the dreams of Nephi) and you go to a great sheikh's tent, you go in and kneel and put the KAF (hem) of his garment on your shoulder (a figure we find very clear in the Book of Mormon), and you say, "ANA DAKHILUKA, I am your suppliant." He is obliged then to say, "Have a place; have a family; have a share in our tent." You are taken in. AHL is a FAMILY and OHEL is a tent. MARHABA is a WIDE PLACE. People move over so you have a place to sit down, and then you are a member. Nephi says the same thing in verse 34: "Therefore, if thou wilt go down into the wilderness to my father thou shalt have place [MURHAB] with us."

163 1 Nephi 4:35,36 "Zoram did take courage at the words which I spake [they sounded good to him]. Now Zoram was the name of the servant; and he promised that he would go down into the wilderness unto our father. Yea, and he also made an oath unto us [he enters the covenant] that he would tarry with us from that time forth." After that they didn't worry about him; they knew he wouldn't break his oath. "When Zoram had made an oath unto us, our fears did cease concerning him." He joined the community. The community was raided, and they were outlaws. The king and especially Laban had been out to get them. They chased them out, it says here. Verse 36: "Now we were desirous that he should tarry with us for this cause, that the Jews might not know concerning our flight into the wilderness [the police were after them], lest they should pursue us and destroy us." So Zoram couldn't go back and report. That would never do.

163 After Solomon there were the kingdoms of Israel and Judah. This was the kingdom of Judah. That's called the Judean Desert. [Jerusalem] is the Judean city, and David

is king of Judah. It's a national designation. It has nothing to do with religion actually. Judah was the fourth son of Jacob. They were divided into tribes, and his tribe settled there and had the city. The other tribes were around there. Lehi didn't belong to that tribe. He belonged to the tribe of Manasseh. He was descended from Joseph, as we find out later.

163,164      1 Nephi 5: 2-8    Here's another interesting touch in the next chapter. Remember, none of the people wanted to go. Nobody was on fire about this journey. Laman and Lemuel, of course, were flat against it. Nephi had to have a special revelation (Lehi had had plenty of them), and he had to persuade Sam to go. Now we see that Mama [Sariah] was against it from the beginning too. She didn't like it at all. She was filled with joy when they returned because [1 Nephi 5:2] "she had supposed that we had perished in the wilderness; and she also had complained against my father." Sariah is the worried Jewish mama here. She really tore into him. She complained, just like the boys did, that he was "a visionary man," APIQQEAH. (How can you trust in your crazy visions? Now what?) Verse 2: "Behold thou hast led us forth from the land of our inheritance, and my sons are no more, and we perish in the wilderness." You can hear her going on and on. She gave him a bad time until they finally came back again. Then there was great relief because they had come back. Then there was joy. "And after this manner of language had my mother complained against my father." She really worked on him. Nobody liked this trip. And his patient rejoinder is so typical: "I know that I am a visionary man" he says. "But behold [the tense is important here], I have obtained a land of promise." He already had it, you see. The promise is a promise. All things are present once you have made the transition—once you have accepted it. "I know that the Lord will deliver my sons out of the hands of Laban, and bring them down again unto us in the wilderness [don't worry, it's all right]. And after this manner of language did my father, Lehi, comfort my mother, Sariah" until they came back, and then, verse 7: "Behold their joy was full, and my mother was comforted. And she spake, saying: Now I know



of a surety [she had doubted all along] that the Lord hath commanded my husband to flee into the wilderness [until then she had been scolding him all along];... and after this manner of language did she speak.” He brings us into the family with these things going on.

164 1 Nephi 5:9-16 Then they rejoiced and offered their mizbeah. And notice what was in the plates. It was the Tanach he brought back. It wasn't just the plates of Moses. T is for Torah: that's the five books of Moses. N is for Nebffm, the prophets. And K is for the Ketubim, which are the literary works (like the Psalms) and the histories. They call the entire Old Testament the Tanach, and that's exactly what was in the bronze plates, as we read here. Notice verse 11: “And he beheld that they did contain the five books of Moses.” Verse 12: “And also a record of the Jews from the beginning [their complete history is there too], even down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah.” The inhabitants of Judah were Jews. Verse 13: “And also the prophecies of the holy prophets.” So it contained the prophecies of the holy prophets, a record of the Jews from the beginning right down to Zedekiah at the time they left, and the five books of Moses. It was the Tanakh. So the Nephites had the complete Bible. And also they had their genealogy, and Lehi found out that he was a descendant of Joseph. Why didn't he, who was an important rich man, have it? Well, these documents were very rare, and they were secret. He wouldn't have been able to get them. Laban was also a descendant of Joseph in a direct line. That's probably why they were in his house. But only one person at a time could receive these genealogical records; that was the direct descendant. In this case it happened to be Laban. Verse 17: “And now when my father saw all these things, he was filled with the Spirit, and began to prophesy concerning his seed—That these plates of brass should go forth unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people who were of his seed.”

164,165 This is an amazing thing. At that time the Old Testament was not in the possession of Jews. You couldn't have it because it was a secret book. The circulation was

very limited. The law was read publicly once a year, but only by the SOFERFM, the scribes and Pharisees. That's why they were so jealous of their rights. The SOFTNM were the ones who started interpreting the law in Babylon where they didn't have a temple. They got a proprietary claim. They called themselves the rabbis, which means "the great ones." It's their own title. The Talmud is full of the most outrageous boasting. You've never heard men who built themselves up as they did. They were absolutely insufferable, just like the scribes and Pharisees (a SOFINM is a "scribe") of the New Testament that the Lord had to face up to. But you didn't have a copy of the Bible in those days, and what's more, nobody but Judah could have it at all. It wasn't until the third century that Ptolemy had the seventy Jews come down. He was the king of Egypt and direct successor of Alexander the Great. He was a great and competent ruler, and he was collecting the greatest library in the world. We talked about Cyrus of Lydia and all the tyrants. They tried to build up their prestige by collecting big libraries. The bigger the library the better; it was better culture. As a rival to libraries in the North, Ptolemy wanted to have the largest library in the world. He thought he had every book on religion, but he was told, "There's one book you don't have, and that's the book of the Jews. So he ordered the seventy Jews to be brought back to Alexandria. He shut each one up in a special cubbyhole by himself and gave him a copy of the Old Testament to translate. Then he compared the translations. Of course, the story is that they were all word-for-word and letter-for-letter. We still have the Septuagint. That's why it's called the Septuagint: it was a translation by seventy Jews. By comparing them he knew that they were right. What's more, the Septuagint is far older than any Hebrew text we have. The oldest Hebrew text we have is the Ben Asher Codex from the ninth century A.D. We have the Greek text of the Old Testament from the third century B.C. We have that and we compare it.

165,166      1 Nephi 5:18-21 It's a very interesting thing. Remember, in Cave One was a complete copy of Isaiah, a thousand years older than any other Hebrew copy of Isaiah known. I could have brought it because I have a bound

copy. There are three thousand different readings of it, but they are mostly trivial readings, showing how marvelously well these scriptures have been handed down. But where there are differences, the Dead Sea Scrolls (the old, old ones) usually follow the Septuagint. And there are long passages from Isaiah in the Book of Mormon. Where they differ from our King James Bible, they follow the Septuagint, too. They follow the older text, so we have it here. But remember, nobody outside of Israel ever thought about the Old Testament. Ptolemy didn't even know about it, though he was a very learned man. He didn't know about it until a Jew in his court told him about it. So he got these seventy men and had it translated. But until then it was known only in Judah and only to a very select group of scribes who jealously guarded it. So when it [the Book of Mormon] says a thing like this: "That these plates of brass should go forth unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people" (1 Nephi 5:18), it is very shocking news. The copies were made in Alexandria. That's where we get our Septuagint. It spread throughout the whole world from there, and all the world has the Bible now. Nobody ever dreamed that this local, national record would become the world record. Verse 19: "Wherefore, he said that these plates of brass should never perish; neither should they be dimmed any more by time. And he prophesied many things concerning his seed." Notice, this doesn't refer to the Book of Mormon; this refers to the brass plates. They are still bright. They have come down to us, and we still have them to this day. He said the records were "of great worth unto us." Why did they need them on the trip? Verse 21: "... that we could preserve the commandments of the Lord unto our children" (the commandments in the prophets, in the writings, and in the book of Moses).

166 1 Nephi 6:5 Then he tells us he is going to give us an abbreviated account. "Wherefore, the things which are pleasing unto the world I do not write, but the things which are pleasing unto God and unto those who are not of the world" (1 Nephi 6:5). That's important. The Book of Mormon is not to be peddled for entertainment or TV fare. It's not meant to be diverting. Mark Twain said, "It's simply

chloroform in print.” Most people can’t even get through it; they think it’s the duller book in the world. We know it’s anything but that, but it isn’t written as a best seller. It isn’t written for the sake of the story or the thrills, though people are trying to build it up for that to make a quick buck. Today it goes on everywhere. When you pick up the Book of Mormon, you shift your mind into another gear especially. It’s not to relax; you have to make it a working force and really get going.

166,167      1 Nephi 7:1,2    Here they still have to take another trip back to Jerusalem. It was to get wives—”that his sons should take daughters [of Ishmael] to wife” (1 Nephi 7:1). They went straight to the house of Ishmael; they knew where they were going. Verse 2: “And my brethren, should again return unto the land of Jerusalem, and bring down Ishmael and his family into the wilderness.” Notice the name “Ishmael.” Remember, the great rival of Isaac was Ishmael. Ishmael claims the covenant. The Arabs [mostly Moslems] are from Ishmael. They claim that it was not Isaac who became the true heir of the covenant, but it was Ishmael. So there is always this fierce rivalry between the two peoples—not between them [Isaac and Ishmael]. They both buried Abraham together. I mentioned that at a meeting once when we had a lot of Arabs in the school—how Ishmael and Isaac were reconciled and were good friends. That hit some of the Arabs so hard that one of those boys went functionally blind. He just went wild. “Don’t tell us that Ishmael ever, ever made a concession to Isaac—a Jew! Absolutely not!” And he went crazy. As I said, he went functionally blind for two weeks and decided to drop the course. That wasn’t the course though; it was a talk I gave. The consul in Salt Lake City complained and said, “So many of those boys are having nervous breakdowns.” They recognized the Book of Mormon was their book, and what could they do about it? You go home and it means trouble; that’s not nice. Those Arabs don’t mess around, and they were good ones. This is what you have. Ishmael was a good Arab. Anyone with the name of “Ishmael” you can be sure is Arab.

167 1 Nephi 7:4,5 Lehi himself is of Manasseh. The rule among these people is that you must marry your BINT AMMY paternal uncle. Every girl must marry the brother of her father. It's very likely that Lehi and Ishmael were brothers because they were both of the tribe of Manasseh. Manasseh was the desert tribe. They lived way east of the Jordan out in the desert— Manasseh and Joseph. Manasseh was the wild one. Verse 4: "We went up unto the house of Ishmael, and we did gain favor in the sight of Ishmael, insomuch that we did speak unto him the words of the Lord." He listened because he was a righteous man. "And it came to pass that the Lord did soften the heart of Ishmael [that was necessary again; that's the way the Lord gets things done in the Book of Mormon: he always has to end up softening somebody's heart or nothing would move, and it's the same thing in our society] and also his household, insomuch that they took their journey with us down into the wilderness to the tent of our father."

167 Notice that they are not only willing but they are able to do it right then. They don't have to stay six weeks and get ready—settle their affairs, etc. Ishmael was ready to go. They went up to Ishmael's house; he was a desert man. Lehi himself was a merchant. When he was traveling in the desert on his trip, he saw the light on the rock. Then he staggered back home. But they make no fuss about the trip. We talk about the elaborate preparations of Nephi and that sort of thing. These people know how to get around, and certainly Ishmael did. He didn't hesitate apparently. This would be out of the question, of course, if the family were a settled family and not used to travel or anything like that, but they had that tradition.

168 1 Nephi 7:6,7 So they were willing and able, but the two sons of Ishmael changed their minds. "Two of the daughters of Ishmael, and the two sons of Ishmael and their families, did rebel against us." The daughters set it going; they did not want to leave town. The two sons of Ishmael sympathized with them. They put their heads together and decided, "No more, no more." Then Nephi had a chance to display his rhetorical skill again. He was going to persuade

them to stay with the group. Notice the line of argument he used: “They were desirous to return unto the land of Jerusalem.” Notice, the lands of their inheritance were not in the city of Jerusalem but far down where they went to get their property for Laban. The “land of Jerusalem” is a term that was used anciently. When it says, “Jesus will be born in the land of Jerusalem,” people make fun and say, “He was born in Bethlehem.” Well, Bethlehem is in the land of Jerusalem. It was anciently referred to as that. Bethlehem is a suburb. It’s just six miles south of Jerusalem, an easy walk.

168,169      1Nephi 7:8-14 This sounds like Nephi is a prude at the beginning, but he isn’t. These were very serious circumstances. Verse 8: “I spake unto them, saying, yea, even unto Laman and unto Lemuel: Behold [now he starts one of his lectures] ye are mine elder brethren [recognizes them with courtesy], and how is it that ye are so hard in your hearts, and so blind in your minds, that ye have need that I, your younger brother [you should be ashamed of yourselves; I’m not assuming anything; I shouldn’t be doing this], should speak unto you, yea, and set an example for you?” Is this tactless? No, this is no ordinary situation. First argument, EXHORTATIO “How is it that ye have forgotten that ye have seen an angel of the Lord?” Second argument: “How is it that ye have forgotten what great things the Lord hath done for us, in delivering us out of the hands of Laban [you just escaped Laban, and there was not one chance in a million of getting away with that], and also that we should obtain the record? Yea, and how is it that ye have forgotten that the Lord is able to do all things according to his will, for the children of men, if it so be that they exercise faith in him? ... [he is going on with his arguments]. And if it so be that we are faithful to him, we shall obtain the land of promise [these are the positive arguments]; and ye shall know at some future period that the word of the Lord shall be fulfilled concerning the destruction of Jerusalem [you don’t want to go back there]. ... For behold, the Spirit of the Lord ceaseth soon to strive with them; for behold, they have rejected the prophets, and Jeremiah [he knew what was going on in the city; here’s our Lachish business] have

they cast into prison. And they have sought to take away the life of my father, insomuch that they have driven him out of the land.” (Now what sort of a chance have we got there?)

169 1 Nephi 7:15-19 Then he said to them very tactfully after these arguments: All right, if you want to go back, you are perfectly welcome. I have no power over you; I'm your younger brother [paraphrased]. Verse 15: “And now, if ye have choice, go up to the land [go ahead], and remember the words which I speak unto you, that if ye go ye will also perish.” (Go ahead, and welcome.) They thought about that again. They became furious, tied him up, and left him behind to be devoured by the beasts. This is another common practice in the desert. You won't kill a person; that's murder. But if you tie him up and just leave him there, you don't have to worry. Let the animals carry it out. That's a custom you read about in the Arab poets, etc. The Lord gave him strength and he burst his bands. Prayer plus effort did it. He prayed with all his might and strained with all his might. Verse 18: “And it came to pass that when I had said these words, behold, the bands were loosed from off my hands and feet, and I stood before my brethren, and I spake unto them again.” He didn't consider this a miracle; he said nothing about it being miraculous. He just said that he prayed and he strained, and his bands were loosed. “And it came to pass that they were angry with me again” (They weren't overpowered at all).

169 1 Nephi 7 19 Then the daughters pleaded with them. The mother and one of the daughters pleaded with them. This is a thing that no Arab under any circumstance can resist. If a mother or daughter from another tribe pleads, you are under obligation—even if it is your worst enemy. It's the chivalric oath.

170 1 Nephi 8:1,2 Notice the beginning of the next chapter: “We had gathered together all manner of seeds of every kind, both of grain of every kind, and also of the seeds of fruit of every kind.” Does that mean a vegetarian diet? Were they going to live on seeds? No, they were

intending to settle somewhere. They were going to plant these and farm and establish a community. When they were told to cross the ocean, they were all just completely bowled over. But here, obviously, they were going to settle and make another community in the desert. There have been many, many of those. “Make straight his path in the wilderness” waiting for the coming of the Lord. Then again there is a very significant statement showing the levels of revelation you can have. Verse 2: “Behold, I have dreamed a dream; or, in other words, I have seen a vision.” What’s the difference between a dream and a vision? Well, you just have to know for yourself from the nature of the dream. This was a classic dream of dreams. Anti-Mormons have written saying, “Well, Joseph Smith, Sr., had a dream like this. Once he dreamed he was in the woods, and there were a lot of stumps there.” But this is the most common of dreams.

171 1 Nephi 8:5-11 He sees a man dressed in a white robe “and he came and stood before me.” This is a person who is going to be his guide. PARALEMPTOR is a classical word for the person who guides you through the ordinances of the temple. It is a man dressed in a white robe. He found himself in “a dark and dreary waste—PER UNA SELVA OSCURA—in a dark forest,” as Dante says. Then he came to a large and spacious field that opened out. That’s the MAYDAN which plays a very important part in mythology and dreams. The MAYDAN is a field of contest, an athletic field. Wherever you hold a chivalric contest, a fight or a display, that’s a MAYDAN. This is frankly a parable, an allegory. He says it is. Verse 10: “I beheld a tree, whose fruit was desirable to make one happy. . . . The fruit thereof was white, to exceed all the whiteness that I had ever seen. . . . It was desirable above all other fruit.” By that was a river of water. This is the Egyptian question, and you ask how literal is this. If you are in the desert what do you need to keep from perishing? You need food, of course. What will give it to you? Only a tree. You will die of thirst or hunger. You must have water and food. The tree will only grow where there is water.



171,172 Well, I have a picture here from the Dura-Europos Synagogue, the oldest Jewish building known in the world. It was discovered a few years ago and excavated at Dura-Europos on the Tigris, well into Asia there. It's a third-century synagogue, the oldest one known. Here is the tree of life, and it's bearing all sorts of fruit. Under it are Isaac [he probably means Jacob] and the twelve tribes of Israel. Here is Joseph blessing Ephraim and Manasseh, or Isaac blessing Jacob and Esau. Here are the Twelve. Here is the Orphic figure who is playing music of beautiful harmony. The tree is full of animals. There are birds and animals. All creatures are being fed on the fruit of the tree. This is the tree of life, and it is right over the main shrine (this is where the Shrine of the Torah was) of this very ancient synagogue—the oldest Jewish church we know of. Right over it is this tree of life with all the symbolism that is brought out by Nephi here. He is going to say that all creatures are fed on it. There's a picture of this in *Since Cumorah*. But the tree of life was a central thing. Nobody knew anything about this until about 1940 when the Dura-Europos was discovered. It told us all sorts of things about the Jews we didn't know before. But notice what an important position they give to the tree of life. Here are the twelve sons of Israel surrounding Jacob, or Israel. Then we come to the rod of iron. We will take it up at the tree next time.

# Lecture 12 1 Nephi 8-11

## **The Tree of Life** **[Coming of John The Baptist and the Messiah]** **[Vision of the Tree of Life]** **[White and Delightful Defined]**

173 1 Nephi 8:10-14 We were talking about that tree which is later explained as the Tree of Life. In 1 Nephi 8:10 he starts talking about the tree. We were pointing out the main shrine of the ancient synagogue at Dura-Europos the oldest Jewish remains in the world. Right above it is the Tree of Life, and it has Orpheus striking his lyre, bringing harmony into all things. This represents the love of God. The animals and birds are in the tree, and all are being fed from the fruit thereof. We will refer to that later. He goes on and talks about it here. In 1 Nephi 8:14 we read, “And I looked to behold from whence it came; and I saw the head thereof a little way off; and at the head thereof I beheld your mother Sariah, and Sam, and Nephi; and they stood as if they knew not whither they should go.”

174 1 Nephi 8:12,19 So Lehi beckoned to them and told them, This is the way, this is the way. Come over here [paraphrased]. They did, and he told them that they should partake of the fruit which was desirable above all fruit. He wanted Laman and Lemuel to come too, but they wouldn't do it. Then he beheld the famous rod of iron in 1 Nephi 8:19. What is the rod of iron? It's along the bank of the river, and it's something to hold on to so you won't fall in. There is a statement in the Midrash about this. The temple

mountain in Jerusalem has been flattened off artificially to make a place for the Dome of the Rock that stands there today, the great mosque of the Moslems. Before then it was really quite steep where the temple was originally built in the time of David, and in the Jebusite city. The sacred way that went up to the temple was steep and narrow and went zigzag up the side. You can see this in Athens at the Acropolis. The sacred ways always go up that way. It was slippery and it was on the rock. When it would storm, you could fall off—with old, feeble people, etc. So there was a railing that went up, and you could follow it. It was iron, and it rusted away in time. It was replaced with a wooden railing. They had to cling to the iron rod to get up to the temple so they wouldn't slip and fall on the rocks.

176 There was the strait and narrow path, and then the large and spacious building as if it had been a world, and everybody striving toward that. First there's the wide and spacious field, the MAYDAN. We mentioned the maydan before. That's a Persian word, but it goes back everywhere to the idea of MAYDAn, where the fortunes of men are settled in the world. Every battlefield, every field of jousting is a maydan, where you settle the affairs of the human race. You come together and counsel. There's the great assembly. It's described in the beginning of the Book of Abraham—the hill of Olishem by the plain where they all met for the sacrifice of Abraham.

176 1 Nephi 8:23 Then there rose a mist of darkness. These mists of darkness, Doughty tells us, are very common and terrifying. It's funny, the desert isn't the place where you would expect to find a mist of darkness, but you do. Many people have described this mist of darkness. This came and they got lost in it, "insomuch that they who had commenced in the path did lose their way, that they wandered off and were lost" (1 Nephi 8:23). That's the scene of the first Psalm, isn't it? The righteous man, as I mentioned before, is like a tree planted by a pool of water, which bears fruit in its time and its leaves never fall off. But that is not so with the wicked who are like dry, shriveled up vegetation that the wind blows away. Then it says, "For the

Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish” (Psalms 1:3-4, 6).

176,177      So many ancient Egyptian and Semitic words are related to English that, you will find, are not shared with any other language. Only with English. It’s a strange thing. English is an archaic language, and we speak it. It’s monosyllabic. Almost everything we say is just one-syllable words. No other language has worn down that far. We have no more case endings; we ignore them completely. We don’t even pay any attention to declensions. “He said it to my wife and I.” You couldn’t use worse English than that, but everybody says it. It’s horrible, but we’re not going to bother to say me anymore. We don’t decline things anymore.

177      1 Nephi 8:24-27      Anyway it’s interesting, “The way of the wicked shall perish,” [paraphrased] and it does here. They lose their way. Then the others came and “caught hold of the end of the rod of iron; and they did press forward through the mist of darkness [they had to have a support, something to guide them; it guides them and it supports them at the same time; it tells you where to go] clinging to the rod of iron, even until they did come forth and partake of the fruit of the tree” (1 Nephi 8:24). We are told that it rotted away, as iron will rust, and was replaced by a wooden railing later on. Then he cast his eyes on the other side of the river, and there was the great and spacious building. What a picture! “And it stood as it were in the air, high above the earth [the top floors were filled with people partying—it was a highrise] ... both old and young, both male and female; and their manner of dress was exceedingly fine; and they were in the attitude of mocking and pointing their fingers towards those ...”

178      1 Nephi 8:27      They were having a party [in Lehi’s vision] with exceedingly fine dresses and all the rest. They were making fun of the people who had partaken of the fruit. That wasn’t the thing to do, but the people in the city were always doing that. They call them the BAYT AL-SHA R. Of course, our people felt bedraggled, and they were ashamed of that. But it’s true that the distinction between

the BAYT AL-SHA'RAND the BAYT AL-HAJAR is very great, between the people who live in the houses of stone and the people who live in the desert. They look on the people who live in the desert as the people in the American West looked upon the Indians. They were Bedouins and wanderers—living upon the face of the earth, picking up what they could. So they made fun of them here [in 1 Nephi], and they were ashamed of that. They didn't want to be mocked anymore, so they wandered off and were lost.

178 1 Nephi 8:30-32 Continuing with 1 Nephi 8:30, "But, to be short in writing [very interesting], behold he saw other multitudes pressing forward; and they came and caught hold of the end of the rod of iron; and they did press their way forward, continually holding fast to the rod of iron, until they came forth and fell down and partook of the fruit of the tree [here are the two ways]. And he also saw other multitudes feeling their way towards that great and spacious building. [They came and couldn't cross the water and] were drowned in the depths of the fountain; and many were lost from his view, wandering in strange roads."

180 1 Nephi 8:32-35 This great and spacious building has to do with our religion, of course. We are all partying these days, and we want the expensive highrise and the rest of the things. So many were drowned (1 Nephi 8:32). "And great was the multitude that did enter into that strange building [that was the popular place] ... and they did point the finger of scorn at me and those that were partaking of the fruit also; but we heeded them not.... Because of these things which he saw in a vision, he exceedingly feared for Laman and Lemuel."

180 1 Nephi 9:1 Notice here in chapter nine he repeats it again: "And all these things did my father see, and hear, and speak, as he dwelt in a tent, in the valley of Lemuel." That was their base camp; they had been there a long time. They didn't intend to move until the Lord gave him a dream and told him to move. Notice, fourteen times in 1 Nephi it says, "My father dwelt in a tent." This makes it very specific that the style of their life was totally different.

180,181 Then he talks about these plates, a summary of other plates. The Lord has commanded him to make these plates, and he doesn't know why. But the Lord has commanded him to make them, and he is making these plates to put his record on. There are others, but this is the special one for us. Chapters ten, twelve and thirteen go together, and they are very important. Chapter ten sounds like familiar stuff to begin with. Don't fool yourself. This puts it all together; from beginning to end it is one story. This is the account of the Jews, and chapter twelve is the account of the New World version—a summary of what is going to happen in the New World version. Chapter thirteen is the world-wide version, what's going to happen in all the rest of the world. So first we have the Jews. Then we have the people in the New World, including the Gentiles. Then we have the whole world embraced in this. Remember, we started with the Brass Plates as a little tiny speck. Even Lehi, who was an important man and a very religious man, didn't own a copy of the Bible. There was just this one copy he had to get from Laban, and it was worth "stealing" to get it. So it all starts out with this little tiny point of light, and it says that these plates shall never grow dim again, and they (the Old Testament) shall finally come to the entire world. As we said, it was the Tanakh. It had the Torah, the prophets, and the histories, and the literary writings (the Kethubim). But why aren't the literary writings there? Why isn't Esther there? And Tobit and all those writings? Because they were not found in the [Old Testament]. They come long after the time of Lehi. Joseph Smith was very smart not to get sucked in on that one, wasn't he? No, there's none of that—just the histories, not the literary writings. There's lots of poetry. The Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiastes and the like are later, and they come from the schools.

181 1 Nephi 10:2,3 Notice that this chapter [1 Nephi 10] is what happened to the Jews. "He spake unto them concerning the Jews," it says in the second verse. [Nephi] puts it all together here, and the Dead Sea Scrolls certainly vindicate the necessity of this indispensable chapter. From the beginning to the ending it is all one history. This is the

theme of chapter ten, and it's a grandiose prospect, the same as we find in those other two chapters. So we'll go through it. The next step was that they should be destroyed. After that they would be carried away captive to Babylon—which happened. And they would return—which they did, of course—"and possess again the land." Then six hundred years later "a prophet would the Lord God raise up among the Jews—even a Messiah, or in other words, a Savior of the world [this is Jesus; John the Baptist is mentioned later]. ... How great a number had testified of these things, concerning this Messiah ... or this Redeemer of the world. Wherefore, all mankind were in a lost and in a fallen state, and ever would be save they should rely on this Redeemer."

181 1 Nephi 10:6 This is the peculiar situation. As I said, there was just this one point of light. The book came into the possession of Lehi, and then just one lone family was to carry the whole civilization, the whole culture, to the New World where it was to last for a thousand years. Notice, the Lord works with very small centers, and it's the same thing here. What about the rest of the human race? This [verse 6] is the rest of the human race. All mankind were in a lost and fallen state and would be forever if they didn't rely on the Redeemer—and how few people knew about the Redeemer. Without the Atonement we are not going anywhere, and nobody in the world knew about the Atonement. How few people know about it today. Isn't that a strange thing? The first words of the Lord to Joseph Smith when he spoke to him in the grove, after he had introduced himself were: "The world at this time lieth in sin, and there is none that doeth well, no not one. Mine anger is kindled against the inhabitants of the earth to visit them according to this ungodliness." That sounds pretty grim, so it was swept under the rug. It dates from 1831 and was older by far than any other account we had of the First Vision. It was written from the dictation of the Prophet by Frederick G. Williams, and the Lord speaks in the first person. In the version we have from later on (the Wentworth Letter, etc) it says, "He told me this and he told me that." But this is what he actually said. Why shouldn't we have embraced that? Somebody doesn't like it. I don't know. The world

doesn't like this story, and they reject it.

182 1 Nephi 10:7 Then John the Baptist in verse 7: “And he spake also concerning a prophet who should come before the Messiah, to prepare the way of the Lord.” That was John the Baptist to prepare and make straight his way in the wilderness. He follows the Dead Sea Scrolls condition very closely, as you know. Why is he so important? He is the link, as we read in Luke, which begins with two righteous people—both direct descendants of Aaron— Elizabeth and Zachariah, doing their stint in the temple. He had to go just a few days a year to do his service in the temple. They lived in the country, out in the hills, and he came in to serve. He went into the Holy of Holies to get things ready, and there he saw an angel. No one had seen an angel in four hundred years. Of course, he was struck dumb; he was absolutely terrified. The same angel went to Mary. Then Zachariah announced that his son would come and turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, etc. He announced the birth of John the Baptist. So the gospel began in the Meridian of Times with the Angel Gabriel introducing himself and coming to John the Baptist. It's good that Gabriel should come to John the Baptist because his work was to baptize and turn the hearts of the fathers to the children. The fathers were dead. Then it goes on that they who sat in darkness should see a great light there in the underworld. There was the chance to work for the dead. Of course, Gabriel is Noah, as Joseph Smith said. Who is better to administer the “water works” than Noah and John the Baptist? They are together in this operation. But the necessity and importance of baptism are being emphasized here. So he went forth in the wilderness to make straight the paths of the Lord. This is the link, you see.

182 1 Nephi 10:9 “And my father said he should baptize in Bethabara [he is telling about John the Baptist here] and ... that he should baptize the Messiah with water. [And the gospel would be preached among the Jews then.] ... concerning the gospel which should be preached among the Jews. ... And after they had slain the Messiah, who should come, and after he had been slain he should rise



from the dead, and should make himself manifest, by the Holy Ghost, unto the Gentiles." Notice, the best people he could come to, his chosen, wouldn't accept him at all. What is the Lord throwing the gospel away on us for? Talk about pearls before swine. Nobody wants it, nobody accepts it, nobody understands it. It's a very puzzling thing that's going on here.

182,183      1 Nephi 10:14 Then he talks about the olive tree on which the fifth chapter of Jacob goes into detail. The olive, as you know, is the immortal tree. There are olives in Athens and olives in Jerusalem which were growing in the time of Lehi. They live as long as redwoods or anything else because you can't kill them when you trim them down and cut everything off. When there was a raid and the city was destroyed and burned down, the olives would start growing again. So it was a miraculous tree of life. It had inextinguishable life in it. You find these two-thousand-year-old olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane. They are immense because they just keep putting out shoots and growing. What's more they can always be grafted. We will talk about that when we come to Jacob, if we ever get to Jacob. He talks about that. Verse 14: "The natural branches of the olive-tree, or the remnants of the house of Israel should be grafted in [you can graft anything onto an olive tree] or come to the knowledge of the true Messiah, their Lord and their Redeemer. And after this manner of language [using the olive tree as an image, etc.]... I have written as many of them [these things] as were expedient for me in mine other book." So if you want to find out about that, I recommend you go to the library and ask for Nephi's other book.

183,184      1 Nephi 10:17-21; Abraham 2:12 He saw in a vision "the things which he spake by the power of the Holy Ghost." You notice what he is talking about here: Time, place, and culture are no object, as experience has shown. The gospel is the same whether you introduce it to the Hopis, the Moslems, the Icelanders, or Nigerians, or whoever it is. You may preach to all of those and you will find the gospel has the same response in all of them. It's amazing that we

don't have to adapt ourselves to their culture at all. Just preach the gospel to them and they embrace it. They can keep their culture too as far as that goes. I know devout Moslems who are equally enthusiastic in embracing the gospel. There's no reason why they shouldn't be. Notice in verse 17 that this is universal: "I, Nephi, was desirous also that I might see, and hear, and know of these things, by the power of the Holy Ghost, which is the gift of God unto all those who diligently seek him, as well in times of old as in the time that he should manifest himself unto the children of men. For he is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; and the way is prepared for all men" (1 Nephi 10:17-18). See, this universal now; he is not talking about only the Jews. He sees it breaking loose through the Jews and going to all the world. In Abraham it's the same thing: "All those who diligently seek him." Remember, that was Abraham's great merit. In Abraham 2:12 he says, "Thy servant has sought thee earnestly; now I have found thee." Abraham sought diligently first and then found. "The way is prepared for all men from the foundation of the world, if it so be that they repent and come unto him. For he that diligently seeketh shall find; and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them [making no distinction], by the power of the Holy Ghost [the Holy Ghost is free to minister to anybody who makes himself eligible no matter where you are], as well in these times as in times of old, and as well in times of old as in times to come; wherefore, the course of the Lord is one eternal round [this is a cosmic thing]. Then continuing with verse 21: "Wherefore, if ye have sought to do wickedly in the days of your probation [this is the first mention of the days of probation in the Book of Mormon, which is often mentioned, and it speaks volumes, of course], then ye are found unclean [and you can't possibly dwell with God].... And the Holy Ghost giveth authority that I should speak these things, and deny them not."

184 1 Nephi 11:1 The first verse of chapter 11 gives the steps by which you solve any problem. The solution to any great problem, whether it's nuclear power or anything you want to solve, is found through these steps in the first verse. First, you desire to know. In the Eyring Building they

have how the TV was invented—the first steps by which you get something. The first and most important question was not asked. The first thing they asked was, “Is there a demand for it? Will it make a profit?” The first thing you should ask is, “Will it do more harm than good?” But how can you know? “For it came to pass after I had desired to know the things that my father had seen...” First you have to desire to know; then you have to believe that it can be done. People gave up on the atom because they didn’t know it could be split, but once Rutherford had done it at least half the difficulty had been overcome. Then everybody jumped on the problem because they knew there was a solution. That was the greatest obstacle. It had never been done; it was theoretical and probably could never be done. But as soon as it was done, the biggest part of the problem was solved. So if you believe it can be solved, that’s the most important step. “And believing that the Lord was able to make them known unto me ...” Then what do you do? You sit pondering. You size the problem up from various situations. You research and do everything you can. You sit pondering, and if you keep pondering, suddenly (this is the only way you will get it; you can’t ponder it into existence) you will have a flash of insight. Suddenly you will get the bright idea. It’s something over which you have no control, according to all great scientists and inventors. It just comes to you as a flash after you have been working on the problem, maybe for years. Then it comes. So this is the way it comes to Nephi here. First you desire; then you are sure it can be done, the Lord can do it. Then you work it out in your own mind: “... pondering in mine heart.”

184,185      1 Nephi 11:1-6 Then “I was caught away in the Spirit of the Lord, yea, into an exceedingly high mountain.” Here’s the solution. We think of all sorts of high mountains of revelation: the Mount of Transfiguration, the Mount of Olives, the ancient Ziggurat on which the king went up to make contact with heaven, the pyramid which was the holy mountain in Egypt, and the mountain of the Lord’s house in the Bible. The temple is on the mountain of the Lord’s house. There’s the Acropolis, the capitol, the highest place. You go up to the top of a mountain because people [generally] don’t go up on an exceedingly high mountain. The Mount of Transfiguration is the most notable because it is high. Nobody ever went up there. You’re removed and aloof from

the world; you're by yourself, etc. That's the place to have it. And this is an exceedingly high mountain he had never seen before. So he's caught up here. What we are talking about is another dimension. When you have a vision like this one here, you are in another dimension. All you can do is describe it. He says that this is going to be largely just metaphors to try to make you realize the sort of thing he is talking about. Notice he says, "upon which I never had before set my foot." Well, is it real or isn't it? "And the Spirit said unto me: Behold, what desirest thou? And I said: I desire to behold the things which my father saw. Then the next step, "Do you believe it?" He replied, "Yes, I believe it." Then "the Spirit cried with a loud voice, saying: Hosanna to the Lord." This is the most exciting experience anyone can have when suddenly there is a breakthrough, and this is it. The voice of the Spirit cried, Well, we've got somebody qualified here; hosanna, three cheers to the most high God, and you shall behold them [paraphrased]. You believe it, you are qualified, and this is the answer.

185,186      1 Nephi 11:6 "Thou shalt behold the things which thou hast desired. And behold this thing shall be given unto thee for a sign. . . Thou shalt also behold a man . . . and ye shall bear record that it is the Son of God. And it came to pass that the Spirit said unto me: Look! And I looked and beheld a tree [now he is being shown things; he sees a tree]... exceeding of all beauty; and the whiteness thereof did exceed the whiteness of the driven snow [this whiteness is mentioned throughout the Book of Mormon; we will see it right in this same chapter here]. Notice, this is another dimension. You would think the fruit would be at least orange, pink, rosy, or some tempting color. Nobody wants to eat snow—white fruit. Verse 10: "And he said unto me: What desirest thou?" As Nephi spoke to him, "he was in the form of a man; yet nevertheless, I knew that it was the Spirit of the Lord [now we are using some sort of double talk; as I said, we are in another dimension]; and he spake unto me as a man speaketh with another." And he says, "Look," and "I beheld a virgin, and she was exceedingly fair and white." Why do they use white? Well, I just went to the dictionary to consult white. I could think of a lot of

[synonyms], but they think of a lot more here. In Arabic there's an expression that means, "may God cheer him," or "may God show him favor." Literally, it says, "BAYYAD ALLAHU, may God whiten his countenance." Another one is, "he is white of face," which simply means, "he is of good character," or "he is a good person." In the Book of Mormon it says the Nephites were "white and delightsome" and the others were "dark and loathsome." It means white in this sense, in the sense of good character. But it is the regular word for white. You ask for the AL-BAYAD, who is the white man of the place? That means the "foremost man, the most respected man." If he is white, he is most respected. What are AYYAM AL-BAYAD, "days of whiteness?" They are "happy days, days of prosperity." I guess it would be the BELIYE NOCHI in Moscow, "the white nights."

186 Then this is an interesting thing: Here is YAD BAYDA\*. BAYDA is the regular feminine. (Colors are always a defective form.) It means "the white hand," which means BENEFICENCE, power, favor, merit, glory. And there are two kinds of men. The human race is divided into AL-SUDANU and AL-BAYDANU. The SUDANU are the black ones, and the BAYDANU are the white ones. Well, that wouldn't be natural in a culture where people are either outdoors or indoors. You know in Greek paintings, of which we have thousands, all the men, being outdoors, are always painted a dark bronze; and all the women, staying indoors and keeping white lead on their faces, are always white. It's a cultural thing with members of the same race. So we get this idea of the contrast between the good guys and the bad guys, called black and white. This is important, this white business.

166 And here's a regular word for woman, MAR A. A HIJIR is a curtain indoors, the apartment for woman. A woman is one who does not go outdoors and get in the hot sun. But the regular word for woman is MAR^A. As I said, the HIJIR is the veil, the HARIM, "the inner part of the house." It could be the kitchen or anything else. It's just not going outdoors, with the two cultures. But it's a cultural thing whether you are black or white—the whole

thing, cultural and moral. But “black and white” are the universal words to use for “good and bad.”

186,187      1 Nephi 11:15 So we go merrily on our way here: This virgin was “exceedingly fair and white.” It doesn’t mean she was leprous or anything like that; of course not. This is the expression it was using: “fair and white” would go together. Verse 15: “And I said unto him: A virgin most beautiful and fair above all other virgins.” Again, you see the other dimensions. This “is the mother of the Son of God, after the manner of the flesh.” That “Son of God” has been inserted. We used to use in this class Wilford Wood’s printing of the first edition of the Book of Mormon, so everybody had a first edition. It was more helpful. We got rid of it because it is not divided into verses, so it is very hard to locate things in it. It’s just a straight story, but it reads much better that way. You can still get it. It’s called Joseph Smith Begins His Work, Volume I, the Wilford Wood series. It didn’t say, “mother of the Son of God;” it said “mother of God.” And, of course, throughout the Book of Mormon Jesus Christ is God. He is the Lord and the Creator. (There would be a quibble about this sort of thing.) When he came down to earth, he still had his status, but he was born of a mother. This became a great controversy between the sects of the Eastern and Western churches. The Eastern church asked, “Should we use that expression ‘mother of God’ or not?” The idea that God could have a mother is very offensive when you consider [believe] that God is like nothing you can possibly imagine. But God for us is not like nothing you can possibly imagine. He has been carried away in the Spirit, in the next verse, which means he is in this other dimension.

187      1 Nephi 11:21-25 “And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God [of course, it wasn’t a real lamb], yea, even the Son of the Eternal Father! Knowest thou the meaning of the tree which thy father saw? [notice, ‘do you know the meaning’—it’s an allegory; this isn’t a real tree, or is it?].... It is the love of God, which sheddeth itself abroad in the hearts of the children of men.” That’s what we have in this picture. The person is striking the lyre to bring

harmony to all nature with the animals and the birds—showering its favor above the altar in the temple here. They didn't have an altar or a temple; they had the scroll of the law there. Yes, this is what the meaning of the tree is: "it is the love of God,... wherefore, it is the most desirable above all other things." That's why the fruit is so desirable; it is the love of God. But then he tells us in verse 25 that the waters also represent the love of God,... which waters are a representation of the love of God." This is another allegory.

187 1 Nephi 11:26,32; 1 Nephi 9 "Behold the condescension of God!" Remember, the world is absolutely out of it. Nobody accepts this, and nobody understands it. What a strange thing to work in a vacuum like that! What's going on, one begins to ask. That's what we have the Book of Mormon for. "Behold the condescension of God" to work with such people. "And I looked and beheld the Redeemer of the world, of whom my father had spoken; and I also beheld the prophet [John] who should prepare the way before him.... And I also beheld twelve others following him." In 1 Nephi 1:9 Lehi had that dream too in his ascension vision. He saw the angels descending to minister to men and "beheld the Lamb of God going forth among the children of men." And what happened to him? At last he visits the children of men, and he is completely rejected. He can't get anywhere. Remember, even the apostles all fled and left him at this time. Verse 32: "He was taken by the people; yea, the Son of the everlasting God was judged of the world; and I saw and bear record." It really happened. If his own people did this, He would have been wasted on the rest of the human world. That's why an absolute atonement is necessary with no strings attached. Because if anybody could be disqualified for atonement for any reason, we would all be out in the cold. The Atonement is absolute; it covers everything—even whether you want it or not. We will get to that later. He was lifted up on the cross, and the multitudes of the earth were gathered together against the apostles. They were wiped out.

187,188 1 Nephi 11:35 "And I beheld that they were in a large and spacious building.... Behold the world and the

wisdom thereof [that's what the building stands for]; yea, behold the house of Israel hath gathered together to fight against the twelve apostles of the Lamb." Who has gathered together to fight against the twelve apostles? The house of Israel, of all things. Verse 36: "The great and spacious building was the pride of the world; and it fell, and the fall thereof was exceedingly great. And the angel of the Lord spake unto me again saying: Thus shall be the destruction of all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, that shall fight against the twelve apostles of the Lamb."



# Lecture 13 1 Nephi 12-14

**Nephi's Vision**  
**[Passion in the Book of Mormon]**  
**[Book of Mormon a Sad Story]**  
**[Wide Gulf Between Two Ways of Living]**  
**[Survey of History]**  
**[Only Two Churches]**  
**[Documents Buried at the Hand of the Lord]**

190 We were noting that chapter ten of 1 Nephi deals with the Jews. Chapter eleven does something else. Chapter twelve deals with the New World version—Israel in the New World, the Book of Mormon people. Chapter thirteen deals with the Gentiles and the whole world; it takes the world view. But that eleventh chapter, as we noticed, is a sort of other dimension. It removes the veil and gives us a brief glimpse of another universe of discourse, some place where everything is very different.

190 It occurred to me this morning that every speech in the Book of Mormon, and there are many, is passionate. It's passionate speech; there's nothing that isn't. The Book of Mormon is trying all out to get through to us, you see. After all, it was hand-delivered by an angel. "Well," you say, "that's a hard one to take." All right, look into the book and then decide something or other. What does this reflect? This isn't just a faded negative or something like that. This is a series of brilliant little vignettes in which we can look right through, like into an Easter peep show. We

can look through and see a world of long ago, but it's a very well-documented world. It's unmatched for contemporary literature now, so we can check on this when Joseph gives us these pictures of things that were going on. There is something extra here when the Book of Mormon passion wants to get through to us. It keeps saying, "This is for you, and you had better pay attention. You haven't got much time."

191 1 Nephi 12:1-3 So we come to 1 Nephi 12, the New World version. Verse 1: "And I looked and beheld the land of promise." Of course, now you expect the happy land; it's the land of promise. Remember, Lehi said, "I have obtained a land of promise," just after he left Jerusalem. But what picture do we see? The next verse immediately throws cold water on all our hopes for the rosy land of promise. "And it came to pass that I beheld multitudes gathered together to battle, one against the other; and I beheld wars, and rumors of wars, and great slaughters with the sword among my people." Is this the promised land? Is this the place of security? It goes right on: "I beheld many generations pass away [do they settle down to a blissful existence alawato? Oh, no] after the manner of wars and contentions in the land; and I beheld many cities, yea, even that I did not number them."

191 1 Nephi 12:4,5 Then it goes on, and we get a mist of darkness. Could this be pollution or nuclear winter or something like that? This is a depressing picture; notice the next verse. It's a mist of darkness. Of course, this is the great destruction that took place at the time of the Crucifixion. There were earthquakes and mountains tumbling and cities sunk and burned with fire, and many that tumbled to earth. That's described in another part of the Book of Mormon, if we ever get to that. But it is a very accurate description of an earthquake that registers eight on the Richter scale, all the details and things that happened. We won't go into that now, but this is what he saw. This was the picture at that time. Then he saw a "vapor of darkness, that it passed from off the face of the earth."

191,192      1 Nephi 12:5-10; Exodus 17:12 Then he saw multitudes. After the mist of darkness, we get this vapor of darkness. What's a vapor? It's a mixture of dust, maybe nuclear particles, cloud mist, rain, etc., if it is nuclear winter. Whatever it is, it's a vapor of darkness that passed from the face of the earth. Then he saw multitudes. When the cloud cleared, everybody was just lying there fallen because of the terrible judgments of the Lord. That may be a later episode than verse 4 which describes the great earthquakes at the time of Christ. "And it came to pass after I saw these things [then he sees another such occasion] I saw the vapor of darkness." When that passed away, he saw everybody pretty sick. Then the heavens opened and the Lamb of God descended. "The Holy Ghost fell upon twelve others," and then the disciples of the Lamb. Then he talks about the Twelve Apostles, so this is the time of the Nephites that he is discussing here. The Jews had the Twelve Apostles. They are never called apostles in the Book of Mormon. He explains that here. Notice in verse 10 he calls them "twelve ministers" because the apostles, we are told, shall judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Do they duplicate them over here? No, they are never called apostles here; they are called disciples. You saw in the Dead Sea Scrolls that they had to have a council of twelve and a presidency of three. The Jews already had that. This was part of the ancient order of things because they had twelve tribes and each tribe was represented in the temple. Now the new Temple Scroll makes it very clear that everything is done in terms of twelve tribes and the presidency. Moses had Aaron and Hur supporting his hands on either side [Exodus 17:12], and so it happens.

192      1 Nephi 12:9 There's a very interesting, many-volume work [Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period] by Erwin Goodenough on ancient Jewish symbols. It has come out that a very common feature of the earliest Jewish symbols is that whenever the Lord comes, he is always accompanied by two others. In Genesis 18 when the Lord appears, Abraham sees three men waiting in front of his tent. He knew that one was the Lord, and he said, "My Lord, I'm not worthy to have you here as my guest." The Lord

comes as three. But here are the Twelve Apostles; in other words, we have a pattern here that is being followed, not just once. Verse 9: “And he said unto me: Thou rememberest the twelve apostles of the Lamb? Behold they are they who shall judge the twelve tribes of Israel; wherefore, the twelve ministers of thy seed shall be judged of them; for ye are of the house of Israel. [See, the Twelve Apostles shall judge the twelve ministers or disciples of the Nephites; they are down on the list there too.] And these twelve ministers whom thou beholdest shall judge thy seed.... And I looked, and beheld three generations pass away in righteousness; ... these are made white in the blood of the Lamb, because of their faith in him.”

192,193      1 Nephi 12:16,18 But the fourth generation went bad, as we know. In four or five thousand years of history here—including the Jaredites, which are much older, I believe, than that—there were only three or four generations of righteousness when the people were living as they should. This is an amazing thing. How can it possibly be that out of all the inhabitants of the earth only one little handful are righteous? In all that period of time only a few generations were fit. This is the oddest thing. I’m supposed to be getting [preparing] something now on the Atonement, and nobody knows anything about the Atonement. It’s very interesting. How is it possible? Well, you ask a simple question: How is it possible for everybody in the world to go around in complete ignorance of the fact that the earth is a sphere? How can everybody in the world not know that we are in a galaxy which is part of a system of innumerable galaxies? Nobody knew that when I was a kid. I mean there are vitally important things that nobody in the world knows. Apparently, nobody misses them. The Lord doesn’t seem to make them known. But don’t be surprised if the Gospel has very few takers, if it is “only one of city and two of a tribe,” as the Lord told his apostles. That’s all you’ll get. All the Lord does here is establish a cadre. That’s what we have in the temple— people that do the work for all the rest of them. After all, the work of baptism that was revealed to John the Baptist was primarily for the dead because the unbaptized dead outnumber the living a thousand to one.

The work has to be done for them. That's why the angel said to Zacharias when he was to become the father of John the Baptist, "He shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.\*" The fathers were already dead, and the work of John the Baptist was to baptize them. Then he said, "Those who sit in darkness shall see a great light." That's the work that is going to deliver them—the preaching to the spirits in prison.

193 1 Nephi 12:15; Moses 7:36; D & C 21:39 So we have here the Twelve and the three generations that pass in righteousness. But it's a weary and sad story. Nobody seems to catch on here. The Book of Mormon is sad. It begins on a sad note and ends on a sad note, and we are in the middle. And yet it is the most joyful of documents. All the verses balance each other. As we noticed before, the "apocalypse of bliss" balances the "apocalypse of woe" throughout. If it's bad, it's also good. We'll get more of the good part; we should one of these times. I guess it's the rainy weather that makes one feel gloomy, isn't it? Note in verse 15 that they are equally wicked: "I looked and beheld the people of my seed gathered together in multitudes against the seed of my brethren; and they were gathered together in battle." If you read something like the ninth chapter of Moroni, you will see they are absolutely equal. He says that one is just as bad as the other, unless perhaps the Nephites are a little worse because they should be better. Mormon says the same thing, "Behold, among all the wickedness of the Lamanites it is not so great as among thy brethren." But remember what the Lord told Enoch. He said, "Wherefore, I can stretch forth mine hands and hold all the creations which I have made. . . . [this is a real shocker], and among all the workmanship of mine hands there has not been so great wickedness as among thy brethren" (Moses 7:36). So in worlds without number this is number one, the worst. Well, this means we are in a real test. If we can pass this one, we shoot right ahead to the top. That's really the impression that's given. We have been building up to this final test so that so much depends on it. It's win all or lose all on this one thing: Will you be able to behave yourself if you are given great authority and

not start acting like Genghis Khan because you are the head of a committee or something like that? Can you be trusted? We will all be saved, but who will be safe? Who can be trusted? That's what the Lord is going to find out here, and very few can be. In Doctrine and Covenants 121:39 we are told, "We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion." It is in the nature of almost all men that as soon as they get a little authority, as they think, they begin to exercise unrighteous dominion. That's in our nature.

194 1 Nephi 12:16-18 So they were gathered together to battle. Then [in verse 16] there's the fountain of filthy water. He said it represented "the depths of hell. And the mists of darkness are the temptations of the devil." And the broad roads on which they are lost. Of course, there is the fear of everyone in the desert of getting lost because it's a terrible place to get lost, and there's no way to find yourself. It's a horrible place. That's the one thing that everybody feared because it was utterly waterless. Remember, it tells us where they turned east, and Joseph Smith said it was the nineteenth parallel—almost south-southeast there, taking them to the Empty Quarter. The whole trip took eight years because of the long stops. For example, they must have spent about a year at the Waters of Laman in the Valley of Lemuel. Notice verse 18: "And the large and spacious building [that's a Ghumdan, you see] ... is vain imaginations and the pride of the children of men"—with their partying and their importance, etc. It's interesting that this is allegory, but it has a physical embodiment. It isn't all just allegory, just a symbol of something to be taken as an abstract and to be understood spiritually.

194,195 Incidentally, which is more specific—what is scientific or what is spiritual? You think of spirits as not being more actual, more real. We say science is, but that's not so. A scientific test is physical and tangible, but it's second hand. You can only interpret it second hand. It depends on your interpretation. With an atom chamber

or a cyclotron, when the particle is cracked, little trails go off in all directions. But they don't mean anything until somebody interprets them. The first-hand information means nothing. It's second hand. You interpret it, and then you argue about what it means. But it's so in all the effects of gravity, whatever it is. But a spiritual experience is something that you feel in yourself. You experience it in yourself, so it is direct. You can't deny that. That's why you can't get away with denying the Holy Ghost. When we say "spiritual," it's a thing we never define at all. We never bother to define it. We use it a lot and kick it around a lot. We get away with murder because we say, "Well, this is a spiritual thing; we just observe it spiritually." You know what is spiritual: the spiritual is a direct experience. These things that the Book of Mormon talks about are the direct experience. As I said, all the speeches are passionate. They are trying to get in contact with you. That's why the Book of Mormon feels so intimate, and it converts people. They don't know why they are being reached because every man who talks in there is not only speaking from the heart but he is trying to reach somebody. He knows this is being directed to people in another time and another place, and he is going all out trying to reach them. So it reaches out, and there is this feeling of warm intimacy in every passage in the Book of Mormon. It's not cold and abstract. It not like history, even of the Old Testament. You feel the urgency and the personal concern. Everybody who writes in the Book of Mormon is passionate because he has a personal concern for the person he is writing to—and that's you. If it comes into your hands, you have been blessed with that.

195 1 Nephi 12:18 He talks about the large and spacious building and "the pride of the children of men. And a great and terrible gulf divideth them." There it is again. It is a figure of speech, an image. Nothing could better describe it; there is a great and terrible gulf between two different ways of living. There is nothing in common between them at all. You can't breach it; there's this great gulf between them. If you are on the one side, there are very few people. The whole world is on one side now. I wonder if we can see anybody over on the other side calling to us? Clement of

Rome was the first writer after the New Testament. He wrote about A.D. 85-95, in the first century. In the epistle called 1 Clement, he compares himself to a man who is standing on a headland all alone. He sees a swimmer swimming out to sea and says, “You fool, come back before it’s too late [he’s talking about the Church]. The time will come when it will be too late to repent, when you can’t do it. Come back now.” Of course, all seven Apostolic Fathers have no hope at all. They all ring down the curtain on the ancient Church, but at a very early time. That’s a very important point that we are going to come to very soon here—that the curtain was rung down on the early Church already in the second century. The second century, instead of being the “age of faith” is known as the “age of heresy” because there were a hundred heresies. Everybody had his own church. Immediately it broke up when the Apostles went away. Well, we may get to that in a minute, but let’s go on and see what is happening here.

195,196      1 Nephi 12:19-21; 1 Nephi 2:23 So there’s this great and terrible gulf. Verse 19: “And while the angel spake these words, I beheld and saw that the seed of my brethren did contend against my seed ... and because of the pride of my seed.” That’s the promise. In 1 Nephi 2:23 he says, Remember, you have nothing to fear from the Lamanites at all as long as you behave yourself. They are there to stir you up unto remembrance. I want them breathing down your neck. You will never solve your questions by fighting them [paraphrased]. “Because of the pride of my seed”—they were the ones that brought it on themselves every time. Verse 20: “And it came to pass that I beheld, and saw the people of the seed of my brethren that they had overcome my seed.” Our side loses here. They are proud of their pride, incidentally. Then they [the Lamanites] gathered in multitudes and there were “wars and rumors of wars among them; and ... I saw many generations pass away.” See, the Lamanites and the mixture of people that were left went right on fighting, as we are told in the Book of Mormon. In Moroni’s last words he said, They are still fighting; I have no idea when the war will end. It is going on indefinitely. They are fighting each other now [paraphrased]. Verse 22: “Behold these shall dwindle



in unbelief.” And, of course, they did. Would God allow this in the promised land? I ask myself. “They became a dark, and loathsome, and a filthy people, full of idleness and all manner of abominations.” Notice, they became that way. It wasn’t a miraculous change overnight. It is never referred to in that sense. It’s a cultural thing. We will get much more on that, incidentally.

196 1 Nephi 13:3-5 Now in 1 Nephi 13 of the Book of Mormon the panorama unfolds here. This is the worldwide view of it, the modern world. He beheld many nations and kingdoms. Verse 3: “These are the nations and kingdoms of the Gentiles.... I saw among the nations of the Gentiles the formation of a great church.” Now, what is this church? I just said that the great apostasy came in the second century; the scriptures were completely corrupted by then. This is long before the Roman [Catholic] church became the leading church. The Roman church was “small potatoes” at that time. It wasn’t until the fourth century that they took over. You must not identify this just with the Roman Catholic Church. People do because that’s a simplistic answer. But there [was] a lot going on in the world that we don’t know anything about. That’s what this chapter tells us, all the way through. Don’t oversimplify. Don’t try to figure it out, as far as that goes.

196 1 Nephi 13:6 Here’s what goes on; it tells us here. Verse 6: “I beheld this great and abominable church.” Revelation 8 [18] says that the abominable church is Babylon. He describes in chapter 18 the people who set their hearts on these things. Verse 8: “Behold the gold, and the silver, and silks, and scarlets, and fine-twined linen.” In the Book of Revelation John describes this [see Revelation 18:12]. Remember, he [Lehi] says the book he saw was John. John is the only New Testament character [writer] mentioned in the Book of Mormon. But he describes these things in terms of a great department store. He goes down the departments—the linens, the fine things, and the slaves. Everything is for sale. It’s quite a brilliant display, and these are the things that make Babylon. This is the “great and abominable.” Of course, there was no Roman

church in the time of John when he wrote those things. But all the high church people want these things, whether it's Greek, Armenian, Russian Orthodox—or the Bakkers, or people like Bob Schuller who build their crystal palaces and things like that. Then it mentions the many harlots. Well, they are all up to that, it would seem. He is talking about this sort of thing—the vanity of the world. What we have here, you see, is a complex. It's an ecumenical thing, and it certainly is here.

196,197      1 Nephi 13:11,12 We have Columbus here. This is Columbus Day, so we can't pass him by, can we? Verse 11: "Behold the wrath of God is upon the seed of thy brethren." And what was that? Columbus. When the Europeans discovered America, that was the wrath of God. That was catching up with them. From then on the Indians go down and down and down until they reach absolute nadir. Then something happens to the Gentiles, he says. "And I looked and beheld a man among the Gentiles." He doesn't say a Gentile; he says "a man among the Gentiles." Years ago I happened to be back East. The old Improvement Era wanted an article on Columbus and Columbus Day. Through a friend of mine, Lucien Goldschmidt, I got to meet Madariaga, the great Spanish authority on Columbus. Then at Harvard there was Samuel Eliot Morison who wrote the great book, *Admiral of the Ocean Sea*. He is a yachtsman, and he gives a very careful nautical study of every aspect, everything that is available, on Columbus. So on October 12, Columbus Day, at 2:00 in the morning of a very bright, clear night with a brilliant moon, and the sea high with a good following wind (a glorious picture), a sailor in the mast sighted either St. Kitt or San Salvador, the outmost island (they call it various names) in the Caribbean. America was discovered, and this was the stroke of doom, "the wrath of God upon the seed of thy brethren."

197      I had lunch with him [Madariaga], and he has always believed that Columbus was a Jew for various reasons. He kept a journal, and he knew all the mysteries of the Cabbala. He always dated things by "the second house." Only Jews speak of the temple as the bayit, "the house of God." The

second house would be the temple that stood at the time of Christ. Only a Jew would call it “the second house” or date things by the fall of the temple. His passion was to rebuild Jerusalem. The reason he wanted the money from the Indies was to rebuild the temple. That was his project; that’s why he wanted the gold. What’s more, he postponed the date of his sailing down the Tigris there until his three ships headed the armada of Jews fleeing from Spain. See, in 1492 Ferdinand and Isabella banished the Jews from Spain. No Jews were to be left there. The biggest thing was one big armada. They fled to various places in Europe, mostly the Netherlands, Russia, Sephardi, Ashkenazi, etc. Columbus postponed his going so that his ships could lead the parade of Jews back to the Holy Land. He wanted to lead them back to the temple. It’s a very interesting thing we have here.

198 1 Nephi 13:13 “I beheld the Spirit of God, that it wrought upon other Gentiles; and they went forth out of captivity, upon the many waters.” Now here’s another argument. He’s talking, apparently, about the Pilgrim fathers that went out of captivity. The captivity was religious; they wanted religious freedom. But they weren’t escaping from the Roman Catholic Church. They were escaping from other groups, from the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England and Calvinist stringency.

198 1 Nephi 13:15,18 But let’s go on. Verse 15: “And I beheld the Spirit of the Lord, that it was upon the Gentiles, and they did prosper and obtain the land for their inheritance.... They were white, and exceedingly fair.” And they humbled themselves. “And I beheld that their mother Gentiles were gathered together upon the waters, and upon the land also, to battle against them.” Why would the righteous mother Gentiles want to battle against them? We are not talking about righteousness here. We are not talking about just the English settlers either. Remember, there were the French and the Spanish—the French and Indian War and the Spanish wars. All the wars of succession in Europe had their reflections on this continent. Remember, George Washington had to fight both the French and the British.

“The wrath of God was upon all those that were gathered together against them to battle.” They were delivered by the power of God, and they did prosper in the land.

198,199      1 Nephi 13:23 A book was carried forth among them. This was the Bible. They had already had that. Notice verse 23: “Behold it proceedeth out of the mouth of a Jew. And I, Nephi, beheld it.” It had the covenants of the Lord. This is the New Testament, but they had the Old Testament too. This is the new one from the mouth of a Jew. How do you best describe the New Testament? Well, as the words of the Savior, of course. But there’s more than that. We have the epistles and the acts of the Apostles, and we have the revelations. They were all Jews. It comes forth from a Jewish source, the whole thing. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were written by those men, and they say that they are the authors. They claim to be. “This is the writing of Mark.” “I, John,” etc. Verse 23: “The book that thou beholdest is a record of the Jews, which contains the covenants of the Lord, ... and it also containeth many of the prophecies of the holy prophets; and it is a record like unto the engravings which are upon the plates of brass.” In other words, it’s the Bible. Their Old Testament isn’t the same as Lehi’s Old Testament because of the many changes. But it says that it’s much like it.

199      1 Nephi: 13:24,26 “When it proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew it contained the fulness of the gospel of the Lord, of whom the twelve apostles bear record.” It was plain then, but as soon as it went forth it didn’t take very long for it to be changed. Verse 26: “And after they go forth by the hand of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, from the Jews unto the Gentiles, thou seest the formation of that great and abominable church.... They have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away.” Those were taken away long before the Roman Catholic Church took over in the fourth century. When were they taken away? In the terrible squabbles of the second and third century. They just fought it out; there was blood and everything else. It culminated in the Council of Nicaea

in A.D. 325 when the emperor had to call a council because everybody was killing everybody else. Well, we've written a lot about that. We don't need to follow up on that here, but that is what was happening. It started in Alexandria with Philo; the professors started fighting. They preempted the gospels in the Bible. They took it to themselves. Remember, in Lehi's day nobody had the book, but now everybody has it. They are all fighting about it, and they corrupt it. Of course, they do. Everybody interprets it his own way, but especially beginning with Philo at the time of Christ, they interpreted everything allegorically. None of this is to be taken literally; it is all spiritual, [according to them]. It's all in an allegorical and philosophical sense. They fought about that, and this is the corruption we are talking about. They lost the main treasures of the book here.

199 So we have an ecumenical composite; all have the same teachings and practices. This is interesting. When you say, "There are but two churches," you are right. There are just two doctrines; two organizations, organized accordingly; two sets of ordinances and the like. All the other churches have the same practices. They all preach that God is a mystery and unknowable—the mystery of the Trinity. They all do not accept the literal Resurrection. They believe that the Jews are out, that the temple will never be built. They have devised their own ordinances and their own ceremonies because they can't get them out of the Bible anywhere. They have been borrowed from various sources—mostly from the old Imperial Cult of the Romans, but there are other sources.

200 1 Nephi 13:29-34 "An exceedingly great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them [because of the changes]. Nevertheless, thou beholdest that the Gentiles ... have been lifted by the power of God above all other nations." Here's the promise in verse 30 here. (Remember, in 1830 the Indians were still the most numerous people on the continent; they were still a big handful.) "The Lord God will not suffer that the Gentiles will utterly destroy the mixture of thy seed which are among thy brethren [so Nephi's seed are mixed with the seed of his

brethren, and the Gentiles cannot destroy them; there is no such thing as a pure Lamanite; we see that all through the Book of Mormon]. Neither will he suffer that the Gentiles shall destroy the seed of thy brethren” (the Lamanites, or his seed mixed with them—the Nephites and others). In verse 32 we see that the Gentiles are in an “awful state of blindness.” They don’t get the point; they do not have it made in the promised land. How far does their blindness go here? They have been “kept back by that abominable church, whose formation thou hast seen. Wherefore, saith the Lamb of God: I will be merciful unto the Gentiles, unto the visiting of the remnant of the house of Israel in great judgment.” One is the scourge of the other here. In verse 34 Lehi’s people are smitten by the hand of the Gentiles. Then after the Gentiles have taken over the land, they “stumble exceedingly, because of the most plain and precious parts of the gospel of the Lamb which have been kept back by that abominable church, which is the mother of harlots, saith the Lamb—I will be merciful unto the Gentiles in that day, insomuch that I will bring forth unto them, in mine own power, much of my gospel, which shall be plain and precious, saith the Lamb.”

200,201      2 Nephi 10:16; 1 Nephi 13:35,37 Incidentally, here is a very important verse I’ll refer you to: 2 Nephi 10:16 should clear something up: “Wherefore, he that fighteth against Zion, both Jew and Gentile, both bond and free, both male and female, shall perish; for they are they who are the whore of all the earth; for they who are not for me are against me [there’s your principle of two churches; you’re either for or against], saith our God.” It’s not just one church, but whoever fights against Zion, whether they are Jew, Gentile, bond, free, male or female. It makes no difference. They are they who shall perish, and they are the whore of all the earth. The Gentiles will not remain in that awful state of blindness. They have been kept back, but “I will bring forth unto them ... much of my gospel, which shall be plain and precious.” Not the fullness but much which is plain and precious is coming out. Verse 35: “After thy seed shall be destroyed, and dwindle in unbelief ...” How can you dwindle after you have been destroyed?

DESTREW means “to break the structure down, to strew around, to scatter in all directions.” Remember, he says, “Jerusalem has been destroyed from time to time.” Then it has been reorganized from time to time. That doesn’t mean wiped out forever with every last person. To destroy is to scatter. “... and also the seed of thy brethren [they will be destroyed too, along with his], behold, these things shall be hid up, to come forth unto the Gentiles by the gift and power of the Lamb.” Of course, that is the Book of Mormon. Verse 37: “And blessed are they who shall seek to bring forth my Zion at that day, for they shall have the gift and the power of the Holy Ghost.... I beheld the remnants of the seed of my brethren, and also the book of the Lamb of God, which had proceeded forth from the mouth of the Jew, that it came forth from the Gentiles unto the remnant of the seed of my brethren.” Well, the Gentiles will give the Bible back to the descendants of Nephi.

201 1 Nephi 13:39 “And after it had come forth unto them I beheld other books [Ah ha, there are other books after the Book of Mormon. What do they do? They confirm it. I would include the Dead Sea Scrolls among these], ... which came forth by the power of the Lamb, from the Gentiles unto them, unto the convincing of the Gentiles and the remnant of the seed of my brethren, and also the Jews who were scattered upon all the face of the earth, that the records of the prophets and of the twelve apostles of the Lamb are true.” The later records prove the earlier ones, not the other way around, though they confirm each other. The later books are discovered. Notice it says, “I beheld other books which came forth.” They are not proofs or demonstrations. They are revealed; they have been hidden to come forth.

202 1 Nephi 14:1 “If the Gentiles shall hearken unto the Lamb of God in that day ... and harden not their hearts against the Lamb of God, they shall be numbered among the seed of thy father; yea, they shall be numbered among the house of Israel; and they shall be a blessed people upon the promised land forever.” Well, that’s the last thing most Gentiles want, to be numbered among them. In 1 Nephi

12:9 you see the situation. “Thou rememberest the twelve apostles of the Lamb? Behold they are they who shall judge the twelve tribes of Israel; wherefore, the twelve ministers of thy seed shall be judged of them; for ye are of the house of Israel.” What we have here when we say “the house of Israel” is that we are all of the same house, but we are not in the same room. There is Israel abroad and Israel here. There are twelve different tribes, and these tribes are quite distinct. Judah is just the fourth son, and the Jews are quite distinct from other tribes like Ephraim. They are quite distinct from the Ishmaelites too, though they are very much alike. What about the other tribes? Of course, we talk about the Ten Tribes and their coming back, etc., a thing that greatly intrigued the Jews in the Middle Ages.

202,203      1 Nephi 14:3 Now we have “that great pit, which hath been digged for them by that great and abominable church.” You notice that the great and abominable church is not capitalized. It’s not one particular institution. I think that may be significant that the brethren left it that way. Why this in this case? Why would you dig a pit? Well, the whole Christian world has dug a pit for the Jews and Mormons and native peoples everywhere. They produce world wars, crusades, religious wars—the Crimean War, World War II, colonialism in the name of religion. There are very few wars that don’t have religion as their basis, even our Civil War because the Bible says that you shouldn’t have slaves. That was the issue that everybody got wrought up about. On the other hand, the Bible says that you shouldn’t rob and take another man’s property from him. Slaves are property, and it’s a wicked thing to take them away. But you shouldn’t have slaves. There are these conflicts. But wars like the Crimean War and the Crusades are purely religious wars. And in World War II there was the Austrian Empire—the land pirates against the sea pirates. But they are fighting each other all the time. See, France was a Catholic nation. Bavaria and Austria were Catholic nations. They fought each other. The Austrians and the Italians have always been fighting each other, and yet they are both Catholic. So everybody fights everybody else in this world, and they are all the same religion. Satan has it very well set up.



203 1 Nephi 14:3 “Yea, that great pit which hath been digged for the destruction of men shall be filled by those who digged it, unto their utter destruction, saith the Lamb of God [does he mean this is spiritual or physical destruction? He says both]; not the destruction of the soul, save it be the casting of it into that hell which hath no end [he asked for an explanation]. For behold, this is according to the captivity of the devil, and also according to the justice of God, upon all those who will work wickedness and abomination before him.” The “great and abominable” is not a label and a doctrine; it is the wickedness of Christian nations in this case. It does refer to them. Notice, these are the people that have the scriptures that proceed forth from the mouth of the Jew—the Bible. It’s the book that has been corrupted.

203,204 1 Nephi 14:5-10 Then he goes on in verse 5: “Thou has beheld that if the Gentiles repent it shall be well with them.” Repent of what? Belonging to the wrong church? No. If they repent of their sins, they will be forgiven, and “whoso repenteth not must perish. Therefore, woe be unto the Gentiles if it so be that they harden their hearts against the Lamb of God [which, of course, they did against Joseph Smith after the Book of Mormon came out]. For the time cometh, saith the Lamb of God, that I will work a great and a marvelous work among the children of men . . . either to the convincing of them unto peace and life eternal, or unto the deliverance of them to the hardness of their hearts [again, the great and yawning gulf between them] and the blindness of their minds unto their being brought down into captivity, and also into destruction.... He said unto me: Look, and behold that great and abominable church, which is the mother of abominations [he keeps rubbing it in, doesn’t he?] whose founder is the devil. And he said unto me: Behold there are save two churches only,” as we said before.

205 1 Nephi 14:12 In verse 12 notice that the numbers in the church of the Lamb were few; it never gets big. And the whore sat upon many waters. Well, you can sit on waters if you want; it’s just an expression. But the [true]

Church's dominions were small (let's hope so). They "did gather together multitudes upon the face of all the earth, among all the nations of the Gentiles, to fight against the Lamb of God.... I, Nephi, beheld the power of the Lamb of God, that it descended upon the saints of the church of the Lamb ... who were scattered upon all the face of the earth [so they are not all gathered in Zion, apparently]; and they were armed with righteousness [that's the only thing to be armed with; and, believe me, we are not armed with it now, are we? Far from it; we are armed with acquisitiveness and with great managerial skill, and things like that. That is not known as righteousness].... I beheld that the wrath of God was poured out upon that great and abominable church, insomuch that there were wars and rumors of wars among all the nations and kindreds of the earth."

205,206      1 Nephi 14 17,23 "At that day, the work of the Father shall commence, in preparing the way for the fulfilling of his covenants, which he hath made to his people who are of the house of Israel." So that isn't the culmination when that comes. That just commences to lay the foundation, commences to prepare. Then he sees the man in the white robe, one of the Twelve Apostles. Verse 23: "At the time the book proceeded out of the mouth of the Jew, the things which were written were plain and pure." They were at that time, but that was only in the first century. Remember, we have over eight thousand manuscripts of the New Testament, no two of them alike. And the oldest one is from the third century. There may be a fragment of a verse or two from here or there. Naturally, if we find an old one, like the Dead Sea Scrolls, it would probably be very much like what we have now. But all of our documents are copies of copies of copies. Nearly all of them come from the eighth and ninth centuries. The ones we treasure so are fourth-century documents, the main ones. About thirty documents go into the Cambridge edition of the New Testament. They have thirty different texts—thirty different readings for verses, etc. But when it came out, it was plain and pure. We know now from the many documents that it became corrupted very soon, as I said. So you can't blame one great and abominable church for doing it because that

one didn't come along until quite a while later.

206 1 Nephi 14:25 Nephi was going to write some of these plain and pure things, but he was forbidden. We are not supposed to have that now. Why not? Notice verse 25: "But the things which thou shalt see hereafter thou shalt not write; for the Lord God hath ordained the apostle of the Lamb of God that he should write them." And the apostle's name was John, the only one that is named here. So here we get a very interesting thing. They were written and "sealed up to come forth in their purity." They were hidden, and in the seventh section of the Doctrine and Covenants the most remarkable thing happens. Notice this: "Revelation given to Joseph Smith the Prophet and Oliver Cowdery, at Harmony, Pennsylvania, April 1829 [a year before the church was founded], when they inquired through the Urim and Thummim as to whether John, the beloved disciple, tarried in the flesh or had died." Now, what is this revelation? It's a translated version of a record made on parchment by John, and he hid it up by himself. Well, this is exactly what they did with the Dead Sea Scrolls; they hid them up in hundreds of caves. And John did the same thing. They are on papyrus, as you know. Most of the Dead Sea Scrolls are parchment. You notice that they are sewn together. John wrote a scroll on parchment, and he hid it up. Joseph Smith was reading it. He didn't have the scroll; he had it through the Urim and Thummim. It was revealed to him, you see. But this is how John did it, by sealing it up. Isn't it interesting that it takes the pains to point out that he wrote it on parchment. In other words, it wasn't a spiritual document. He literally wrote it down and he hid it, just as the scrolls were hidden. He buried it on purpose, as this says here. The Lord said of the apostle, "He shall write them. Thou shalt not write them, but he shall write them."

206 1 Nephi 14:26-28 "And also others who have been, to them hath he shown all things, and they have written them [notice that others have done the same]; and they are sealed up to come forth in their purity." Now, the only way you can preserve a document in its purity is to bury it because as soon as you start copying, you start making mistakes. It

always happens. You never have a pure document as long as it's in the hands of men. So if you are going to preserve a document over hundreds or thousands of years, you've got to bury it. That's the only way, so that nobody can lay hands on it. And this is what happens. They are buried and they are sealed, so they can't be changed and won't be dug up until the time of the Lord. Verse 28: "And behold, I, Nephi, am forbidden that I should write the remainder of the things which I saw and heard.... I have written but a small part of the things which I saw ... while I was carried away in the spirit; and if all the things which I saw are not written, the things which I have written are true. And thus it is. Amen."

207 So he has given us a lead; he has given us a start here, and has given us some broad hints. You might say this whole fourteenth chapter is just a series of hints. But they are not to send us arguing in priesthood meeting and things like that. There's no point to that. You read them for yourself. Notice, he's cautious about it. He doesn't want to give us any more. The Lord forbade him to write any more. This is bad enough as it is, but these are things we are already perfectly aware of. So this is safe. When he wants to write more, the Lord forbids him. He is told that John will put them on parchment and seal them, and others will write them and seal them to come forth in their purity. So we can look forward to more documents, I suppose.

207 Now, there are some really wonderful things. This is like walking through the sand here in verses [chapters] 13 and 14 if we attempt simplistic interpretations. If we attempt more sophisticated interpretations, we are in worse trouble than ever. Don't try it. But the Lord has put in here what we would say is "for the record." Notice that this whole thing is about recording—about John writing down, the Spirit speaking to him, and Nephi saying, "I can't write this; I would write a lot more." This all has to do with the record and the state of the record. It's a confused state of things, and it's a confused state of things today. But the Lord will clarify these things. You ask him for enlightenment; he will give it to you.

# Lecture 14 1 Nephi 15-16

## **The Liahona and Murmurings in the Wilderness** **[Liahona Discussed in Detail]** **[Nephi Replaces Steel Bow]** **[Death of Ishmael Causes Revolt]** **[Nephi Told to Construct a Ship]**

208 1 Nephi 15:1-3 We are on the fifteenth chapter. We have to move fast, but there are still some things that are important to know from 1 Nephi. We start out with the last place to look if we want to find information. It starts out, “I returned to the tent of my father.” He found his brethren disputing, and it wasn’t the first time in history. They wanted an answer to the question, but they never bothered to look. “They did not look unto the Lord as they ought,” he says in the third verse. Have you asked for it? Don’t expect blessings from the Lord unless you ask. So he says here, “They did not look unto the Lord as they ought.”

208 1 Nephi 15:4 “I, Nephi, was grieved because of the hardness of their hearts, and also, because of the things which I had seen, and knew they must unavoidably come to pass ... [he had seen certain things that must happen; notice that word unavoidably is a hard one, isn’t it? Isn’t it supposed to be all conditioned?] because of the great wickedness of the children of men.” Why unavoidably? Well, you know the unavoidable play is determined by the actors, as we said before. A man’s character is his fate. In the old comedy of Menander, and then taken over by Plautus and Terence, the whole plot was always determined

by the actors. I mean if you have a rich old miser who has a beautiful daughter and an impoverished young man who is wooing her and a clever servant, you know exactly what is going to happen. All the characters were standard; they all wore standard colored wigs so people would know which one they were. The rascally servant wore a red wig, the daughter naturally was a blond, the old man was naturally bald, and the young man's hair was black and curly. Of course, he had a friend. Shakespeare used that plot. Everybody uses that plot. But the point is that the play is unavoidably predictable once you set the characters up, and that's so with all sorts of things.

209 1 Nephi 15:4,5 So he says here that these things must unavoidably happen. What is the situation he saw? Well, he says it was "because of the great wickedness of the children of men." So this is "man who is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward." And he is worried sick about it. Notice, he says in verse 5, "I was overcome because of my afflictions." It was just too much; they kept pouring it on. You notice, they blame him for everything. Again, it's interesting that they have a character on which they can do that, and they take it out on him. That's the theme of "Boots," a theme that runs through all the old Norse literature and is very predominant there. Sir George Dasent wrote a book on it and collected the stories of Boots. Boots is a Cinderella story with the two sisters (like Laman and Lemuel, you see) taking it out on Cinderella because of hidden jealousy motives. But there was no reason to be jealous about Cinderella. Boots is, of course, the third son and the youngest. He's called Boots because he has to clean everybody's shoes. He's made the butt of everything, and he has to wait on the other two. Of course, it turns out that he is the prince in the end and he triumphs. This is the Boots motif because he cleans the boots.

209 1 Nephi 15:7,8,9 This is bound to happen. Then they used this excuse. They [Laman and Lemuel] said to him, "Behold, we cannot understand the words which our father hath spoken concerning the natural branches of the olive-tree, and also concerning the Gentiles." "And I

said unto them: Have ye inquired of the Lord?" They said they hadn't tried because it wouldn't work if they did. So that's a self-fulfilling prophecy. It's like the old woman who prays for the hill to be removed from behind her house; she doesn't like it there. In the morning she gets up, looks out of the window, and says, "Hah, I knew it wouldn't move anyway." Well, that's her faith.

209,210      1 Nephi 15:11 But don't make such a prize too cheap. He said to them, You don't just ask the Lord (paraphrased). Notice in verse 11 the things you have to do. First, don't harden your hearts (as they had). Make up your minds. Second, "ask me in faith, believing that ye shall receive, with diligence in keeping my commandments, [then] surely these things shall be made known unto you." That's a routine very few people are willing to go through. Remember, in D&C 9:7-8 where the Lord tells Oliver Cowdery, You thought all you'd have to do was ask. No, you have to get the best answer you can yourself. Work it out in your own mind first to get the best solution you can. Do the best job you can on your own and then ask me [the Lord] if it is all right. If it's not all right, you will blank out on that subject; you will have a numbness of spirit. I'll let you know whether it is right or not [paraphrased]. So you have to do the work, and then you check with him. This is a nice way to do it. "Let him ask of God." You see how the gospel started out with Joseph Smith reading in James. "If any of you lack wisdom [what do you do?], let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering [doubting]." Well, that's something else if you are going to ask that way. I won't play then if I have to believe it already. St. Augustine wouldn't do that, you see. He starts out his Confessions by saying, "If I ask God whether he lives, then I assume that he does. Then I'm cheating; I shouldn't do that."

210      1 Nephi 15:17,18 We have to hurry on here. Then they talk about the plasticity of the olive tree. That's referred to a great deal later on, so we will skip the olive tree right now and the things it does and the things it stands for. We'll go

to the process that's working among the Gentiles. Verse 18: "Wherefore, our father hath not spoken of our seed alone, but also of all the house of Israel, pointing to the covenant which should be fulfilled in the latter days [those are the temple ordinances made now, and] the restoration of the Jews in the latter days.... Isaiah, who spake concerning the restoration of the Jews, or of the house of Israel; and after they were restored they should no more be confounded." (That means mixed up.) Then the brothers were pacified. Then they start asking about the tree. Verse 17 is very important. He wants the Gentiles to be in on it too. "What our father meaneth [is] that it will not come to pass until after they are scattered by the Gentiles; and he meaneth that it shall come by way of the Gentiles, that the Lord may show his power unto the Gentiles." The Lord is going to show his power to the Gentiles, too; they have to be in on the act. They are important to the theme. Nobody gets left out.

210,211      1 Nephi 15:21 Then we come to the tree [verse 21], and it's explained briefly. You know what it is. The tree is the objective. It's the fruit, the light that saves you, the tree of life. And the iron rod is the means by which you get to it. You cling to that consistently. Hang on, keep walking, and don't let go. That's good. The river, which turns out to be filthy water, is the alternative. If you don't make the effort to go to the tree, the water will catch you. If you don't hang to the iron rod, you'll get lost in the filthy water and swept away, as so many people were in those days. And there's the awful gulf between those on either side. That's the penalty if you don't make the effort. You'll end up on one side or the other. The penalty for making no effort at all, of course, is to be on the other side. That awful gulf is a real thing. You see, we don't compromise here. In this life nobody is on one side of the gulf or the other; nobody is safe home. You can always sin; everybody can. Nephi is going to make that very clear later on. On the other hand, nobody is completely damned because it's never too late to repent as long as you are in the flesh. So we are all in between now and making our choices one way or the other. The worst thing you can do is to assume that you have arrived on



one side and your enemy is on the other side—that you're the “good guy” and he's the “bad guy.” The whole Book of Mormon is to keep us in this “in-between state” where we are now. We are sort of balanced there. We find it harrowing and difficult. That's the whole thing; we are supposed to be enjoying the excitement of it.

211 1 Nephi 15:28-32 Then we are told in verse 30 that a division is necessary. In verse 28 he talks about the “awful gulf, which separated the wicked from the tree of life, and also from the saints of God.” It's between them, and that's the awful hell, etc. Verse 31: “And they said unto me: Doth this thing mean the torment of the body [this isn't just allegorical or spiritual; this thing is physical as well; you suffer physically in these things; you work mentally, but you also go through physical anguish and pain] in the days of probation [that's now], or doth it mean the final state of the soul after the death of the temporal body?” He says it means both, in the next verse. It represents both temporal and spiritual. There is no spiritual law that isn't temporal, and vice versa, “even the works which were done by the temporal body [right now] in their days of probation.” These are the days when we are envied of the angels because we can choose between the one and the other. Their state is fixed for a time to come at least.

211 1 Nephi 15:34 Then there is a final state when they are “brought to stand before God, to be judged of their works.” If they are filthy, they will be filthy still. You can't just say, “I'm born again and that takes care of that.” Verse 34: “There cannot any unclean thing enter into the kingdom of God; wherefore there must needs be a place of filthiness prepared for that which is filthy.” So there are places for this and a final place to dwell. The wicked are rejected; that's it. Well, whether they have their chances or not, let's go on to the next verse where he continues to preach.

211,212 1 Nephi 15:34; 1 Nephi 16:2-7 They say to Nephi, “Thou hast declared unto us hard things, more than we are able to [understand] bear.” We don't like to admit this. Why should the struggle of life be so hard? Well, why

should it not be hard when so much depends on it? The interesting thing we find out from Nephi very soon is that all preaching is to yourself. You are preaching to nobody but yourself. If I preach, I preach only to myself. You can see how that is here. Others may pick it up, as far as that goes. That's like teaching the point; that's all you do. You can't teach a person; that's not a transitive verb. You might hit a person or see a person, but you can't teach a person. What do you do when you teach a person? Well, the word for teach is TOUCH, TACTILE, DIDACTIC. That's when you point to something. TEACH is the same word as TOUCH. It just means point the finger. All I can do is point. You look and then you see for yourself. I don't go directly from one person to another that way. So the teacher is just DIDACTIC. He teaches and points so others may pick it up. Nephi goes on preaching too, and later on he tells us in [1 Nephi 16:2] that it's just himself he has been talking to all along anyway. Verse 2: "I knew that I had spoken hard things against the wicked ... [and that] the guilty taketh the truth to be hard." If you were righteous, he says, you wouldn't murmur; you would face the truth [paraphrased]. We hear a lot of this stuff today, don't we. "They did humble themselves before the Lord; insomuch that I had joy and great hopes of them, that they would walk in the paths of righteousness." They [the hopes] were to be dashed all right. So they went back to the tent in the settlement in the valley of Lemuel. The family had been living there a long time now. They got married there. Nephi took one of the daughters of Ishmael, and they all intermarried with the Arab family. Zoram married the eldest daughter of Ishmael. That shows you he was more advanced in age than some of the others. Then finally the time came to move. They had been there a long time, and the Lord ordered them to move. That night he got the commandment. The orders came through "that on the morrow he should take his journey into the wilderness."

212,213      1 Nephi 16:10 Now it is the SIRAH, as the Arabs say. I should have brought it along. The best parallel to Lehi in the wilderness is the SIRAT BENI HILAL The BENI HILAL were a tribe way back in pre-Islamic times

who wandered clear from Central Asia way over to Morocco looking for a place to settle. They went by night so people wouldn't see them, and they couldn't build fires. They were constantly hiding, and they were suffering greatly for lack of food. It was the same as Lehi's company. Remember, he tells us, "We didn't build fires." The Lord said, "I'll be your light by night." So [Nephi] said, "We didn't cook our food; we ate raw food." The BENI HILAL tells you all those things. The title is SIRAT BENI HILAL. That means "the setting forth on the journey—the pulling up of stakes and getting going" because they were always going. In the books bearing the name of Abraham, the title is always LEKH LEKHA. It means, "Get up and get going." So Abraham is the one who gets up and gets going. He is always moving from place to place. He never settles; he never has a land of his own. He was the first Hebrew, which means "a person from the beyond, an uprooted person, a wandering person" as we are told in the book of Deuteronomy.

212,213      1 Nephi 16:10,11; Alma 37:38-42    So they marry their wives, and he is ordered to move. Then he finds the Liahona in front of his tent. In 1961 I had an article in the Ensign [The Improvement Era] on this sort of thing. There are a lot of sources on this, but this new book had just come out. This writing of Professor Fahd really helps out here. Just a few notes from this to sum up here. A good deal is said about the Liahona in the Book of Mormon. We are not going to give it all here—just this summary. First, the Liahona was a gift from God, and the manner of its delivery caused great astonishment. It was just found in front of his tent the next morning. Second, it was neither mechanical nor self-operating. It was not a mechanism but worked solely by the power of God and solely according to their faith. It wasn't magic; a magic thing would work by itself. Third, it only worked in response to faith, diligence, and the heed of those who followed it. Fourth, there was something ordinary and familiar about it. It was called "the small means by which God worked." It was not a mysterious, untouchable object. They called it "but a temporal thing." It was so ordinary that there was a constant tendency of Lehi's family simply to ignore it. They wouldn't pay

attention to it, whether it worked or not. According to Alma, their needless, years-long wanderings in the desert were because of the fact that they ignored it most of the time. Fifth, the working parts of the device were two spindles or pointers in a globe. On these, special writings would appear from time to time clarifying and amplifying the message of the pointers. (Remember, Lehi was terrified when he saw the writing on them that told him about these things.) The specific purpose of the traversing indicators was to point the way they should go. The pointers were mounted in a brass sphere whose marvelous workmanship excited their wonder and admiration because instructions sometimes appeared on this ball too. The device was referred to descriptively as “a ball” functioning as an indicator, and in both senses it is called “a compass.” On occasion, it saved Lehi’s people from perishing by land and sea. We are told, “If they would but look on it, they might live.” And it was preserved for a wise purpose long after it had ceased to function; it was a museum piece. It had been prepared specifically to guide Lehi’s party to the Promised Land. It was a “type and a shadow,” he tells us, of man’s relationship to God during this earthly passage. We won’t go into Alma’s description here.

217 1 Nephi 16:14,16 “And we did go forth again in the wilderness, following the same direction, keeping in the most fertile parts of the wilderness, which were in the borders near the Red Sea.”. You could say, “The preaching was just Joseph Smith preaching, and an angel had nothing to do with it.” But when you get a record as full and as vivid as this, there’s something going on. Verse 16: “And we did follow the directions of the ball, which led us in the more fertile parts of the wilderness [near the Red Sea].”

217,218 1 Nephi 16:18 His bow was made of fine steel, and he said, “I did break my bow.” In Palestine from time immemorial they only used composite bows. That’s why they considered it a miracle when Nephi made his bow. The composite bow has a handle of ivory or wood, and then it goes back like that. Well, in the drawings you see that it goes clear forward like this. Then you have to turn it way

back to get plenty of draw on it. But it goes back like this when it is drawn like that (beautiful bow). And the metal parts were of bronze which doesn't spring like steel, but steel is the best. Just in recent years it has been discovered that steel is as early known as anything at all—for obvious reasons. Steel is a mixture of iron and carbon. If you are using coal or wood or anything else and you have to get an awfully high temperature, you are going to get carbon mixed in with it. It won't make inferior iron; sometimes it will make good steel. But anyway, we know they had it. We have those pictures of King Tut's beautiful steel dagger from seven hundred years before. But they had steel bows, and they only used composite bows, which were metal. This part was bone, ivory, or wood. It wasn't so demanding, you see. You could replace parts, etc. But he broke his steel bow, and that was bad. That meant that the family was going to starve because everybody depended on it.

218 1 Nephi 16:20-26 Now Saxton Pope in his classical work called *Hunting with the Bow and Arrow* says the average bow is worth a hundred thousand shots. After that it loses its spring and you can't use it anymore. Lehi [Nephi], who seemed to be a very capable fellow, must have been using his bow for years. It says that their bows had lost their springs, and that would happen. Notice in verse 21: "... the loss of my bow, and their bows having lost their springs." As a result of this, they are very hungry. He returned without food and they suffered much. Now what happened? Now who is righteous? Who has a perfect faith? This is the nadir in their travels, you see. Verse 20: "And also my father began to murmur against the Lord his God [Lehi himself]; yea, and they were all exceedingly sorrowful, even that they did murmur against the Lord." They were all murmuring against the Lord—not just Laman and Lemuel, but Lehi himself. We've got to watch these things. Verse 23: "And it came to pass that I, Nephi, did make out of wood a bow, and out of a straight stick, an arrow; wherefore, I did arm myself with a bow and an arrow." Then he asked the Liahona where he should go to find game, and he found it in the right place.

218,219 1 Nephi 16: 27-32 Julius Euting who wrote a classic work, and he hunted everywhere. The only place in Arabia where you can find very good hunting is in the mountains along here, especially Mount Jasum and Mount Azd. Well, this is very important because they are the only places in Arabia where you can find NABC wood which is wood for bows. It makes excellent bows, but it is exceedingly rare. It's only found in the mountains right along here. This is where they would have been at that time, keeping in the mountains near the Red Sea. They came here and [their bows] lost their springs and all that. We don't know exactly where they were, but around the same area where you find the bow wood at Mount Jassum and Mount Azd, you also find very rich game—oryxes, mountain goats, everything you can imagine at the tops of the mountains. Of course, those creatures live up high. Then his father looked on the ball and “he did fear and tremble exceedingly” because there was a new writing on them which was plain to read. So he went up into the top of the mountain—which is where you find this type of game, enough to feed the family—”according to the directions which were given upon the ball.... I did slay wild beasts, insomuch that I did obtain food for our families.” How great was their joy when he stumbled into camp bearing this stuff, and “they did humble themselves before the Lord.”

219 1 Nephi 16:34 From that time they traveled nearly the same course. They kept that almost due east, slightly south, course. This is the way they did it. They would pitch their tents and tarry for a space of time. That's why it took them eight years. It was strenuous going, so they would tarry and rest. Verse 34: “Ishmael died, and was buried in the place which was called Nahom.” The Arabic word NAHAMA means to MOURN, so a place called Nahom would be the best place to bury him, wouldn't it? Then “the daughters of Ishmael did mourn exceedingly.” And this is a characteristic of the Jews as well. (I left home the book I was going to read, for which I suppose you can be grateful.) But I assure you that it tells you in that book that whenever a person died among the ancient Arabs it was the daughters, and only the daughters, that had the privilege of

mourning. Later on they hired professional male mourners, but in the early times that was unthinkable. It was the mothers and the daughters, but specifically the daughters, who mourned for the dead—both at the burial and at the funeral.

219 1 Nephi 16:35-38 Then from mourning they went to murmuring. “You were to blame for all this” is what the daughters came around to. But you notice “that the daughters of Ishmael [following their Ishmael custom] did mourn exceedingly, because of the loss of their father.” And, as I said, that reminded them of other things, and they murmured against Lehi for bringing this whole thing on them. “And thus they did murmur against my father, and also against me,” he says in verse 36. They have it in for him too now. Laman and Lemuel are familiar with the practice of desert communities; everybody was. What we have in verses 36, 37, and 38 would come right out of the Dead Sea Scrolls, wouldn't it? This is the sort of thing they were doing.

220 1 Nephi 16:37,38 Then they say, “Behold, let us slay our father, and also our brother Nephi [they are going pretty far], who has taken it upon him to be our ruler and our teacher, who are his elder brethren.” That's what they couldn't stand. The law of seniority is very strict among the Jews, and to give a firstborn second place to another was a grave offence. You might almost say that they were legally within their rights. I know some family cases that are very pointed on that. Laman and Lemuel say in verse 38, “He tells us these things, and he worketh many things by his cunning arts, that he may deceive our eyes, thinking, perhaps, that he may lead us away into some strange wilderness [some unoccupied patch of the desert to settle down and make their community where he can be the leader is the idea]; and after he has led us away, he has thought to make himself a king and a ruler over us, that he may do with us according to his will and pleasure. And after this manner did my brother Laman stir up their hearts to anger.” Now Laman leads it because he is the oldest and he felt that he should be the leader. He felt it all

along. He is mortally offended by giving the job, not just to Lemuel, but at the time to the youngest son of all, Nephi, that he should be the leader.

220 1 Nephi 16:39 “The voice of the Lord came and did speak many words unto them, and did chasten them exceedingly [well, how? It was through Lehi or Nephi] and after they were chastened by the voice of the Lord they did turn away their anger, and did repent of their sins.” What would make them do that? Well, it is obvious what happened. Nephi revealed their plot; he deflated Laman. Laman was the leader, and he was trying to stir them up. When he was exposed in what he was up to (even patricide and that sort of thing), then he had gone too far. Then he was definitely deflated. It was a very shameful thing which he proposed, when they thought it over. So they “did repent of their sins, insomuch that the Lord did bless us again with food, that we did not perish.”

221 1 Nephi 17:2 Then we come to a very interesting statement here [at the beginning of chapter 17]: Again, they went nearly eastward and waded through much affliction. That “nearly eastward” meant the Rubc al-Khali, the worst desert in the world. It’s worse than the Sahara, as a matter of fact. There are some good spots in the Sahara, but the Rubc al-Khali has nothing. You can believe that they waded through much affliction going through there. Verse 2: “We did live upon raw meat in the wilderness.” They had to preserve it. It was dried, raw meat—the game he got in the mountains probably that they kept with them. But their women were strong, and they still had children. This is a noted phenomenon among Bedouin women. They do all the work. They pitch the tents, they make the fires, they do the cooking, they do everything. They are amazingly strong.

221 1 Nephi 17:3 Here’s a reflection that is very important in the third verse. Nephi uses this teaching on a number of occasions, and he says here: “And if it so be that the children of men keep the commandments of God he doth nourish them, and strengthen them, and provide means whereby they can accomplish the thing which he



has commanded them; wherefore, he did provide means for us while we did sojourn in the wilderness.” We once had to memorize that passage where Nephi says, I will go and do what the Lord commandeth because he doesn’t command if you can’t do it [paraphrased]. But here it says if the Lord has given you commandments and you make the effort, he will be responsible and provide the means. So we can’t get out of things like the Word or Wisdom, or tithing, or even the Law of Consecration by saying, “Well, it’s not very workable now, so we’ll put it off for a while. It might work then. We’ll defer it to a later time.” The Lord says, “I will make it possible to do that thing if you will make a real effort.” We haven’t made a real effort on so many things.

222 1 Nephi 17:3-5 Notice [in verse 3]: “He did provide the means for us while we did sojourn in the wilderness.” I know people who have used so much clever and sophisticated math on their tithing as if the Lord couldn’t provide the means if they just went ahead and paid it. And here’s a key statement in the verse 4: “And we did sojourn for the space of many years, yea, even eight years in the wilderness. And we did come to the land which we called Bountiful. Well, anyway there was the land Bountiful and the wild honey. “And we beheld the sea, which we called Irreantum, which, being interpreted, is many waters.” There’s a very important Egyptian writing that was read in all the temples every morning in which that name Irreantum was used for the sea. It’s a very interesting name, but we won’t go into it.

222,223 1 Nephi 17:6-13 And they stayed in Bountiful for many days. They didn’t know they were going to sail; they thought they had reached a happy land. Now, this was a place where they could really have a community. They could really get something going here—eight years away from anybody else. Nephi could really take over if that was his idea. Then came the thunderbolt: “The Lord spake unto me, saying: Thou shalt construct a ship.” What? me construct a ship? he says [paraphrased]. He didn’t know anything about ships. Then he asked: “Whither shall I go that I may find ore to molten, that I may make tools to construct the ship after the manner which thou hast

shown unto me?” There was no time to experiment; he went straight ahead with it. The Lord told him where he could find the ore because he couldn’t waste time exploring. Then he made a bellows; he knew about that. Remember, how the boys admire the fine workmanship on the handle of Laban’s sword. They are connoisseurs of precious things. They had precious things of gold, bronze, etc. (the Brass Plates). They were struck by the beautiful workmanship on that brass ball etc. As a rich merchant in the Orient, the one thing you would understand is the value of precious metals and good workmanship. They recognized it. You can’t work with metals without a bellows, and he would certainly know about that and how to make it. They did it very well. Verse 12: “For the Lord had not hitherto suffered that we should make much fire, as we journeyed in the wilderness.” That was because it would give away their position. Remember, they were always moving. Until they got to the Rubc al-Khali, they were always moving through occupied territory and they were always trespassing. That’s why the Arabs are always raiding and always at war. They are always killing each other, and they always have to have the GHAZW. Our wordy RAZE comes from that. It’s your sacred obligation to raid and plunder the camp of anybody whom naturally you consider is trespassing on your land, which they can show by tribal records was really their land a long time back. So this goes on forever. So you don’t build much fire. This is made very clear by Doughty and other writers on the subject. Whenever you are traveling in any dubious territory, either by day or night, don’t make fire because the Lord said, “I will be your light in the wilderness; and I will prepare the way before you, if it so be that ye shall keep my commandments” (verse 13). So you don’t give yourself away by the smoke or by the light.

## Lecture 15 1 Nephi 17-19, 22

**Toward a Promised Land**  
**[A Curse Always Comes With a Blessing]**  
**[The Lord has Nephi Overpower His Objectors]**  
**[Nephi Shown How to Build a Ship]**  
**[They Almost are Lost at Sea]**  
**[Prophet Zenos]**  
**[Isaiah Quoted with Small Changes]**  
**[Great and Abominable Church]**  
**[The Holy One of Israel will Unite All Nations]**

225 Now, we've got the seventeenth chapter, the seventh verse, when the Lord says, you will make a boat—"Thou shalt construct a ship." He didn't have time to scout around for the necessary metals. The Lord told him, I can tell you where to get them. We said they were adept in ores—where to find ores, and how to make the bellows.

226 As far as making the trip, we'll get to the journey here in a second. We talked about not making fire, etc. Now when his brothers saw he was going to build a ship, this was it. They thought, we really have him now; he'll make a complete fool of himself. Verse 18: "They did not believe that I could build a ship." Now you'll notice this. This is where all their pent-up frustrations came out. They rejoiced and they said, We knew you could not construct a ship, ha, ha, ha [paraphrased]. But notice, Nephi himself was bowled over. He first of all said, I don't know how to make ship. [The Lord said], I'll show thee. Verse 9: "And

I said: Lord, whither shall I go that I may find ore to molten that I may make tools?" He didn't expect to make this journey—nobody did. They weren't going to cross the water. They hadn't dreamed of that, as we saw in the other verses on the preceding page. They thought they were going out into some strange wilderness where they would establish a community and Nephi would make himself king and ruler over them in the manner of the companions of the cave or of the various sectaries. This had been going on as we saw in the Nahal Hever for thousands of years, doing the usual things. They thought he was going to be another "the Star" or "the Teacher of Righteousness,"—the kinds of various teachers that lead these communities. The Teacher of Righteousness was the one up in Qumran. The Star was the name for the leader at Damascus, etc. So they never dreamed they would have to cross the water. This was something that really bowled them over.

227 1 Nephi 17:20 So they rejoiced over him and thought, we have him now. You're just as bad as our father, they say in verse 20. Laman and Lemuel are interesting types, you notice—they're complicated characters. If you could find all the references to them, you would find that they have a case going for them, and they are typical.

227 1 Nephi 117:21,22 "Thou art like unto our father.... [verse 21] Behold, these many years we have suffered in the wilderness." Now, would you say that they had a legitimate gripe? Well, from their point of view I think they certainly did. They said, And the worst of it is, we didn't leave a wicked Jerusalem. Those people were keeping the laws; they were religious. They were the official church. The people of Jerusalem were a righteous people; "they kept the statutes and judgments of the Lord and all of his commandments, according to the law of Moses; wherefore we know they are a righteous people; and our father hath judged them, and hath led us away" into this wilderness when we might have been enjoying ourselves all this time. What's the point of having all that wealth if we can't use it?

227,228      1 Nephi 17:33-35; D & C 6:9    Then Nephi gives them a lecture on the past, of what happened and the necessity of being Rechabites—that they should be brought into bondage. Israel, if they didn't move, would be brought into bondage. And they hardened their hearts and blinded their minds. He [the Lord] would destroy them and He did lead them as the case may be. Now this is a very important statement he makes here, speaking in verse 33 of chapter 17: "Do ye suppose that the children of this land, who were in the land of promise [see, the whole land had been occupied by Arabs, Amorites, etc.—all related and all speaking closely related languages; closely related to Hebrew, too—the Ebla Tablets show that], who were driven out by our fathers, do you suppose that they were righteous?" If they were righteous, they would have been the chosen people, he says. Our fathers were chosen for that time, but they weren't righteous very long, he says. "Do you suppose that our fathers would have been more choice than they if they had been righteous? I say unto you, Nay." Then in the verse 35, "Behold, the Lord esteemeth all flesh in one [they could have been the chosen people—blood has nothing to do with it]; he that is righteous is favored of God." And who is righteous in the Book of Mormon? There's a very simple definition of righteousness in the Book of Mormon, as in the book of Ezekiel. He was righteous because he was repentant, and a person who is not repenting is a person who is not righteous. That's all there is to it, because we're all wicked and we all need to repent all the time. "Say nothing but repentance to this generation [See D&C 6:9]." The first word of the Lord to the Nephites was, This is my gospel that the Father calleth upon all men everywhere to repent [See 3 Nephi 11:32]. You have to do that. And as Ezekiel tells us, if a person has been righteous all his life but he's not repenting any more, he's wicked. Of course, he may have been wicked all of his life, and if he's repenting now, he's righteous. It makes no difference. So, always repent, always keep repenting. We'll see what repentance is later on; that's easy enough to get to.

228 1 Nephi 17:36-39 And now we come to that very important doctrine of the promised land—the curse and the blessing. In the Dead Sea Scrolls, the FERAKAH is never mentioned without the QELALAH. The FERAKAH (the blessing) always goes with the QELALAH (the cursing). That is the penalty clause that goes with it. If you sign a contract, it gives you a big advantage. You're not free to break the contract. There's a penalty if you break it commensurate with the gain you would get if you kept it. There has to be a balance there. You have to be willing to run a risk in the same thing. If you're going to get the promised land and you're going to enjoy the benefits of it, you'd better watch out because if you don't live up to the terms of the contract, you're going to be "in the soup." And this is the doctrine here. The earth is adapted to man's pleasure and convenience. Verse 36: "Behold, the Lord hath created the earth that it should be inhabited; and he hath created his children that they should possess it [we're supposed to be here]. And he raiseth up a righteous nation, and destroyeth the nations of the wicked [he's not going to tolerate the abuse of the earth very long.] And he leadeth away the righteous into precious lands [gives them the best possible land and the wicked he gets rid of] ... and curseth the land [the same land] unto them for their sakes." The land is precious—it is not to be abused. And he says he curses the land for their sake. The earth is his footstool, and there is a connection between heaven and earth. He rules "high in the heavens . . . and this earth is his footstool," he says in verse 39 here. So, this is the basic and fundamental principle of the promised land. They're going to a promised land, you see. This is the understanding on what they are going there for.

228,229 1 Nephi 17:42 He [the Lord] brought them out of the land of Egypt, which wasn't their land, and they hardened their hearts (they always did), as 1 Nephi 17:42 notes also, "And they did harden their hearts from time to time, and they did revile against Moses, and also against God," and he led them forth to a land of promise. You notice, the environment does make a difference. I mean, the ambience we live in is conditioned by our own behavior.

You'll always find that.. It's amazing— the environment reflects the people. So heaven is an ambience. It's an environment as well as a state of mind as far as that goes, and so is hell. They're going to create an environment, and this environment is very important. It reflects on us.

229 1 Nephi 17:42; 1 Nephi 19:11 “They were led forth by his matchless power into the land of promise. And now, after all these things, the time has come that they have become wicked [the Jews—after all these things] nearly unto ripeness.” How much longer did they have to last? Three more years, wasn't it. They [Nephi's family] had been wandering for eight years, Nephi says, and Jerusalem was destroyed eleven years after they left. So they had three more years to go at Jerusalem—a winding up. And he tells them about Laman and Lemuel. He says, “Ye are murderers in your hearts and ye are like unto them” because you thought of murdering your father, and that's not very good. And then he tells them, if you don't hear one voice, you'll have to hear the other. Notice, he tells us the same thing in the nineteenth chapter. He says, “Ye have seen an angel... and he hath spoken unto you in a still small voice, but you were past feeling [notice you feel the voice]; wherefore [for that reason], he has spoken unto you like unto the voice of thunder.” If they wouldn't hear the gentle voice, they would get the thunder, and it knocked them out. It scared the daylights out of them. The same thing happens in the 1 Nephi 19:11: “For thus spake the prophet: The Lord God surely shall visit all the house of Israel at that day, some with his voice, because of their righteousness, unto their great joy and salvation, and others with the thunderings and the lightnings of his power” because they're not righteous. You have your choice of the voice you're going to hear. Will it be a good one, or will it be the other one? The voice of thunder will get you moving all right. And so you have the two voices here. Remember, the angel spoke with a voice of thunder, and the earth shook too at the same time

229,230 1 Nephi 17:47 Oh, Nephi's passion here! He is really worked up in verse 47: “Behold, my soul is rent with anguish because of you. My frame has no strength

[and then he's filled with strength]. Touch me not, for I am filled with the power of God [now he really gets going, and he frightens them]... for God had commanded me that I should build a ship. And I said unto them: If God had commanded me to do all things I could do them." And you know that people under stress do marvelous things. So if you have to do something, you can do it if you're filled with the Spirit. And you know cases of women who have lifted cars when they've fallen on children and things like that—phenomenal strength under certain stress. Nephi felt that way. You've had that feeling when you could do almost anything. Besides that, Nephi was an overpowering person. Remember, he had a lot of practice with these fellows, and they were confounded. They durst not do this lest he should wither them. They didn't know what would happen, "so powerful was the spirit of God."

230 1 Nephi 17:53 "And ... the Lord said unto me: Stretch forth thine hand again unto thy brethren, and they shall not wither before thee, but I will shock them, saith the Lord." So there's an electric force here. What is it? St. Elmo's Fire—something like that. He gives them a shock, and that's all; it's enough to give them a jolt.

231,232 1 Nephi 18:4-8 And then he showed them how to make the ship—how to work the timbers, etc., as we saw. It's very interesting. It's the natural way; they've been doing it for thousands of years. Of course, they knew about that much. He had seen it done, but doing it was something else. You have to be an expert. It's inherited, etc. After the manner which the Lord showed him, he made this ship. Then he went often to the mount to pray for instructions, and the Lord showed him great things. And when the brethren saw the ship was finished, they were really impressed. This first-class piece of work had more effect on them, I'm sure, than any sermons by Nephi. He had actually made a ship, and it was a functional ship. It must have been a beauty, and it must have been nice to look at, too. He said [in verse 4] "My brethren beheld that it was good, and that the workmanship thereof was exceedingly fine [it was a beautifully built ship]; wherefore,



they did humble themselves again before the Lord” That would convince them if nothing else would—that he produced this ship. And so they all went into the ship, everyone according to age (Jacob and Joseph having been born in the wilderness), and they were driven by the wind “for the space of many days.”

233 1 Nephi 18:9 Now this is a character sketch. They liked to have parties; they were great party people, Laman and Lemuel, you know. Well, they say that. They enjoyed the rich things of Jerusalem, their friends, etc. They began “to make themselves merry, insomuch as they began to dance, and to sing, and to speak with much rudeness, yea, even that they did forget by what power they had been brought thither.” Now, Joseph Smith says that rudeness is a sin. REVERENTIA (reverence) is reverence for anything—there is no reason for being rude. We must hold nobody or nothing in contempt. We must never do that because we don’t know the values of things; we don’t know how to evaluate at all. As the Romans say, “Everything must be RITE, RECTE, PARENT SOLEMNITER—done ritually, rightly, and with proper solemnity.” In Joseph Smith’s famous address to the brethren he said, You’ve been acting like a lot of children. We must be more serious minded about this thing. The things of God are of great import. O man, your mind must be stretched as far as eternity, and you must ponder these things in great seriousness and think about them [paraphrased]. It doesn’t mean you have to be solemn all the time—nobody laughed more than Joseph Smith. But that’s a different thing from vain and empty laughter. As we’re told in the Dead Sea Scrolls, the hollow, silly laughter doesn’t mean anything. Brigham Young gave a talk on that at the dedication of the Salt Lake Theatre. [That kind of laughter] is not good. Rudeness is a sinful sort of thing. It is treating the world disrespectfully.

234 1 Nephi 18:10-15 “And I, Nephi, began to fear exceedingly lest the Lord should be angry with us [for the way we were behaving].... Wherefore, I, Nephi, began to speak to them with much soberness [now this would make them just madder, wouldn’t it?]; but behold they were angry

with me.” What do you expect by now, after all the lecturing they’d been getting from him? This is the last straw as far as they’re concerned: “We will not that our younger brother shall be a ruler over us.” So they tied him up with cords, and tight, so much that he couldn’t move. And the compass ceased to work. Then came the typhoon, and they were driven back for three days. On the fourth day it looked as if they’re going to founder, and were about to be “swallowed up in the depths of the sea,” so they loosed his hands. His wrists and ankles were terribly swollen. But you notice the sons of Ishmael had joined them.

234,235      1 Nephi 18:19-25 “My children did not soften the hearts of my brethren that they would loose me [that didn’t work—then]. When they saw that they were about to be swallowed up in the depths of the sea they repented of the thing which they had done, insomuch that they loosed me.” Then he took the compass, and it worked, and he steered them back. And they landed with all these seeds and their preparations, etc. Remember, most of the plants in most of the countries of the world had been transplanted there in prehistoric (other) times. It’s very interesting, of course, the geography of plants—where you find them and where you don’t. Verse 23: “And it came to pass that... we did arrive at the promised land.” And they set out there. They were certainly seasoned explorers and survivors by this time. They could go through anything. He says here that as they journeyed in the wilderness they noticed all sorts of things. They knew what they could use and what they couldn’t use. They were prepared for this sort of thing. They were literary people, but after eight years of practice they knew a good deal about surviving and didn’t waste any time exploiting and exploring the land.

235      1 Nephi 19:10-16 In chapter 19 he’s talking about his writing on the plates, etc. In verse 10 he talks about the prophets Zenock and Neum, and the prophet Zenos. It’s a very interesting thing. “He spake concerning the three days of darkness ... unto those who should inhabit the isles of the sea, more especially given unto those who are of the house of Israel.” Notice, he’s much taken with the isles of

the sea here. Notice right across the page in verse 16, “Yea, then will he remember the isles of the sea” again and “all the people who are of the house of Israel,” the same phrase. Verse 11: “The Lord God surely shall visit all the house of Israel at that day, some with his voice [again you see, either the thunders or with his gentler voice]. ... And all these things must surely come, saith the prophet Zenos.” Now, who was Zenos, the prophet? We have a discourse on Zenos here which we won't spend much time with, but he's an interesting character, Zenos or Zenez. His name appears in both forms. Zenos looks like a Greek name, doesn't it? But it isn't; with an x it would be. Twelve times the Book of Mormon names the prophet Zenos. There's no mention of him in the Bible—we have no record of him anywhere, not until around 1906 when he was found. The people of Lehi had brought his writings from Jerusalem, and they were popular, for preachers living hundreds of years after expected people to remember passages of his words—Jacob and Alma. Now how could an important prophet like Zenos, if he ever existed, simply drop out of sight?

236 Helaman 8:19 Then we go into the Book of Mormon Zenos who prophesies “in the midst of the congregations.” That's the expression used here in the Book of Mormon, “in the midst of the congregations.” Like the Old World Zenez, the Book of Mormon Zenos is conscious of being one of the line of prophets, all of whom have testified of the Messiah. Helaman tells us that in chapter 8, verse 19. “And after Zenez had spoken these things he awoke and his spirit returned to him [remember that we are talking about the newly discovered book of Zenez, 1893] and he remembered not what he had said and seen. Then Zenez went forth and preached to the people, saying: ‘If such is to be the rest of the righteous after they have left this life [this shows that much of the vision is missing], it behooves them to die to the things of this corruptible world, that they may not behold its sins.’ And after he had said these things, Zenez died and slept with his fathers.”

236 But notice, [Zenos] gave them a regular Book of Mormon sermon. It sounds like New Testament or Dead Sea

Scrolls. He said, “If such is to be the rest of the righteous after they have left this life, it behooves them to die unto things of this corruptible world, that they may not behold its sins” before he died. So this Zenos is a real person. And the interesting thing about it, which comes in later, he prophesies about the vineyard. He compares Israel with a vineyard, which of course the fifth chapter of Jacob does. And Jacob says he’s quoting Zenos when he tells it, so here we have a beautiful connection between Zenos and Zenez. This one is from Since Cumorah.

236 1 Nephi 19:12 This is a marvelous thing. Look at this twelfth verse here. “And all these things must surely come, saith the prophet Zenos [way back there in the time of the Judges]. And the rocks of the earth must rend; and because of the groanings of the earth, many of the kings of the isles [that’s an odd thing to say] of the sea shall be wrought upon by the spirit of God, to exclaim: The God of nature suffers.”

237,238 1 Nephi 19:13-20 “And as for those who are at Jerusalem, saith the prophet, they shall be scourged by all people, because they crucify the God of Israel”. They “have despised the Holy One of Israel” They will be hated among all nations as a result, despised for despising Him. , Yea, then will he remember the aisles of the sea; yea, and all the [scattered] people who are of the house of Israel, will I gather in, saith the Lord, according to the words of the prophet Zenos, from the four quarters of the earth. Yea, and all the earth shall see the salvation of the Lord. ... I speak unto all the House of Israel.” Again, Nephi’s great fervor and passion—notice his empathy here in verse 20: “I have great workings of the spirit, which doth weary me even that all my joints are weak, for those who are at Jerusalem; for had not the Lord been merciful, to show unto me concerning them, even as he had the prophets of old, I should have perished also.”

238 1 Nephi 19:23 And they knew these things concerning this because they were written on the Brass Plates. “I did read many things unto them” that they might know

what had happened in the past. And then this important statement in verse 23: "And I did read many things unto them that were written in the book of Moses; but that I might more fully persuade them to believe in the Lord their Redeemer I did read unto them that which was written by the prophet Isaiah; for I did liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning." And then what follows are two chapters quoted right from Isaiah, but not word for word. In this book I just read from we have a section on Isaiah. We won't need to linger on it now.

238 Toward the close of his book, Nephi quotes two chapters (48 and 49) of Isaiah in full. This would indeed be a daring thing for a forger to do. Imagine, to include two whole pages, two whole chapters of the Bible in an attempt to fool the Bible-reading public. Well, you're not going to get away with that. Everybody would recognize that for what it was, wouldn't they, right off? If the author of the Book of Mormon was an imposter, his attempts to deceive are prodigiously artless here. But the Book of Mormon follows the language of the King James Bible only as far as the latter conveys the correct meaning of the original. So far is Nephi's translation from being a slavish repetition of our Bible that there is hardly a single verse that is identical in the two translations. Most of the changes are minor, but they are there and they are important because we have the Septuagint to check them. And so we've given a number of sections the way they're quoted in the Book of Mormon in Isaiah and in the Septuagint, and the Book of Mormon is closest to the Septuagint, which is actually over a thousand years older than the Hebrew text, the Masoretic text. That was until the first discovery came along with the Serek Scroll at Qumran was a complete text of Isaiah, a thousand years older than any Hebrew text of Isaiah known before. Then we could compare it and see how well it had survived and how well it has been copied. Miraculously well. There are 3,000 different readings, but they're small readings—different punctuation, ways of expressing things, endings, etc., They are there; it's not the same thing. It's the same as the way it's quoted here. Almost every verse has little changes in it. There are some verses that have some

important changes, and they're significant ones.

239 1 Nephi 19:23 Notice: "I did liken all scriptures unto us that it might be for our profit and learning" because Isaiah's talking to them as well as he's talking to us. Remember, we talked about the recurrent scenario, and that's what we have here—the key to the Book of Mormon. Their history is really our history. We are all taking the same standard test, talking the same terms, etc. The props change, the scene changes, the background changes, the sets and the technology change—but the issues are always the same. It's a test. We're all trying to qualify for the same job, the same future employment—to rule and reign in the House of Israel. So it applies to us just as much as it does to them. That's why Isaiah is so alive today. He said he knew they were very treacherous. He just bawls Israel out, etc.

239 1 Nephi 22:1-4 I'm going to skip these two chapters of Isaiah. Let's come to chapter 22, when the brethren ask him what these things mean that Isaiah talks about. Notice they say in 1 Nephi 22:1, "What meaneth these things which ye have read?" Aren't they just spiritual? We're not going to be bound by them; these are just spiritual. This is always the way to weasel out of a situation. This is just spiritual. I'll just pay a spiritual tithe; that's the important thing. He says, No, they're both. In the second verse he says, "by the spirit are all things made known unto the prophets, which shall come upon the children of men according to the flesh [it will be literal]. Wherefore, the things of which I have [spoken and] read are things pertaining to things both temporal and spiritual; for it appears that the house of Israel, sooner or later, will be scattered upon all the face of the earth, and also among all nations [notice a complicated ethnic picture too].... And they are scattered to and fro on the islands of the sea." As I was saying about Eldad hadani, that includes the Ten Tribes, you see. Well, they had already been scattered. They were scattered in the earlier times, 720 [B.C.] when Israel fell to the Assyrians. But then the rest of them are all scattered. They continue.

239 1 Nephi 22:5,6 “And also concerning all those who shall hereafter be scattered and be confounded [confounded means mixed up together with other people], because of the Holy One of Israel; for against him will they harden their hearts; wherefore they shall be scattered with all nations and shall be hated of all men.” Well, you know what happened. You know about the Holocaust and how many times that sort of thing has happened. Two thousand years of that—no people ever had to suffer like that. Then they will be nursed by the Gentiles [verse 6] “Their daughters have been carried upon their shoulders” and given their support. It’s a very interesting thing. When it speaks of their daughters, he says they’re speaking of temporal things. Now the interesting thing is that these Jewish girls married princes, kings, and dukes all over. They’re such fascinating women, as you know. They’re marvelous. There’s something about not just a Jewish mama, but a Jewish girl. They have such intelligence, such verve, such dash, such industry.

240 1 Nephi 22:6-12 “It meaneth us in the days to come [so there are specific references here], and also all our brethren who are of the house of Israel.” And there shall be “a mighty nation among the Gentiles upon the face of this land; and by them shall our seed be scattered. And after our seed is scattered the Lord God will proceed to do a marvelous work among the Gentiles [it’s likened unto their being nourished by the Gentiles]. And [the Lord] is going to keep the promise to Abraham that “in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.” And they can’t be blessed [without help] because they can’t save themselves. You remember, they’re supposed to be reduced to almost nothing at all. They will not survive at all, chapter 25 of Matthew says, “unless the time is cut short in righteousness.” There would be none of them left. They didn’t have a chance if the Lord didn’t intervene, and so he says they “cannot be blessed unless he shall make bare his arm in the eyes of the nations [He shall intervene with force in the eyes of the nations]. Wherefore, the Lord God will proceed to make bare his arm in the eyes of all the nations.” This is what’s going on here. When everything is going downhill, men do not have control. They cannot

reverse the trend— God must show his arm then. And then “he will bring them again out of captivity [no one knows who they are, notice] and they shall be gathered together to the lands of their inheritance [plural—not just Israel, the lands of their inheritance]; and they shall be brought out of obscurity and out of darkness.” Who knows where they are? So don’t argue about where the Ten Tribes are.

240,241      1 Nephi 22:13,14      As to the abominable church which has rule over the whole earth: Elsewhere it says that, and here it says, “the whore of all the earth.” Now no one church beguiles the whole world, the whole earth. This, as we’ve seen, is the collective, as far as that goes. Verse 14: “And every nation which shall war against thee, O house of Israel, shall be turned one against another [well, of course the Arabs fight each other, the European nations fight each other, everybody fights each other]. ... All that fight against Zion shall be destroyed.” Now the point is, Zion is not an achievement. Zion is a project here, and there is no Zion. Zion is not on the earth now. We do not have one heart and one mind and no poor among us. That’s far from the case. And, there are those who oppose it. Verse 14: “And all that fight against Zion shall be destroyed,” the great and abominable and this raging hostility against the Church.

241      1 Nephi 22:16-18      And then comes the first vision. Verse 16: “For the time soon cometh [after that] that the fulness of the wrath of God shall be poured out upon all the children of men; for he will not suffer that the wicked shall destroy the righteous. Wherefore, he will preserve the righteous by his power [and we don’t know why, but here he talks about something], even if it so be that the fullness of his wrath must come, and the righteous be preserved, even unto the destruction of their enemies by fire.” He doesn’t refer to the sword at all in the Book of Mormon. How many times? About twenty—eight times he refers to the destruction, and it is always by fire, and in these terms. “Wherefore, the righteous need not fear; for thus saith the prophet, they shall be saved, even if it so be as by fire.” What’s that? A counter fire. What is it? Will the wicked



destroy each other by fire and thus save the righteous? “Behold, my brethren, I say unto you these things must shortly come.” Shortly after Nephi speaking? No. Shortly after the thing described in the verse 8 above here, where he says, “And after our seed is scattered, the Lord God will proceed to do a marvelous work among the Gentiles.” Then, you see. Shortly after that time will come “fire, and a vapor of smoke must come; and it must needs be upon the face of this earth [see, we find no mention of the sword here; it’s covered with a vapor of smoke]; and it cometh unto men according to the flesh [I’m not talking about a spiritual fire]. If it so be that they will harden their hearts against the Holy One of Israel.”

241,242      1 Nephi 22:19-23 This is an unimaginable situation. How could any smoke cover the whole earth? What kind of a thing would that be? Wars were very well contained up until now; this is something else. And now the whole seas incarnadine are polluted. Verse 19: “For behold, the righteous shall not perish.” Now this is the only possible defense. The righteous shall not perish. Repent! That’s the guarantee. We don’t know how it’s going to be done, but the Lord says he will manage it. You just trust him and trust righteousness, and don’t put your trust in the arm of flesh. Notice verse 22: “And the righteous need not fear, for they are those who shall not be confounded. But it is the kingdom of the devil.” And then he talks about the four things that make our world, our day. The great abomination is a composite here, you see, when he talks about the church itself. “For the time speedily shall come that all churches.” Notice the destruction includes not just one church but all churches. The great and abominable includes all churches that have this, the four things that we all set our hearts on today. Notice what they are: Gain and power and popularity and the lusts of the flesh. Those are the four things. That’s your prime-time mix. These are our role models today, because they have these things, the things we like to watch. We like to see the wealth and the corruption and the crime and the violence, etc., because the things we covet are gain, first of all, and then power. The power gives the money, and the money gives the power.

Then you have to be popular—that’s an important thing, if you’re going to go into business. Then, of course, you do it all, and you have your private life, which is not so private. It’s terribly public, I guess. So, the kingdom of the devil. “They are those who must be consumed as stubble.” There you are, that burning of stubble again. That makes me nervous.

242 1 Nephi 22: 24-29 Well, let’s finish the book now. Verse 24: “The Holy One of Israel must reign in dominion, and might, and power, and great glory. And he gathered his children from the four quarters of the earth; and he numbereth his sheep, and they know him . . . and because of the righteousness of his people [the only thing that will save them—the righteousness of his people], Satan has no power; wherefore he cannot be loosed for the space of many years, for he hath no power over the hearts of the people [this is Satan’s battleground, their hearts, and the one effective weapon against the forces of evil we talk about is righteousness; you don’t go back and fight them, etc.].... But, behold, all nations [this phrase occurs ninety times in the Book of Mormon, the importance of bringing all nations into play; it isn’t just for one limited group, or one special tribe, or a chosen people, or church, or anything like that—or church] kindreds, tongues, and people shall dwell safely in the Holy One of Israel if it so be that they will repent.” It doesn’t say necessarily they are members of the church or anything like that, but they shall dwell and they shall be safe in the Holy One of Israel if they will repent—all nations. So the Church is not provincial and it’s not ethnic.

242 Here also all the churches [are mentioned], and this has become very characteristic of all churches, hasn’t it? This doesn’t sound like a respectful way to talk about churches. But they’re certainly after gain, they’re certainly after power, and they certainly want to become popular because you don’t get gain unless you’re popular. That’s your numbers, you see— people. And what do they do when they get rich? Invariably they become corrupt.

242 We do the second book now, and he really breaks loose. The great book is the second book of Nephi. That is where we really get something, and so we don't want to rush these things.

## Lecture 16 2 Nephi 1-4

### **“Encircled ... in the Arms of His Love”: Oneness with God and the Atonement [Various Theories of Atonement Reviewed] [Rabbinical Schools Deny the Temple and the Atonement]**

243 2 Nephi 1:5-7 So we start out with 2 Nephi, and we really get into some pretty deep stuff. It begins with Lehi [he quotes from The Odyssey in Greek]. Remember, how The Odyssey begins with all of them going home. Well, we won't go into that, but this is the way The Odyssey opens. Jerusalem was destroyed, and Troy was destroyed. We're beginning a new story—a new epic, so to speak. We're starting in the New World now. We've shifted the whole scene, and it's a new act. Notice the fourth verse. Jerusalem is destroyed, so we can wipe that out and take that as finished now. And, on the other hand, “we have obtained a land of promise [now there is a fresh beginning] ... which is choice above all other lands [now, no map is given here]; a land which the Lord God hath covenanted with me should be a land for the inheritance of my seed. Yea, the Lord hath covenanted this land unto me and to my children forever, and also all those who should be led out of the other countries by the hand of the Lord .” They're not the only people that are going to come here, obviously. There's only one condition to people being here, it tells us in verse 7: “Wherefore, this land is consecrated unto him whom he shall bring.” And this is the only restriction of people coming here is that God is

aware of their coming. You didn't have to be a Nephite or a Lamanite to come here now [in Lehi's time] or in ancient times. Every time we'd find something—anything you'd find out lying around that was pre-Columbian—always had to be Nephite or Lamanite. Well, that isn't so at all. All sorts of people were coming before and after—the only condition being that the Lord knew that they were coming, and he brought them here.

243,244      2 Nephi 1:7 “This land is consecrated unto him whom he shall bring. And if it so be that they shall serve him . . . they shall never be brought down into captivity; if so, it shall be because of iniquity [see, but there is always a condition there—unless it's because of iniquity]; for if iniquity shall abound, cursed shall be the land for their sakes, but unto the righteous it shall be blessed forever. The blessing and the curse, the BERAKAH and the QELALAH, always go together. You never get the blessing without the curse. You might just as well say this promised land is a cursed land. The promise is a curse on the land. It says so here, and many times. It can be both at once, a blessed and a cursed—to the righteous, blessed; to the wicked, cursed. It's the same land, same place, and he says it was the same thing with the former inhabitants of the land. Remember, if they had been righteous, would our fathers have pushed them out? No, not at all, he says [paraphrased]. And so it's both at once. You don't have it made just because this is the promised land.

244      2 Nephi 1:8 And then he talks about kings here, and this is an interesting thing, this next one. “And behold, it is wisdom that this land should be kept as yet from the knowledge of other nations [because otherwise kings would take it over]; for behold, many nations would overrun the land [if they wanted it], that there would be no place for an inheritance.” He is going to tell us after this that it is going to be free of kings, and this is a very important thing. But remember, it was kings that claimed it, right from the first, as soon as they knew it was there. There's the Donation of Constantine in 324, the year before the Nicene Council. It was a forgery. It came out of Rheims which [had been] a

forgery factory in the eighth and ninth centuries, and all of these forgeries came out. Well the Donation of Constantine was given after Columbus, of course. A line was drawn down the middle of the Atlantic, and everything west of that line belonged to the Holy Roman Emperor or the king of Franks. See, this fictitious document was granted by the pope. But the Donation of Constantine was used a lot later on—that everything in the New World belonged to the Frankish king or to the Holy Roman Emperor. Charlemagne was the ruler of the Franks— not at that time though.

244 2 Nephi 1:9 Kings claimed it first right from the beginning. There were claims for the king of Spain, claims for the king of England, claims for the king of France. It was always the king that claimed it here. It was claimed for the Russians on the West Coast, and later claimed for the Japanese emperor. Everybody claimed it, always in the name of kings. This is an important thing, that they want to displace it that way. Of course, with the Dutch and the Portuguese it's the same thing. It was all in the name of the king. But the Lord said, no, that would not happen. It's the land of promise, that inasmuch as they behaved themselves, "they shall prosper ... that they may possess this land unto themselves." Now again, is this selfish? Now they have it all to themselves (oh, goodie, goodie, it's just for us). No, not at all. He says, inasmuch as they keep the commandments, and you'll soon find out what the commandments mean—sharing and sharing equally. This is very important in the Book of Mormon. It brings that out all the time. That's the basic commandment, the one that Alma emphasizes so much.

245 2 Nephi 1:10 Now notice in the tenth verse: "But behold, when the time cometh that they shall dwindle in unbelief [it doesn't say if, it says when; the Lord knew it was going to happen, and it did happen, of course], after they have received so great blessings from the hand of the Lord." This is the whole thing, you see; then they have to pay a heavier price than they ever would otherwise. Already in the second century, they were saying (the seven apostolic fathers all deal with this question), "God has

invested so heavily in the church so far that he won't allow it to be taken away. The gospel can never be taken away because God has already started us out and given us his blessing. It's going to be eternal." But Clement, second Clement, Polycarp, and especially Ignatius of Antioch in his seven letters, say, "That's all the more dangerous. The more blessing we've received, the greater danger we're in." As Ignatius said, quoting the scripture, "For if the angels that kept not the first estate were cast down, how do you expect to be supported no matter what you do, after the blessings you have received?" You're under stricter obligation to behave than anybody else. And if you don't, you're in greater danger. And so all the apostolic fathers looked upon the future of the church as very bleak indeed. In fact, the curtain had rung down.

245 2 Nephi 1:10 "Having all the commandments from the beginning, and having been brought by his infinite goodness into this precious land of promise—behold, I say if the day shall come that they will reject the Holy One of Israel, the true Messiah, their Redeemer and their God, behold, the judgments of him that is just shall rest upon them. Yea, he will bring other nations unto them, . . . and he will take away from them the lands of their possessions, and he will cause them to be scattered and smitten." How true that was. He's talking about the Nephites now, you see, and the Lamanites. The Lamanites are still losing. They're still losing ground, and astonishing things are happening now. Well, I won't go into that. Where have people ever been scattered and smitten as much and as long as the Indians? There have been other scatterings and smittings, of course, the Jewish being the classical one. But as a whole people being constantly pressed down, never given a chance, just ground down to nothing. As it tells us later in the Book of Mormon, scattered and smitten—this is what happened. Believe me, they have been scattered, and they still are.

245,246 2 Nephi 1:13 "O that ye would awake; awake from a deep sleep." Those he is addressing are already in a deep, deep sleep, and they remain there. This is like a voice in a dream. Here in verse 14 is the hardest criticism

against the Book of Mormon. They thought this just wiped it out because of this passage here: “Hear the words of a trembling parent, whose limbs ye must soon lay down in the cold and silent grave, from whence no traveler can return.” You see, that’s taken right out of Hamlet, nothing else. That isn’t what Hamlet says at all. And, of course, the ordinary epithet for the world of the dead, both the Greek and Babylonian term, is IRSIT LA TARI, the land of no return. They always called it the land of no return. That was the regular title for it. We talk about that in the book, *Lehi in the Desert*, I think, or *Since Cumorah*.

246,247      2 Nephi 1:14    Here [in verse 14] it doesn’t say anything about a land. It says, “the cold and silent grave from whence no traveler can return. And this is the classic statement, as I said. The Babylonian name for it is the IRSIT LA TARI, the land of no return. He doesn’t even call it the land; he just says it’s “the grave from whence no traveler can return.” You’d expect him to say that, but you’d be surprised how that has been exploited. This absolutely proves the Book of Mormon is a fraud, that Joseph Smith got it out of Hamlet [people claim]. But it is not the quotation from Hamlet at all.

247      2 Nephi 1:15-17    And now we come to a very interesting thing. The point of these chapters in 2 Nephi is that he’s dealing with the Atonement, and this is a very important thing. I don’t know whether to talk about it now or a little later, because he’s going to get into it quite deeply here. But he says, “I am encircled about eternally in the arms of his love.” Now, this is an extremely common figure in Egyptian. If it sounds evangelic or something like that, don’t fool yourself. This is standard. He says “And I desire that ye should remember to observe the statutes and judgments of the Lord.” Note the formula of the Dead Sea Scrolls, always MISHPATIM and HUQQIM, the statutes and judgments. That’s a pair that always goes together, especially in the Dead Sea Scrolls—“the statutes and judgments of the Lord.” You’ll find them elsewhere. “This hath been the anxiety of my soul from the beginning.” Nephi is worried, and he ends up in deep despair. And Jacob picks



it up in even deeper despair, so things go down all the time. Notice what he says in verse 17: "I have feared ... that ye be cut off and destroyed forever." Well, already we're getting the idea of the Atonement. "Encircled eternally in the arms of love," and the alternative is to be "cut off and destroyed forever."

247 As you should all know by now, the Atonement is AT-ONE-MENT. It is one of the few English words, like FORGIVENESS and RIGHTEOUSNESS, that are theological, technical words— one of the very few that are used. It's only used once in the New Testament, which is in Romans 5:11, and, in the new Revised Standard Version of the Bible, used by most churches, it doesn't appear at all. They've changed it everywhere to reconciliation. So what is meant by atonement! It's a very important thing. Now, as I said, this happened to be the lesson yesterday [in the Gospel Doctrine class]. W. J. Wolf, in the most recent writing on the Atonement, says, "There's not a single New Testament document on the Atonement." Well, I'm not going to give you the Hebrew background. You'll find in the Hebrew background in the tenth chapter of the book of Hebrews, where the whole thing as carried out in the temple by the Jews is regarded as a similitude of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. That's the way Paul interpreted it, but that's not the way most people interpret it. There are other interpretations. As Wolf says here, "There is not a single New Testament document on the Atonement. There is simply a collection of images and metaphors from which subsequent tradition built. Tradition has tried to decide what parts of this picture should be taken literally and what parts metaphorically."

247,248 We have all sorts of things here. There are various words that are used for it, translated with it in the Bible and theological writings. There are half a dozen of them here; I'll refer to them presently. But he goes on and says, "Which parts are to be taken literally and which metaphorically?" What are we talking about, "the atoning blood of Christ"? To what degree does it atone and what do you mean by atoning! How can it at-one a thing? And

this has developed extended rationale. It's personalized in Isaiah 53. "Images include the ransom, the buying free of the slave with emphasis on the costliness. This is called the commercial interpretation [you hear that too; you've sinned, and Christ will pay the price]. There is emphasis on forgiveness of sin as in Mark 14 and Matthew, and the image of the lamb developed by John. The main issue is whether the Atonement is the completion of the Old Testament sacrifice or if it's something independent and standing alone, which the Old Testament simply foreshadows," which, of course, is what we believe.

248 "There are three main interpretations of atonement. One is the classical interpretation of the Greek fathers, which integrates incarnation, atonement, and resurrection. It uses the image of a military contest—onward Christian soldiers—the inevitable victory of Christ. We march behind and we are automatically saved." We win because we're the good guys, etc. And then there's Anselm's interpretation which is being renewed today in a famous work of his called *Cur Deus Homo, Why God Became Man*. This is satisfaction. This is medieval. The Lord's honor has been damaged, so the gallant knight has to go out and avenge the honor to the person above him, to his lord, of course. Sin has damaged the honor to God, and it has to be avenged. And Christ pays the satisfaction. There must be satisfaction—I mean the casting down of the gauntlet. There is the jousting in the field of honor, the trial—well, they used various trials and tests—the trial by ordeal to see who's guilty and who isn't. All these things are medieval. Anselm refers to all of them. It's Christ who pays the price, he fights the fight, he vindicates his Father's honor, etc.

249 But, what are the other interpretations? There is Calvin's interpretation, the Reformation theory, that Christ as a substitute endured God's punishment so we wouldn't have to endure it again. There's something to be said for all of these, you'll notice. When Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac, remember there was a ram caught in the thicket, and the angel said, "Nay, lay not thy hand upon the lad—here is a substitute." You don't have to sacrifice Isaac; you have

to sacrifice the ram. The rabbis tell us, the Talmud tells us, that the name of the ram was "Isaac." So this was Isaac, because in the rites of the tabernacle, later the temple, Aaron and his sons would place their hands upon the head of the ram, or the bullock, and transfer not only their guilt but their personalities to it, so to speak. Then when it was killed, they were killed. It was the equivalent or substitute sacrifice. Rosenberg has recently written a very interesting book on that. It's the idea of the substitute sacrifice, and Christ is substituted that way. This was the theory, and there is something to be said for it because the work of the temple is proxy all the way through—and we can't pay the price, certainly. You can't pull yourself up by your own bootstraps. Well, the Reformation theory includes that and the Protestants' "justification by faith." It's faith that will do it [according to them].

249,250      Then there are Hugo Grotius, the Dutchman, and Jonathan Edwards and the Puritans later on. That is the rectorial or governmental theory. It's all done in the public interest. Christ's death has a deterrent effect on sinners. So we have these various things. I think we have an interesting lesson in philology here. We may well refer to that—what the meaning of the word is. Strangely, the Book of Mormon gives us the most clear-cut connection between the ancient word KAPPORETAND our Old English AT-ONE-MENT (atonement). The first thing to notice is that the word atonement is unique in touching all bases. The other words will cover part of it. For example, reconciliation is the commonest rendering of the word, which is KATALLAGE. That means "changing back again to where you were." It's the same thing as TESHUVAH in Hebrew. It means "a return,"—you return to where you were. But you can never come back; you can't go home again after you have sinned. That has to be washed away, so there is baptism. The idea is to return, but how can you return to a place if you never were there before? All throughout the doctrine of atonement, a pre-existence is assumed—returning to the presence of the Father, coming home again. The Pearl, the earliest Christian hymn, is beautiful on that particular subject. But the Greek word they used in Romans 5:11

is KATALLAGE. There it is called atonement, meaning “made one of the Father again.” This is “made one” in a very special sense. In reconciliation you have a settlement or an understanding, but that doesn’t make you one, you see. Then redemption is another common one. The price is paid (that’s right) and it’s got you off, but you don’t even have to know the person who paid the price, let alone be one with him. The idea of being one goes beyond having the price paid. Then salvation means “you are safe home again,” but you are not one with anybody in particular. There is no specification of what sense this is to be taken. Then TESHUVAH, the Hebrew “returning, repentance.” But where is the oneness again?

250 2 Nephi 1:15 Then there’s the KPR. KIPPUR is the Hebrew word. You all know about YOM KIPPUR. The root is KPR, and KIPPUR is the “act of atoning.” That’s HILASKESTHAI, and it refers literally to the “covering of the Ark, covering of the mercy seat.” The KAPPORET, the thing that covers, is the HILASTERION, where God appeared to forgive the sins of the people. It was the front curtain or the veil of the tabernacle. After the people had completed all the rites and ordinances of atonement, then the veil was parted and God (the Savior) was supposed to speak from the tabernacle and tell the people that their sins were forgiven and they were welcomed to his presence. That’s this idea of being taken back into his embrace again, “encircled about eternally in the arms of his love” [2 Nephi 1 15].

251,252 2 Nephi 4:32 We’ll go ahead to chapter 4 of 2 Nephi in which we have a vivid desert episode. Talk about one of those dazzling little vignettes, it’s here. Nephi describes himself as running away from his enemies. He has been oppressed terribly. His big brothers have never stopped dogging him; they have been after him all the time. He has been given a rough time by everybody. The family sort of resents his being the leader anyway, being the youngest until his two brothers were born there [in the wilderness]. In verse 32 he says, “May the gates of hell be shut continually before me, because that my heart is broken and my spirit is contrite! O Lord, wilt thou not shut

the gates of thy righteousness before me, that I may walk in the path of the low valley [now in a thing like the Sir at Bani Hildl, a person escaping from his enemy always wanted to take the low, quick, straight path as far as he can get away from him—the easiest path to take and the surest to escape, not having to run up and down any hills or anything like that], that I may be strict in the plain road!" That means "sticking right to the path." That's the DEREKH, you see. At the end of the first Psalm: "The way of the wicked shall be lost in the sand." It goes that way. That my way may not be that way, "that I may be strict in the plain road [that I may stick to the proper path]! O Lord, wilt thou encircle me around in the robe of thy righteousness!" This is an Arabic idyll. When a person is running away, he runs to the tent of any great sheikh he can find. He goes in and kneels down before the sheikh and says, "I am thy suppliant." The sheikh is then obligated to put his caftan over his KATEF which is the same word as shoulder—to put the hem of his garment over his shoulder and say, "AHLAN WA-SAHLAN WA-MARHABAN. This is your tent, this is your family." The Hebrew word OHEL for tent is the same as the Arabic word AHL for family. He says, "We'll make a place for you." Then the lord or the chief is under obligation to defend you against the enemies that are chasing you. You are now under his protection, and he will protect you. This is part of the medieval code.

252 2 Nephi 4:33 This is what we have here. "O lord, wilt thou encircle me around in the robe of thy righteousness!" He's running away and he wants the plain road so he can get away from his enemies and wants to be encircled with the robe of righteousness. "O Lord, wilt thou make a way for mine escape before mine enemies! Wilt thou make my path straight before me! Wilt thou not place a stumbling block in my way." A stumbling block is the Greek word SKANDALON; it's anything you trip up on when you are running, what you bump your toe on. The Hebrew word is EBEN MIKSHOL [or SUR MIKSHOL] which means "the rock of stumbling, a stone of offense. Sometimes it's called "a stumbling block" and sometimes "a rock of offense." It's anything that will trip you up when you are trying to go

somewhere. You are making a nice thing of it, and all of sudden you fall flat on your face. That's dangerous, you see. So he says, don't let that happen to me. "But that thou wouldst clear my way before me, and hedge not up my way, but the ways of mine enemy [make his way hard]." I showed that picture from the time of Lehi of an Arab riding his camel, and it said he was escaping from his enemies. He was running for dear life. That's what we have here. Notice how the image is: Make the way straight for me so I can get through. Then when I go to you, will you put the robe of your righteousness around me and I will be in your protection. My enemy, meanwhile, is blocked in the sand. He is wandering around and doesn't know where he is going. He's lost, he's been blocked. But don't put any stumbling block in my way so that I can escape. So we have these interesting situations here.

252,253      Alma 5:33,7,10,57 Now we will turn to Alma 5:33. This idea of being embraced is very strong in the Book of Mormon as an expression for the Atonement. Since that's what the Sunday School lesson was yesterday, I happened to stumble on this. "Behold, he sendeth an invitation unto all men, for the arms of mercy are extended towards them, and he saith: Repent, and I will receive you." This is the embrace; he is willing to take you. Notice, "Come unto me and ye shall partake of the fruit of the tree of life; yea, ye shall eat and drink [come into my camp] of the bread and the waters of life freely." He will take you in when you are running away and he says his invitation and his arms are extended. And in 2 Nephi 1:15 we have it where he says, "But behold, the Lord hath redeemed my soul from hell; I have beheld his glory, and I am encircled about eternally in the arms of his love." That's what got us started here. It's the embrace he is in. We have this ideogram. And the opposite of that you will find in Alma 5:7. We notice that the opposite is the very same thing: "Behold, he changed their hearts. . . Behold, they were in the midst of darkness; nevertheless, their souls were illuminated by the light of the everlasting word; yea, they were encircled about by the bands of death [that's the other encircling; Satan can

encircle you too], and the chains of hell, and an everlasting destruction did await them/\* You get this same negative idea right here in verse 10: "And now I ask of you on what conditions are they saved? Yea, what grounds had they to hope for salvation? What is the cause of their being loosed from the bands of death, yea, and also the chains of hell?"

253 Alma 5:25,57 In the one you are bound tight to one person; in the other you are bound tight to another. And there is nothing ever mentioned about anything in between the two, which is a very interesting thing. The opposite of oneness is in Alma 5:25. This is the alternative to being embraced, to being taken into the family. "I say unto you, Nay; except ye make our Creator a liar from the beginning, or suppose that he is a liar from the beginning, ye cannot suppose that such can have place [remember, Nephi said to Zoram, 'You come down to our father's tent in the desert and you can have place with us; MARHABAN means 'have a place with us,' and here he uses that term again] in the kingdom of heaven; but they shall be cast out for they are the children of the kingdom of the devil." The opposite is to be cast out or not included—thrown out of the house. Then notice verse 57 in the same chapter. (These are just at random.) "Come ye out from the wicked, and be ye separate, and touch not their unclean things. The names of the wicked shall not be mingled with the names of my people." The idea is being cast out and cut off completely, and that's what we are talking about here. We have a section on this in the Egyptian writing on embracing at the veil, for example. Remember, the PAROKET is also the front veil of the tabernacle which the Lord parted to grant the people atonement after they had performed all the ordinances necessary on the Day of Atonement, the tenth day of the seventh month. That was when he greeted them and claimed that he was one with them. So there is the emphasis on at-one. It's this oneness that makes all the difference in the world, that you can't get anywhere else. It's good that this word survived and came right through in English, never questioned, as against the alternatives which are used today.

255,256 The argument is definitely on President Smith's side, for as he observes, "The Bible account, being the most rational and indeed [the] only historical one, ... we cannot but come to the conclusion that this is not the work of chance." We are talking about atonement, and only the scriptures will explain why this is necessary. And the ancients don't have atonement. See, there is no Egyptian word for sin. The whole idea is quite different there. And what do you do if you don't have the Atonement? What is your view of life? The Greeks, etc. I sin, but all people do that. You can't help that; everybody does that. Life is hard, so we all sin. What happens as a result of that? There is no atonement, no forgiveness, no hereafter. So the only alternative is the tragic view of life, and all the ancients have this terribly tragic view of life. You either have the Atonement, "come back home and be one," or you are going to have this infinitely tragic view of life—we're going nowhere. It's absolutely basic in the Greek tragedies, for example. They do have redemption, forgiveness, and all those other things—but not the hereafter, the Atonement, the life eternal, etc. None of them have that. In the old Norse sagas, it is even more poignant. It's terrible and tears you apart.

257 2 Nephi 1:16-20; 2 Nephi 9:41 Now Lehi goes on with more imagery that is very interesting in 2 Nephi 1:16: "And I desire that ye should remember to observe the statutes and the judgments of the Lord ... for I have feared, lest ... ye be cut off and destroyed forever." See, there's the alternative. You are either embraced in his arms or you are cut off and encircled by the chains of death—the other thing that encircles you. Verse 19: "But behold, his will be done; for his ways are righteousness forever. [In spite of his despair, he says], "Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land; but inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall be cut off from my presence." That's the cutting off. What can be closer to his presence than to be in his embrace and one with him. There's that marvelous passage—the most beautiful in the Book of Mormon, I think. "The keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant



there” (2 Nephi 9:41). He will receive you personally, take your hand, and give you the signs and tokens himself when you come, as he did to the Nephites. Every one of them he received individually, even the children. One by one, he blessed them and received them. He called each person by name and identified himself to each one. This is what we do here in the rite of the Atonement in Israel. It's very clear as a matter of fact. Exodus is where it is set forth in the Old Testament, and then in all the books of Moses you have the rite of the Atonement. It's very important.

257,258      2 Nephi 1:23-31 “Awake, my sons; put on the armor of righteousness.” The oldest manuscript of this comes from Spain. The Lorica means “the armor of righteousness.” It's a famous poem, and philologically it's a very strange thing. Norbert Wiener's father, who was a professor of philology at Harvard for many years, wrote a book about this, *The Lorica*. It's such a strange mixture of language and everything else. It describes the “armor of righteousness” as a whole thing. It seems to have been very ancient, both among the Hebrews and the Jews. He is talking about it here, and it is a natural defense, the Lorica—the armor of righteousness. “Shake off the chains with which ye are bound [there it is again] ... and arise from the dust. Rebel no more against your brother.... Were it not for him, we must have perished with hunger in the wilderness.” He saved us; he brought us through. But [in verse 25] he is still afraid; he doesn't think he is making much progress. “And I exceedingly fear and tremble because of you [he is not optimistic].... He hath not sought for power nor authority over you, ... and that which ye call anger was the truth, ... but it was the Spirit of the Lord which was in him, which opened his mouth to utterance that he could not shut it.... And if ye will hearken unto him I leave unto you a blessing, yea, even my first blessing. But if ye will not hearken unto him I take away my first blessing.” This exhortation is to the whole family; he is going to give their separate blessings later. Notice, Zoram is a “fifth wheel;” he is another member. He has married the oldest daughter of Ishmael. Lehi says that Zoram is going to be a true friend to Nephi forever, like the Plataeans and the Athenians. Verse

31: Thy seed shall be blessed with his seed, that they dwell in prosperity long upon the face of this land.”

258 2 Nephi 2:2,4 Now he starts speaking to Jacob, his firstborn in the wilderness. Notice verse 2: “Thou knowest the greatness of God; and he shall consecrate thine afflictions for thy gain.” What does that mean? It means you will get credit for enduring. There is nothing you will go through that you won’t be thankful for and glad of later on. He will consecrate your afflictions for your gain. In verse 4 we see that the Book of Mormon is the handbook of the Atonement. This whole chapter is on the Atonement, and we are going to get a rather clear explanation of things. He starts out here, “For the Spirit is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. And the way is prepared from the fall of man, and salvation is free. And men are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil.” This is the first basis, of course. The conscience is absolutely basic because you are not going to have any Atonement unless you have guilt feelings.

258,259 The final idea: Why do so few people know anything about the Atonement? We leave it up in the air—we don’t know what we are talking about. Why do so few know anything about the gospel, for that matter? But the point is, here is this thing which is the central point of the teachings of Jesus Christ—his atoning blood. The term is used over and over [in the Book of Mormon]; it’s dominant. It’s a central theme, and yet, as we saw here, there is no agreement about it [in the world]. People are trying to figure out what it is. There is one very good explanation of that—something has been taken away. As I told you about Johanan Ben Zakkai, they didn’t want the temple. They didn’t want any of this. Remember, the main purpose of the temple was the carrying out of the sacrifices of the Atonement. That’s what you find described in the books of Moses. The rabbis, who were teachers and not priests, were glad to get rid of it. Ben Zakkai took his school and went over in Jamnia and founded the first rabbinical school. They didn’t want any of this, so these things were removed. As the Book of Mormon tells us, many precious things were

removed. That's why people stumble. It's very obvious that the Atonement stands right there, and yet it's a vacuum. There's something missing. The explanation is very clearly given by Nephi at the first that many precious things have been removed; therefore, many stumble because of that. The Gentiles stumble, etc. It's obvious that has happened, but the Book of Mormon replaces that. It replaces those parts that have been removed, and that's why we need it—among other things. Precious things have been removed from the Bible.

# Lecture 17 2 Nephi 2

**The Law and the Atonement**  
**[There Must Be An Opposition in All Things]**  
**[Adam Fell That Men Might Be]**  
**[We Are Free to Choose Liberty & Eternal Life]**

260 We are on the second chapter of 2 Nephi, perhaps the hardest chapter in the book. It's about the Law of Moses. We have often said that the Nephites were living by the Law of Moses. We are repeatedly reassured that salvation does not come by the Law of Moses. Then why is there so much fuss about it? It leads you and guides you on the way. What has got me going here is that I have just been reading the classic work on the subject of the history of law by a Sinologist who is also a scientist, Joseph Needham. He goes to a great extent. He goes all over, using every conceivable definition of law—when the word first appeared in the East, in the West, here, there and everywhere. He decides that law is an idea that is limited to a very special type of culture and to a highly specialized organization of society—namely, where you have a great emperor or powerful king. He lays down the law. Without that there is no law; there's only custom and practice. They are what the anthropologists started calling mores at the beginning of the century. There's the way of doing things, so you do them a certain way. He makes a big fuss about that. Being a Sinologist, he makes a big thing about Confucius. He says, "Forget about the law; there's no law at all. You do the right thing. The princely man does so and so. There is

the proper way.” If Needham only realized it, all his work is just a quibble because we all have the same way.

260,261 God has made laws for the worlds. This is from way back in the eighteenth century; it sounds like something from Orson Pratt or Brigham Young. For all the “worlds,” you see, and this is Newton. Many people think he is the greatest scientist who ever lived, as far as genius is concerned. So God has made laws which we follow, and we praise the Lord. “For . . . guidance”—what does that mean? Well, the GUIDANCE is the HUDA of the Koran. Incidentally, he [Needham] never mentions that, and it is very important. People who live in the desert always want guidance, of course. He also forgets a lot of other things. Remember our friend Solon? At the beginning here he makes quite a difference between ETHOS and NOMOS. He wrote a work called the EUNOMIA that we quoted from about the wickedness of the people, their greed, and the injustice of their society. He called it the EUNOMIA, the “proper NOMIA” the proper following of the rule. NOMOS, the same word as name, is “what has been declared;\*” whereas, the ETHOS, ethics, is just what people do. ETHNOI is the way it is translated in the New Testament. The ETHOS, the ethics, is just the customs and practices. We do things certain ways in our society; we wouldn’t think of doing them another way. If you did a thing the wrong way—got on the wrong side of a horse—that would be outrageous, for example. Customs and everything we do are controlled by these laws that nobody laid down; they have never been declared. Of course, they break down in the city, and we have to have laws. Everything has to be written down. We have become the most legalistic and the most litigious people in the world. The city of Salt Lake has more lawyers per cubic inch than any other city in America—it does, really. It has the highest percentage of lawyers. So we are stuck by the law. But the Book of Mormon tells us over and over again that the law is not going to save—of course, it isn’t. It’s for our guidance. It’s that with Confucius. It’s the Tao, the way you follow. It’s just a quibble whether it’s written down or not.

261 Our word LAW comes from LAG, the old Scandinavian, Norse word. The idea is that you have to have a built-up empire and you have to have an emperor in charge doing it, he [Needham] says, because that came with the despots in the seventeenth century, and with the Chinese emperors. As soon as the emperor took over, then you would get the idea of law. But that's not so at all because the law is what is pronounced from the LOGBERG. Once a year the whole community would come together. The remains of these still stand in Iceland. It's a circle, and they still have it in Switzerland. All the people would be summoned to a great assembly. From the top of the mountain, as Moses read the law, our Norse ancestors would read the law. As I said, it is still the law in Iceland. They recited it from memory if they knew it. That was the GODI which pronounced it. GODI means "man speaking for God." The GODI was the high priest. The king and the GODI were often identical, but the high priest would pronounce it. Incidentally, our friend [Needham] had nothing to say about Egypt either, so he skipped a lot of things.

261,262 Well, the law is the guidance, and you have to have it to get there. But it is devised for our weakness. It caters to our weakness and we have to have it. It's not the goal—it's the way that gets you there. It's like the iron rod; you cling to the iron rod. We love iron rods, and think if we have an iron rod we already have it made. We just keep the iron rod, and that's our goal. The iron rod is just to get you to the temple. That is not supposed to be the temple. It's not supposed to be the object. You don't stick to the law all the time.

262 We have the Ten Commandments, the laws of Moses. Ah, yes, there is the law as far as this goes. But it is written for barbarians, as Paul tells us. The best clue to this whole thing, that matches these various chapters in the Book of Mormon, is the tenth chapter of Hebrews. It's beautifully expressed, and fortunately I brought that along. In chapter 2 here, it says the law is going to get you there. Now what are the Ten Commandments? Do you have to be told every day that you shouldn't kill? That you shouldn't lie? That

you shouldn't commit adultery? That you shouldn't bear false witness? Do you have to be reminded of that? No, the time comes, the Lord says, when "the law is written in their hearts." Only a savage or a barbarian would have to be told over and over, "Now, you mustn't kill anybody today." But we still have to be reminded. We think if we've kept the law, then we are saved—that's all there is to it. But that's not it at all. That's where it begins. This is the least requirement. It starts out with the Word of Wisdom, for example. Do we have to tell people every day, "Well, don't go out and get drunk"? We don't have to be told that. Even with smoking now, people are warned; we don't have to go to the Word of Wisdom for that. Most of you would never think of doing those things. It wouldn't occur to you because, as it says when it is given to us in Doctrine and Covenants 89, this is adapted to the weakest of all Saints; this is the lowest requirement. This is the mere beginning—the least thing that can be expected of you. We start with the Word of Wisdom. It's the same thing with tithing.

262,263      D & C 59:5; Matthew 22:39-40 Then we get to the Ten Commandments. The Lord was asked, what is the first and great commandment. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy might, mind, and strength" (D&C 59:5). "And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:39-40). Well, if you love the Lord with all your heart, might, mind and strength and if you love your fellowmen that much, you are not going to go out and murder, and you're not going to go and steal. You don't need any of the [other] commandments at all; those two obviously cover the whole thing because you will do what is right. As Isaiah and Jeremiah say, "The law is written in your heart." You wouldn't think of doing those things because it is part of you. But again, it's just going to lead you where you are going to go; that's the purpose of law. So Atonement is way up there. It's a very interesting thing in the book of Hebrews because they are still living by the law. Paul had to tell about these things, and he talked in terms of the "bloody sacrifice" that was made. This would be

done away with; it was just a type and a shadow of things to come. He told them, Don't think in fulfilling that you have fulfilled the law. That's not it at all; it looks forward to another sacrifice [paraphrased]. This is the passage where it talks about that great and last sacrifice—the sacrifice that will just have to be made once. Whether it will be made in other worlds [or not] is another thing, of course. That's in the Newtonian hymn, "Other worlds, for their guidance." But we have our guidance when we have this given for us. But, you notice, this puts the Atonement way out there. We are nowhere near that league until we have fulfilled all these things. As long as we are here, we are in a miserable condition of things. That's what we are going to have here.

263 2 Nephi 2:2 Now, let's look at the main points as we go along here. In the 2 Nephi 2 we'll start out with a very encouraging announcement in the fourth verse. This is a handbook of the Atonement. "The Spirit is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. And the way is prepared from the fall of man, and salvation is free." The door is wide open. You can choose your own pace, and you can advance as you please. It's going to be a very individual thing. And you begin on an upbeat note—the plan is made. There are various things that you might question. What can he possibly be talking about here when he says, "he shall consecrate thine afflictions for thy gain [verse 2]"? We mentioned that the last time. It means that you get credit for what you have endured. But then he says, "The Spirit is the same [you are always going to have the same Spirit], yesterday, today, and forever. And the way is prepared from the fall of man, and salvation is free." So that's the first note in this handbook of the Atonement—the gospel. The other world opens out to us. Then the next verse: "And men are instructed sufficiently that they know good from evil." You will be able to judge for yourself. Without that, of course, you wouldn't be able to get very far—that's an important thing. So you don't have to look at the fine print in the law all the time to find what is good and bad. That is a sign of decadence, intrigue, dishonesty, etc., when people have to write finer and finer print in the law, because you know what's right yourself.



263,264      2 Nephi 2:5 Brigham Young was so impatient with lawyers. He detested lawyers because they are not necessary. Any person with a little common sense would know what's the right thing and what's the wrong thing to do. (There are many stories told about Solomon on this subject.) But we know sufficiently good from evil; we don't have to split hairs about it. You know when you are doing right and when you are doing wrong. "And the law is given unto men. And by the law no flesh is justified." The law won't justify you. A person might say, "I'm justified because I kept the law." No, that won't justify you all the way because there are various laws that are written in various ways, and lawyers can make it go any way they want to. They can show you are breaking the law or keeping the law. You are not going to be justified just by the law. A good example is the rich young man. He went to the Lord and asked, "What shall I do to become a follower of you?" The Lord said, "Have you kept all the commandments?" He said, "Yes, I have—I have kept them from my youth."

The Lord said, "No, there is one you haven't kept. You go and sell everything you have and share it with the poor." That's what you do; it's the law of consecration. That's the law that none of us can take. We get up to there and then we stop. We draw the line there. You are not going to be saved by the law unless you go all the way. Then it will deliver you on to a better world. Meanwhile, we are stuck with it. There's no appeal; from a sentence of the law, you don't get an appeal anyway. "Yea, by the temporal law they were cut off; and also, by the spiritual law they perish from that which is good, and become miserable forever." This is for lack of Atonement; you have to go beyond that. The point is that we are not capable of doing what is right. "Man is born to evil as the sparks fly upward."

264,265      2 Nephi 2:7,8 "Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends [the set terms] of the law be answered." This is where you come in, you have to be able to accept this. Merely keeping the law isn't going to do it.

You can keep-the set terms and the ends and escape the sentences etc., but this is another thing entirely, you notice, a broken heart and a contrite spirit. A court can't test you on that or anything else like that. They can't look into your heart; they have to deal with facts, always with facts. Of course, this is silly. "Wherefore, how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth [this great gulf between us and reality], that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God." That is the question, you see. Standing up in the court and getting cleared by the judge or the jury is one thing. But standing in the presence of God who can see everything, every flaw and everything you have in you, that's another thing. We would rather have the rocks and the mountains cover us than have to do that. That's the worst torment we can have—worse than any hell. Anything but that, you see. [People might say], "Give us hell, we can enjoy hell, but don't let us have to do that." Well, that's true. That's the hardest thing we could do, to be so completely out of place. Hell is a place where you are out of place, where you don't want to be. But the worst thing about hell is that you belong there, that you are among your own kind, etc.

265 2 Nephi 2:8 Well, he goes on here, "There is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah [how is this going to be done?], who layeth down his life according to the flesh, and taketh it again by the power of the Spirit, that he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise." We cannot achieve it all; this is another thing here. This is a very important part of it if we are going to carry on. The whole thing is this other life we are concerned about. That's what the gospel looks for. We have the rules for this life. People write books on "the happy life," etc. They are just careerism, as far as that goes. Your career goes up, and then it comes down with a bump. And that's that. We've got to think in other terms. If life is to be endurable, we have to think in other terms.

266 2 Nephi 2:9,10 "Wherefore, he is the firstfruits unto God." What does he mean by the firstfruits? That's an image

that the Jews all understood. It means the best you have—the best and most beloved. It is the prize. It couldn't be anything less, you see. Nothing less than the supreme sacrifice could be made. You can't settle for less here. "Inasmuch as he shall make intercession for all the children of men; and they that believe in him shall be saved. And because of the intercession for all, all men come unto God; wherefore, they stand in the presence of him, to be judged of him according to the truth and holiness which is in him." Then after your resurrection, you still have "to be judged of him according to the truth and holiness which is in him."

266 2 Nephi 2:10,11 With the Lutherans, death erases everything. A person's death is his own atonement. If that was the case, there would be no place for hell. We'd all be equal in the hereafter, which is not so, of course, no more than we were before [this earth life]. "Wherefore, the end of the law which the Holy One hath given, unto the inflicting of the punishment which is affixed, \*-\*which punishment ... is in opposition to that of the happiness." Being bound by punishment rather than by your spontaneous good will is the opposite "of the happiness which is affixed, to answer the ends of the atonement." Permanent happiness and exaltation is the end, the object of the Atonement. To answer that, you must have something better than that [law]. "For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things." This is an important point. Why? Well, the first law of energy for one thing (Newton's first law, actually) is that all motion is equal and opposite in direction. All motion is equal in force and opposite in direction. If you push in this direction, you are going to have an equal and opposite resistance in the other direction. It's a natural law. Without that [opposition in all things], we wouldn't have anything, "neither happiness nor misery, neither sense nor insensibility."

266 2 Nephi 2:13 I have some interesting quotations here from the early church fathers on this subject. These were the earliest writers, and they make it rather clear. This was a popular doctrine before—the idea that there must be opposition in all things, the right and wrong. He says in verse 13 here, "And if ye shall say there is no law, ye

shall also say there is no sin [to break it], ye shall also say there is no righteousness. And if there be no righteousness there be no happiness.

273 [The ruling Kings] would say, “We are God’s representatives on earth and whatever we do, after all, is in the name of virtue. We want everyone to be virtuous, and it is our business to see that everybody is virtuous.” I’m quoting from somebody there, as a matter of fact. In this they were quite sincere.

273 Remember, that was Satan’s plan. He didn’t want to damn anybody. He wanted to make everybody virtuous. He didn’t command Cain to sacrifice to the devil or anything like that. He said, “Sacrifice to the Lord.” He wanted the gospel plan to go through as long as he was in charge, you see. He told Adam and Eve to do a thing that had been done in other worlds. They were expected to eat that fruit, as a matter of fact. But he got them to obey him. That was the whole point: they were taking orders from him. That’s what he wanted. He wants to run the whole thing. He will use any guise, any trick he can. As Joseph Smith said, “He will tell a thousand truths to put over one error.” Then you see how that confounds everything. The thing is he wants to be in charge. Remember how he introduces himself at the beginning of the book of Moses. He says, “I am the only begotten; worship me.” He stamps on the ground and rages and rants in a “five-star tizzy” because he wants to be worshipped. He wants to run things; that’s his desire. He is ambitious, and his plan is to make everybody virtuous, not vicious. He was the model and archetype of those monarchs of old who insisted on banishing all sin by edict.

273,274 2 Nephi 2:4,5 So let’s go back to the Book of Mormon which is talking along these lines in the second chapter of 2 Nephi. First we had, the Spirit is the same, it’s open, salvation is free. Then, you are instructed, you have sufficient knowledge, etc., to carry on so you can be judged. With that law of good and bad, of course, we can make laws, but we have to make them for everything we do. If the Spirit isn’t in you and you don’t know what’s

right, all the laws in the world aren't going to help. But as I said, we are very litigious, and we use it as a means of controlling wealth. But there is the Atonement which requires the "broken heart and contrite spirit" and then the Resurrection and standing in judgment.

274 2 Nephi 2:11,13; 2 Nephi 9:7 And "there must needs be an opposition in all things." Otherwise, if this wasn't so, "all things must have vanished away." That's the heat death. Entropy or the heat death is referred to in 2 Nephi 9:7: "Wherefore, it must needs be an infinite atonement." How is it going to cover everything? Because of that good old second law—the law of entropy or the heat death—everything runs down. Heat can only move from a hotter to a cooler body, that's all. When it finally has distributed itself evenly, then there's nothing. Things must have vanished away, etc. It's the same thing here. The more complex materials always break down to the more simple. Well, by theory then, the more complex shouldn't have existed by now. They should have vanished long ago, but they haven't. This is a great puzzle to scientists today; they talk a lot about it. "Wherefore, the first judgment which came upon man must needs have remained to an endless duration." And this is what happened. He says, when you die you are dead—

that's the normal thing. What is happening here is that a mind far greater than inert matter has intervened and is running things. But it has to take the intervention of something because in the normal situation of things this is what happened: "And if so, this flesh must have laid down to rot and to crumble to its mother earth, to rise no more." Well, that's entropy, that's real. It rots, it crumbles, it falls and reaches a dead level, and that's the end.

274,275 2 Nephi 2:15,16 We have something much better than that, of course, in the Atonement. So we go on, and this part is very nice. I like this an awful lot. Verse 15: "It must needs be that there was an opposition; even the forbidden fruit in opposition to the tree of life; the one being sweet and i the other bitter. Wherefore, the Lord God gave

unto man that he should act for himself.” And you are enticed by the one or the other, and you are enticed equally in either direction, as we are told in chapter 7 of Moroni. He says that, remember. The devil enticeth and inviteth in one direction. At the same time God inviteth and enticeth in the other, and you are pulled between orbits. Which way you go depends on you; you will decide which one you will follow. Neither one is overpowering or irresistible because if that was so then you wouldn’t be responsible. You’d say, “It’s stronger than I and I have to yield.” But that’s not so. But Satan here, this old rascal, is seeking the misery of all mankind. Well, somebody is doing an awfully good job [of that].

275 2 Nephi 2:21 “And the days of the children of men were prolonged, according to the will of God, that they might repent while in the flesh.” That’s good, that gives me another day— hooray, hooray! I’ll need it. We must repent, you see. This is very important. After all, if we are so completely involved in the things of this world, as we necessarily are, we are never clear unless we make our first step and repent and decide we prefer to move in another direction. Repentance is a file of intention to change your way, but you have to keep repenting. Remember, we talked about repentance before. And it’s a state of probation. You always have a chance to repent; it’s not too late. And “their time was lengthened” to give them more time to repent. This is the greatest thing you can have. Remember, as Irenaeus said, the angels don’t have the capacity to repent. They don’t have the choice. That makes us envied of the angels because we can always do better. We can repent and make the resolve. “For he gave commandment that all men must repent; for he showed unto all men that they were lost, because of the transgression of their parents.”

275 “And all things which were created must have remained in the same state in which they were after they were created; and they must have remained forever, and had no end [see, there was no entropy at all there; they must have remained whatever they were]. And they would have had no children; wherefore they would have remained

in a state of innocence, having no joy, for they knew no misery; doing no good for they knew no sin.”

275,276      2 Nephi 2:25-29 So is passing the test enough? No, it isn't. We must repent continually. You never pay the full price because, of course, you can't—even from day to day. Atonement is absolutely necessary; repentance once is not enough. Just what is the mechanism of repentance? How is it done? How does atonement work? This is the thing that escapes everybody. Let's see if it escapes us. Then we have the most famous passage in the Book of Mormon in verse 25: “Adam fell that men might be; and men are, that they might have joy.” This is the bottom line, “that they might have joy.” How do you define joy. Well, you can't define anything that is really important, can you? You have to be redeemed from the fall. “And the Messiah cometh in the fulness of time, that he may redeem the children of men from the fall. And because that they are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever, knowing good from evil; to act for themselves [they can move in all directions]. ... Wherefore, men are free according to the flesh; and all things are given them which are expedient unto man. And they are free to choose liberty and eternal life through the great Mediator of all men, or to choose captivity and death, according to the captivity and power of the devil; for he seeketh that all men might be miserable like unto himself. And now, my sons, I would that ye should look to the great Mediator, and hearken unto his great commandments [we have to have Him].... And not choose eternal death, according to the will of the flesh and the evil which is therein [the will of the flesh and the laws of nature and running down, entropy], which giveth the spirit of the devil power to captivate, to bring you down to hell.” Well, what about the spirit? It doesn't run down. Yes, but what is it? It is subject to the devil after that. This would be a terrible thing to have happen.

276      So that second chapter is a very hard one, actually. The third one is a genealogical chapter, which is an interesting one too. There's enough nourishment here. There's enough meat to keep us guessing.

## Lecture 18 2 Nephi 3-8

**Lehi's Family: Blessings and Conflict**  
**[Name Joseph has Significance]**  
**[Antiquity of the Written Word]**  
**[Lehi Blesses His Sons]**  
**[Nephites Separate Themselves from the Lamanites]**  
**[Isaiah Quoted]**  
**[They Lived After the Manner of Happiness]**  
**[Importance of the Atonement]**  
**[The Word Plan Missing from the Bible]**

277 2 Nephi 3:1-3 Let's start with the third chapter of 2 Nephi. It's a genealogical chapter, and it has strange phenomena in it which occur in genealogy all the time. If you've done any work in genealogy, you know that certain names have a way of popping up all along, and certain relationships turn up where you don't expect them at all. Notice, in the first verse he compares Joseph as a lost child, the last-born in the wilderness. Well, Joseph was the "lost child." Remember, he was sold by his brethren into Egypt—dropped down a well, picked up by a caravan, and taken to Egypt. His brethren were all down on him, but he has a home. "And may the Lord consecrate also unto thee this land," he says in the second verse, so he will have a place to go. "And now, Joseph, my last-born, whom I have brought out of the wilderness of mine afflictions, may the Lord bless thee forever, for thy seed shall not utterly be destroyed." Always the survival of Nephites in the New World also.



Then we have something of a survey here. He says, "I am a descendant of Joseph." Now it's this name Joseph that they play on, but this is a characteristic thing in genealogy, and Joseph is very special. But the fact that it should be the same Joseph, leading right down to Joseph Smith, should not surprise you.

279 2 Nephi 3:12 When he talks about this Joseph business, you may well take it seriously. He talks about another Joseph and it goes on down the line. An important thing is that a great deal is said in this chapter about written records, a written connection. That's all you have. Notice here in verse 12: "Wherefore, the fruit of thy loins shall write; and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write; and that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together unto the confounding of false doctrines ... in the latter days." That's the way it is turning out. Speaking of Moses, he says, "But I will write unto him my law, by the finger of mine own hand; and I will make a spokesman for him."

279,280 The fact is that you will find writing is the oldest thing—the written document, handing around the visible written document you find there. You will find these hand marks on caves, for example, which are individual marks of possession. A person would put his hands on the cave and then spray it with paint by blowing it from his mouth. You find the same thing in the caves of China, and in Spain, and in Australia. They did the same things on the walls there back to the most primitive times. But aside from that they put marks, definite symbols and marks. It's the WASM of the Arabs; you put your mark on something. It's your name and your identity. It identifies you with a cave or a piece of property, especially with an arrow. The first long anthropological article I published was on the arrow, hunting and the state. It's on the marking of arrows—the prehistoric way of establishing your identity, whatever you shot for the lands, etc. That's the crest you have in Scotland. Your crest is the pattern of colors and threads on your arrow so that you can identify it. Wherever you go it

identifies you. It's the crest of your house, and you weave it opposite directions in your plaid. You wear it as a plaid and it identifies your house. They call it the crest, but it's your mark or identification. But this writing and marking of things is the oldest thing we have. It's very necessary. It establishes identity and it establishes control. So when we are talking about identity here and genealogy and passing over thousands of years, that is the written record which is very important.

280 2 Nephi 3:18-23 Notice again in verse 18: "I will give unto him that he shall write the writing of the fruit of thy loins, unto the fruit of thy loins." It's as if it were coming from the dust, and, of course, the value of the Dead Sea Scrolls is that they are written documents. The minute they were dug up, the kids in the caves there in Nahal Hever could read them. Just like that, though they were at least two thousand years old. "And they shall cry from the dust; yea, even repentance unto their brethren, even after many generations have gone by them. . . . Wherefore, because of this covenant thou art blessed; for thy seed shall not be destroyed, for they shall hearken unto the words of the book." This has to do with the bridging of time and space and also of humanity. As Brother Packer was talking about last night, we are "the human family." That is something unique. We do come from one ancestor, from one common source. That's an idea that's coming back. The biologists are bringing that back a lot. I don't mean about Adam, but they gave up long ago the idea that we have multiple origins. That has been dropped now by most biologists. We do come from just one ancestor, but that's another thing. What we are dealing with here is the big picture. We get a scope, a span, and a sweep here that's quite remarkable.

280,281 2 Nephi 4:2,3-14 Then we have Lehi summing up with a patriarchal blessing. He blessed his sons and daughters. He spoke concerning Joseph in 2 Nephi 4:2, "For behold, he truly prophesied concerning all his seed. And the prophecies which he wrote, there are not many greater. And he prophesied concerning us, and our future generations." Notice in verse 3 that he doesn't bless Laman

and Lemuel. He doesn't give them a blessing. He blesses their children because it is their children who survive and who are blessed. He calls Laman his first-born. "Behold, my sons, and my daughters, who are the sons and the daughters of my first-born, I would that ye should give ear unto my words." But it's not the first-born he is blessing, you will notice. It's like the way Isaac crossed his hands when he blessed Jacob and Esau. He reversed the blessing on Esau and wouldn't give it to him. It's the same thing with the blessing on Manasseh in the Ascension of Isaiah, a very old text that has been discovered. "I should leave a blessing upon you [he's not going to leave them without a blessing]. . . . Wherefore, if ye are cursed, behold, I leave my blessing upon you, that the cursing may be taken from you and be answered upon the heads of your parents. Wherefore, because of my blessing the Lord God will not suffer that ye shall perish; wherefore, he will be merciful unto you and unto your seed forever.... [Then] he caused the sons and daughters of Lemuel to be brought before him" and gave them the same blessing. He gave the sons and daughters of the second son the same blessing as the other. Then he gave the sons of Ishmael the same blessing. Then he blessed Sam: "Blessed art thou, and thy seed; for thou shalt inherit the land like unto thy brother Nephi." He had always been Nephi's strongest support. Then Lehi died. After his death the old feud burst out anew worse than ever, you notice in verse 13. "Not many days after his death, Laman and Lemuel and the sons of Ishmael were angry with me because of the admonitions of the Lord." They had been holding off out of respect for their father, probably.

281 2 Nephi 4:15-19 Then Nephi says, "And upon these I write the things of my soul." Here we get a very interesting character analysis of Nephi. He really pours it on here and shows a complex and difficult character. "I write the things of my soul, and many of the scriptures... For my soul delighteth in the scriptures, and my heart pondereth them, and writeth them for the learning and the profit of my children." That sounds like a verse out of the Talmud, doesn't it? Then he goes on, "Nevertheless, notwithstanding

the great goodness of the Lord, in showing me his great and marvelous works, my heart exclaimeth: O wretched man that I am! Yea, my heart sorroweth because of my flesh; my soul grieveth because of mine iniquities.” Well, what is he up to that is so sinful? You notice he is always under this steady pressure from his brethren. Now it has burst out anew, and it is very bad after Lehi’s death. He is just about ready to give up here. He says, “I am encompassed about, because of the temptations and the sins which do so easily beset me.” What is he tempted to do? We soon find out here. To play a rough game is what he is tempted to do. He wants to hit back at Laman and Lemuel. He has a short temper; remember, he really lets fly at times. The dispatching of Laban wasn’t his idea, but he impulsively grabbed Zoram, held his mouth, and told him there was nothing to fear, instead of arguing with him properly. He said that he was large and strong. He could handle Zoram easily enough, and so he did. Then verse 19: “And when I desire to rejoice, my heart groaneth because of my sins; nevertheless, I know in whom I have trusted.”

281,282      2Nephi 4:23-26      What could his sins have been? What are sins? You can’t classify them. You can’t do that, of course, because sin is a state of mind. Verse 23: “Behold, he hath heard my cry by day, and he hath given me knowledge by visions in the nighttime. And by day have I waxed bold in mighty prayer before him; yea, my voice have I sent up on high; and angels came down and ministered unto me.” Verse 25 is a very interesting ascension text here: “And upon the wings of his Spirit hath my body been carried away upon exceedingly high mountains [in the plural]. And mine eyes have beheld great things, yea, even too great for man; therefore, I was bidden that I should not write them.” What’s he talking about? Well, he says they are too great for us. What has been happening to him is out of our league. During eight years in the desert, he really had some experiences. “O then, if I have seen so great things, . . . why should my heart weep and my soul linger in the valley of sorrow [Why am I unhappy in that case? This is man’s condition he beautifully describes here], and my flesh waste away, and my strength slacken, because of mine afflictions?”

282 2 Nephi 4:27 Well, he has had plenty of afflictions. After eight years he has had about more than he can stand, and they are about to break loose and go off by themselves. It's because he has reached a peak here, as if he couldn't take it any more. "And why should I yield to sin, because of my flesh? [Here is where the weakness comes.] Yea, why should I give way to temptations, that the evil one have place in my heart to destroy my peace and afflict my soul?" This is a very nice thing. This is who you have to blame for your troubles. With eight years of tension, his passionate nature came out here. He was brooding and self-accusing. He hit back to the brethren. He was impulsive and also physical. So he came out with a confession here. His troubles affected his peace of mind. He just got mad and all upset. You can imagine losing sleep, tossing, and this sort of thing that happens to all of us. We shouldn't be peeved about these things, but that's the way we are. "Why am I angry because of mine enemy?" [Why blame him and get all upset because of my enemy? It's all right to go my way if I have trouble, but why get mad at him?] Awake, my soul! No longer droop in sin." He calls that sin because it is. Sin is waste, the scriptures tell us. You are wasting time and energy with anger because it is not going to get you anywhere. Maybe righteous anger, but this is a brooding anger against his brothers that has been going on and on. "Rejoice, O my heart, and give place no more for the enemy of my soul [there's the enemy]. Do not anger again because of mine enemies. Do not slacken my strength because of mine afflictions."

282 2 Nephi 4:28-33 He was ready to let up and not follow it through. He had been losing his resolve or something. But [he tells himself] don't slacken strength because of afflictions; expect your afflictions. Then he keeps telling himself that he should rejoice and see the positive side. "Rejoice, O my heart, and cry unto the Lord, and say: O Lord, I will praise thee forever; yea, my soul will rejoice in thee, my God, and the rock of my salvation." Then we come to this marvelous desert image—this little vignette of a person fleeing through the desert from his enemies and wanting the Lord to block up the way of those who

are chasing him, going in and bowing down to the lord of the tent and asking the lord to place his robe around him for protection and to say, “I am your protector now.” He’s a member of the tribe, and the sheikh is bound to protect him as a member of the family then. When he says AHLAN, that means both family and tent. The tent is yours, and MARHABAN means “have place.” We discussed that “have place” business before.

283 2 Nephi 4:32,33 “May the gates of hell be shut continually before me, because that my heart is broken and my spirit is contrite! O Lord, wilt thou not shut the gates of thy righteousness before me, that I may walk in the path of the low valley [that’s the way to get through, the shortcut], that I may be strict in the plain road [that’s the DEREKH! O Lord, wilt thou encircle me around in the robe of thy righteousness! that’s what atonement is; when the Lord opens the flap and takes you into his tent, KAPPORET, he forgives the people; we talked about that before]. O Lord, wilt thou make a way for mine escape before mine enemies! Wilt thou make my path straight before me! Wilt thou not place a stumbling block in my way [that’s a KASHAL]—but that thou wouldst clear my way before me, and hedge not up my way, but the ways of mine enemy.” That’s what you want; that’s what the Arab prays for.

283 2 Nephi 4:34,35 This next verse is a confession. “O Lord, I have trusted in thee, and I will trust in thee forever. I will not put my trust in the arm of flesh; for I know that cursed is he that putteth his trust in the arm of flesh.” Remember, he was a very powerful guy. He was their best hunter. He was the toughest character of them all, a mighty man physically. I won’t trust in the arm of flesh anymore, he says, “for I know that cursed is he that putteth his trust in the arm of flesh.” This is sort of a confession, you see. And all force begets counterforce; you are not going to profit by that. “Yea, cursed is he that putteth his trust in man or maketh flesh his arm.” There’s your “peace through strength” sort of nonsense. “Yea, I will cry unto thee, my God, the rock of my righteousness [this is a rock in the desert; this is what David uses; he is quoting Psalms

here when he flees from his enemies; remember, David was in flight a good deal of the time, fleeing for his life with a small company and hiding out in the desert among the rocks]. Behold, my voice shall forever ascend up unto thee, my rock and mine everlasting God. Amen.” That’s a nice picture of Nephi there.

283,284      2 Nephi 5:1-5 Then in chapter five comes the big break. “I, Nephi, did cry much unto the Lord my God, because of the anger of my brethren.” This is a cry to God, and what is the cause of it? The anger of his brothers. They just won’t let up; they are relentless and obsessed. Nephi is the enemy as far as they are concerned. They will never forgive him. “But behold, their anger did increase against me, insomuch that they did seek to take away my life.” When he called upon the Lord in this prayer that just went before, it didn’t cure them at all. Their anger only got worse until they finally sought to get rid of Nephi. Now, what’s he going to do? “Yea, they did murmur against me, saying: Our younger brother thinks to rule over us [when you have a small company together for years and years, you are always going to have short tempers and anger; there are many films and plays built on that particular theme; people just can’t abide each other after a while]; and we have had much trial because of him [he’s to blame]; wherefore, now let us slay him, that we may not be afflicted more because of his words [they are getting under our skin—we are not going to have any more]. For behold, we will not have him to be our ruler; for it belongs unto us, who are the elder brethren to rule over this people [naturally].... And it came to pass that the Lord did warn me [it was time to get out now], that I, Nephi, should depart from them and flee into the wilderness, and all those who would go with me.”

284      2 Nephi 5:6,7 Here we have another break; we have the Rechabites again. They are breaking off, and this is the beginning of the division between the Nephites and the Lamanites. He took his family, and he took Zoram and his family. So the Zoramites are Nephites henceforth. There are five families here. He took Sam, the elder brother and his family; and Jacob and Joseph, the two youngest brothers;

and also his sisters and their families. That's more than five families, isn't it? They would be married to men from the outside. "And all those who would go with me." That was another group. Anyone who was willing to go, regardless of family, etc. These little things escape you if you don't notice them. You might say he went with just five families. No, there were five families, and some of his sisters' families, too, and anybody else that wanted to join—any of those who believed in the warnings and revelations of God. They were out there on a warning anyway. Verse 7: "And we did take our tents and whatsoever things were possible for us, and did journey in the wilderness for the space of many days." Well, this is where I came in, the old story again. "Nel mezzo del cammino di nostra vita." Well, we're in the middle of a journey all the time in the dark and dreary world, as Dante starts out.

284,285      They lived according to the law of Moses. The basic law is still the law of Moses. They are still living by the Old Testament. This really comes out in Alma. You will see more light cast on the Old Testament practices described in Exodus, Leviticus, and Deuteronomy than anywhere else. But they are living by the law of Moses. We know that salvation doesn't come by it. It just points their minds forward. We were told a number of times earlier that they brought all manner of seed over here.

285      2 Nephi 5:12 "And I, Nephi, had also brought the records which were engraven upon the plates of brass." They had the national treasures with them. And he took the sword of Laban and used it as a pattern to make more swords "lest by any means the people who were now called Lamanites [they were calling them Lamanites for the record; whether they called themselves Lamanites or not we don't know] should come upon us and destroy us." And they went to work and built many buildings. One of the first things they did was build a temple and constructed it "after the manner of the temple of Solomon." This is one of those points for which the Book of Mormon was often criticized. There was only one temple, and that was the temple at Jerusalem. You wouldn't build another temple, but we know that's not



so. In 1925 the Elephantine Records were discovered from upper Egypt. The people who left Jerusalem at the time of Lehi went up the Nile to Elephantine to the first cataract. There was a large settlement of Jewish mercenaries there working for the king of Ethiopia at that time. They asked for permission to build a temple. They wrote letters to the temple committee, the high priest and the scribes, back in Jerusalem. We have a number of those letters asking for permission to build a temple. The permission was granted, and it was built after the manner of Solomon's temple. They didn't have those materials. It was a much cheaper and smaller building, but they did build it. Then later on under the influence of the same dynasty up north, Honi, who was very famous and called "the circle drawer," went and built a model of the temple again at Heliopolis where the Jews could worship in Egypt. That's where most of them went when Jerusalem fell. Alexandria became the biggest Jewish city in the world, just as New York is today.

285,286      So Nephi built this temple. Naturally, he would use the pattern of Solomon's temple. But it wasn't built of so many precious things. They couldn't afford that. Solomon's temple was really a show, as you know. "For they were not to be found upon the land; wherefore, it could not be built like unto Solomon's temple. But the manner of the construction was like unto the temple of Solomon; and the workmanship thereof was exceedingly fine." It was the best workmanship they could do.

286      2 Nephi 5:18 Now naturally they wanted to make Nephi their chief. He had been running things all along anyway, so why shouldn't he be the chief? They were desirous to have him king, but that was too much of a title for him. "I did for them according to that which was in my power," he said. They looked up to him as their king and leader.

286,287      2 Nephi 5:21-24 Now this cursing. There's a great deal said about this race business in the Book of Mormon. It's very clear what it is—it's a cultural thing. It tells us here in verse 21, "Wherefore, as they were white,

and exceedingly fair and delightsome.” That doesn’t mean they had complexions of milk, that they were pale white and ghostly. That’s not healthy anyway. Nor does it mean that the others were coal black. Black is much too strong a word to use here, if you are using it literally. But, as I’ve said before, it applies just as much in SHAHOR and LABAN as it does in Hebrew and Aramaic, and also in Arabic. Anything that’s ABYAD is good, delightful, pleasant; and everything that’s ASWAD isn’t. In the paintings, whether it’s Greek vase paintings or wall paintings in Egypt, the people who live in the BAYT AL-SHACR, “the houses of hair, out in the desert are always painted with dark complexions. The people who live in the BAYT AL-HAJAR, “the houses of stone,” are always depicted with light complexions. The women never went out; they would paint their faces with white lead, as a matter of fact. It’s a cultural thing. Of course, if you live that way, you become dark. Also, the camps of natives, Asiatics or anything like that, become garbage dumps. They live by hunting and plunder. They are not cultivating the soil and are not bound to work too much. So they become slovenly and dark in their manner. They become dirty, different, smelly and all that sort of thing. That’s what it means by loathsome—dirty, smelly, not very well groomed or anything like that. This is a cursing. When you see a person who is white and exceedingly fair and delightsome, you are not going to see a platinum blond necessarily. Though you do find them. This is the thing that always bowled me over among the Hopis. Every tenth child is a blond, not an albino at all. They will have red hair and blue eyes. I thought, well it’s an oddity—some missionary, some Scandinavians have intermarried with them. That wasn’t it at all. These were all native Hopi kids, and every tenth one was a perfectly good blond, as blond as anybody you ever saw. And yet it was quite normal. Nobody was upset by it or anything like that.

287 2 Nephi 5:25; 1 Nephi 2:23 Then this is the point [in verse 25]. As the Lord tells them back in 1 Nephi 2:23, right at the beginning of the book, I want them breathing down your neck. I’m going to keep the Lamanites there to keep you in line that they may stir you up to remembrance. You

are never going to solve the Lamanite problem by trying to beat them with any weapons or anything you can do. That's not how you solve things. I want those people giving you trouble [paraphrased]. Verse 25: "And the Lord God said unto me: They shall be a scourge unto thy seed, to stir them up in remembrance of me; and inasmuch as they will not remember me, and hearken unto my words, they shall scourge them even unto destruction." Here's a promise: If your people do not obey me, the Lamanites are there to destroy you. They will scourge you until you are destroyed. That makes it very clear. Then Nephi consecrated Jacob to be a priest and teacher, so Jacob was not to be his successor in the government. They started appointing chiefs by the name of Nephi. They gave them that title, just as Julius Caesar's successor was called Caesar; and ever after the person who held the title was called a Caesar, though it was a personal name originally.

288 2 Nephi 5:27 Here's an interesting thing: "And it came to pass that we lived after the manner of happiness." Now, what on earth is the "manner of happiness"? There is a regime that assures happiness. And, of course, it's a state of mind—that's all it is. It's a state of mind that goes with every way of life, whether you're living in the desert or in the clouds. Wherever you are living, whether it's in the city or in the country, there is a manner of happiness. If you are not happy, that means you are not living the right way. You are supposed to be happy. They were living after the manner of happiness. But you might say, "Egads, just these families living out in the sticks all by themselves. Weren't they bored stiff? This is an interesting phenomenon—where you find boredom is not in such places but in the midst of the greatest civilizations. That's where people get bored because they get replete.

288 Alma 41:10 Well, what do you do not to be bored? What do you do to live after the manner of happiness? As Brother Packer told us, also from the Book of Mormon, "Wickedness never was happiness." You are not going to get it by kicking the gong around and indulging in this, that, and the other. That's a very interesting thing. You

will quickly exhaust all the variety you can think of, and it becomes exceedingly depressing, as we know.

289 2 Nephi 5:32 So we have a perfect right to the way of happiness. “Man is that he might have joy,” and our whole idea here is a country where we can have “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” But it doesn’t tell you how to pursue it. You are not supposed to tell me, and I’m not supposed to tell you. But there are ways of pursuing happiness until your joy becomes uncontrollable, just absolutely wild. It’s the love of the Lord; it’s when the Lord blesses you. You will know and feel that. But, you don’t know what happiness is until that happens, and it will. Here’s the key right here in verse 32: “And if my people are pleased with the things of God they will be pleased with mine engravings which are upon these plates.” So they’re pleased with the things of God. That’s enough to keep you happy all the time. There are some very interesting things. We have lots of pioneer journals and things like that about things that went on.

290 2 Nephi 6:2,3,9,12,15,17 Now we get on to the sixth chapter and the words of Jacob. Jacob gets a word in here, and we have a book of Jacob. He was consecrated to be a priest by Nephi “unto whom ye look as a king or a protector.” Nephi wouldn’t be appointed. He refused the office, but they looked upon him as a king and a protector. Jacob says [in verse 3], “Yea, mine anxiety is great for you.” He is worried. Remember, he is their spiritual leader now, and he is as worried as Nephi was. He says he is going to give them a view of things to come, and he quotes Isaiah—as Nephi had been quoting Isaiah more than anything else, just like the Dead Sea Scrolls are Isaiah far before anything else. Verse 9: “And he also has shown unto me that the Lord God . . . should manifest himself unto them in the flesh.” He has the future of the Jews here. This is a thing that is gone over in the Book of Mormon a number of times. I’m going to skip over these chapters in Isaiah here, just pointing out some things. Verse 12: “And blessed are the Gentiles . . . if it so be that they shall repent, and fight not against Zion, and do not unite themselves to that great

and abominable church, they shall be saved.” Well, that’s a strange condition. All you have to do is not belong to a particular church. That should be very easy. That includes atheists and everything else. “For the people of the Lord are they who wait for him; for they still wait for the coming of the Messiah [and very few did]. The Messiah will come a second time then “in power and great glory, unto the destruction of their enemies.” He is giving them a preview of the comings of the Lord, as in the Hebrew prophets. Then he says, “And they that believe not in Him shall be destroyed, both by fire and by tempest, and by earthquakes, and by bloodshed, and by pestilence, and by famine. . . . For the Mighty God shall deliver his covenant people. For thus saith the Lord: I will contend with them that contendeth with thee—And I will feed them that oppress thee, with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood as with sweet wine.” Well, he is quoting Isaiah here, and chapter 7 is just chapter 50 from Isaiah.

291 2 Nephi 9:1-4 Let’s get to chapter 9 where he starts explaining it, then. Now we are really racing along here. “I have read these things that ye might know concerning the covenants of the Lord that he has covenanted with all the house of Israel—That he has spoken unto the Jews, by the mouth of his holy prophets, even from the beginning down . . . until the time comes that they shall be restored to the true church and fold of God; when they shall be gathered home to the lands [plural] of their inheritance, and shall be established in all their lands of promise [so it’s a wider movement than just the city of Jerusalem]. . . . I speak unto you these things that ye may rejoice, and lift up your heads forever, because of the blessings which the Lord God shall bestow upon your children. . . . I know that ye know that our flesh must waste away and die.” Now he comes to the subject of the Atonement and the Resurrection here. The important thing is not what happens to Jerusalem, or what happens to the nation or the church, for that matter—it’s what happens to you. I mean if the whole thing is just going to pass away and go down into the dust and be forgotten forever. This is the one where he talks about the second law of thermodynamics, right here. He says, “Our flesh must

waste away and die [well, it does do that]; nevertheless, in our bodies we shall see God.” Remember Job: “And though . . . worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.”

291,292      2 Nephi 9:5 Luther translated that, because he didn’t like it, “Yet without the flesh I shall see God.” All you have to do is put another word in there—not in the flesh, change it to without. Well, you can do that if you want, but that’s not what the text said. Verse 5: Yes, I know that ye know that in the body he shall show himself unto those at Jerusalem, from whence we came [he promises the coming of Christ]. . . . For as death hath passed upon all men, to fulfill the merciful plan of the great Creator . . .” This word plan is used a lot. You can look up in Young’s Concordance or anywhere else and find that the word plan does not occur once in the Bible. It’s being used a great deal by preachers today, but it was never used in Joseph Smith’s day. But you see how it explains things; we can put up with an awful lot if we know it is according to plan. We can wait it out in that case. But the word plan is never found in the Bible. The rabbis didn’t like it, among other things. The idea of the plan is very important here, and this is the way things are supposed to be. But this requires a pre-existence and it requires a lot of other things. Atonement does. We talked about atonement, PESHUVAH and YESHIVAH. YESHIVAH is the “return to the place where you were before, return to God.” Well, if you weren’t there before, [you can’t go back]. That’s one word for atonement they use in the Old Testament. The other word means “going in and sitting down beside him.” It means “going in and sitting down with your Father in Heaven” when you are taken into the presence of the Most High. All those words have to do with going back home and being received again, and that’s what he is talking about here. This gives us great insight into the Atonement doctrine, especially later on when we get to Alma.

292      2 Nephi 9:6 He says here in verse 6: “For as death hath passed upon all men [that’s true, but that’s part of the plan], to fulfill the merciful plan of the great Creator,

there must needs be a power of resurrection.” There’s only one thing you can do if everything is going that way. That’s the natural course of things, so what can you do about it? There has to be a power. Somebody has to intervene. Well, is that conceivable? Of course, it’s conceivable with just the fact that we are here. Somebody intervened to get us here. There must be a power to intervene. Because he says that it is perfectly natural for things to die and stay dead. “And the resurrection must needs come unto man by reason of the fall [because we fell and spoiled everything]; and the fall came by reason of transgression; and because man became fallen they were cut off from the presence of the Lord.” That’s the opposite of atonement, at-one-ment. To be cut off, to be separated is not to be at one anymore. This is the opposite, and this is the penalty.

292,293      2 Nephi 9:7 So what are you going to do about this being cut off? There must be an infinite atonement here, bringing together in one. Atonement is not just one in the presence of the Father but the atonement of all things—the atonement of the flesh, bringing together things that were formally separated. That’s what at-one is. At-one covers an awful lot of ground. Yesterday, I listed forty different words in the Bible that are the equivalent of atonement, and sometimes are translated as atonement. Forty different expressions all mean atonement in different ways. It all comes back to being at one. Good old atonement is the best word you can use. So it says here “an infinite atonement.” That is an unlimited capacity to recompose things that have broken down—to bring them back together as they were in their original state, restoring and integrating.

293      2 Nephi 9:7,8 Then this one really hits the gong: “Wherefore, the first judgment which came upon man must needs have remained to an endless duration. And if so, this flesh must have laid down to rot and to crumble to its mother earth, to rise no more.” Remember, you cannot reverse the process of entropy. It’s the heat death. Things all wear down to a dead level, and you can’t go anywhere after that because there’s no place to go. That’s the way it would be, he says, if somebody hadn’t intervened and

changed things. Then no wonder he breaks out and says how marvelous it is to know that there's something and that's not going to settle things. "O the wisdom of God, his mercy and grace! For behold, if the flesh should rise no more our spirits must become subject to that angel who fell from before the presence of the Eternal God, and became the devil, to rise no more." Why? Because they have yielded. It's the spirits that yield to sin and went the way of the flesh. The spirit is guilty. The flesh is finished and passed away forever, but there's a guilty spirit. It's got itself into this jam; now, what's it going to do? Our spirits must be subject to the person who tempted them. It was the spirit that was tempted by Satan here. They become devils and angels to the devil. The time's up, so we will have to break it up now, but this ninth verse is another one of those remarkable concise summaries. It's shocking, but it's a good one.



## Lecture 19 2 Nephi 9

**Jacob's Teachings on the  
Atonement and Judgment  
[Where There is No Law Given  
There is No Punishment]  
[Sin is Waste and Always Destroys]  
["The Keeper of the Gate is the  
Holy One of Israel"]  
[The Lord Will Not Admit All  
who Knock at the Gate]  
[Ancient Custom of Shaking Garments]**

294 2 Nephi 9:8,9 That's all we're here for is to study the Book of Mormon—not to listen to me, but to look at the text of the Book of Mormon closely and follow it carefully because it has a great deal to say. After all, this was hand—delivered by an angel. There's every evidence that it was, so let's look at it. We are in 2 Nephi 9:8. We mentioned the infinite atonement. I said that this was a concise summary, that this was a shocking verse. What is the justification for saying a thing like this? Well, all you have to do is look around you and see that it is true. Look what it is: “And our spirits must have become like unto him [notice there is nothing in between here; we must have crumbled and rotted, and then he says], and we become devils, angels to a devil [that's some choice], to be shut out from the presence of our God [that's the opposite of atonement], and to remain with the father of lies, in misery, like unto himself. Notice that combination, misery and lies. What

is the Lord full of? Grace and truth. What's the opposite of that? Misery and lies. The opposite of grace is misery, and the opposite of truth is lies. He [Satan] is the father of lies and misery. "Yea, to that being who beguiled our first parents, who transformeth himself nigh unto an angel of light, and stirreth up the children of men unto secret combinations of murder and all manner of secret works of darkness."

294,295      2 Nephi 9:9 What's this angel of light business got to do with it? That's very important to put that in there. He "transformeth himself nigh unto an angel of light." He is not a Halloween horror. He is among us; he is one of the boys. He is right in the system. In fact, the system is his. That's how he is able to form the secret combinations of murder and all manner of secret works or darkness that fill the world today. Remember, he told us when he lost his temper what he was going to do. He was going to take money and buy up the power and rule in a horrible way upon this earth, and that's what he has done. If you make a long list of all the major crimes and follies of our times—drugs, militarism, sex, everything else—can you name any one of them that doesn't have money behind it? He says, "You can have anything in this world for money, and I'm the one that has it." That's how he is able to gain this control. That's what he says he will do—buy up the authority, the power, kings and presidents, armies and navies—and he will rule that way. So he has a very powerful tool to use, and he is using it very effectively today. Does this sound like an exaggeration, as it certainly sounded like not long ago? But it doesn't sound like it anymore. We are warming up; these are the last days. Then he is happy.

295      2 Nephi 9:10 "O how great the goodness of our God, who prepareth a way for our escape from the grasp of this awful monster; yea, that monster, death and hell, which I call the death of the body, and also the death of the spirit."

295      2 Nephi 9:11,12 This is the point—all these noble souls are trapped ahead of time, not a chance to get out when you are in this situation. It's a great tragic situation.

That's the awful monster death and hell, and it's a proper term. "And because of the way of deliverance of our God, the Holy One of Israel, this death,... which is the temporal, shall deliver up its dead; which death is the grave." In verse 12 he talks about a spiritual death. The grave is the temporal death, and the resurrection has been taken care of by the atonement. You are going to be resurrected whether you want to or not. But the spiritual death, you can have that. That's real hell, "which spiritual death is hell; wherefore, death and hell must deliver up their dead, and hell must deliver up its captive spirits, and the grave must deliver up its captive bodies, and [notice they are restored] the bodies and the spirits of men will be restored one to the other; and it is by the power of the resurrection of the Holy One of Israel." The body will go on living and so will the spirit, and it will be a horrible thing if you are going to be living in a sewer forever and ever.

295,296      2 Nephi 9:13 "O how great the plan of our God!" I mentioned last time that the [word] plan is not found in the Bible, yet it's found forty-two times in the Book of Mormon, only two times in the Doctrine and Covenants and only two times in the Pearl of Great Price. It's found forty-two times in the Book of Mormon and thirty-six times in the book of Alma. Whatever happened to the plan? How did it drop out of the Bible? As I said, it has become popular with ministers today because it is a very comforting doctrine. To know that everything is running according to plan is certainly reassuring. Otherwise, comes the problem. What is the meaning of it? Where is it going? It's nothing. Life becomes absolutely a name without some sort of plan and purpose. What are we here for? The questions we hear all the time. But why was the plan ever thrown out by the church? Was it in there? It's in the Book of Mormon. We have these things in the Book of Mormon that match the Old Testament all the way through. I was thinking of atonement, you see. In atonement the Book of Mormon matches the Old Testament but not the New Testament. Of course, the Old Testament came first, and it represents the old Hebrew doctrine of the atonement which is centered around the temple. It always talks of it in terms of the

temple—of sacrifice and the shedding of blood, the tent, the embrace, and all the things that go with the rites of atonement among the Jews. The Nephites had these things. So this is what atonement is in their terms. And always the language in Nephi and Alma and all the others is the same imagery that is used in the Old Testament in describing the sacrifices of the temple. But the temple was lost, and the rabbis took over. They were learned men, but they were not priests. Then you had something else. They did away with the plan, which was disturbing. They did away with a premortal existence; they did away with the Council in Heaven. They did away with all sorts of things having to do with this plan. Why, when it was such a good thing? Because the philosophers at the School of Alexandria took it over, and in their place you have the doctrines of St. Augustine. This takes the place of the plan. It's PRAEDESTINATIO AD DAMNATIONEM, PRAEDESTINATIO AD SALVATIONEM. You are predestined to damnation or you are predestined to salvation. There's nothing you can do about it because it's the will of God. "It all depends on his will," as we read in Dante. This is the thing. St. Thomas takes it a long way here. It's the will of God, and that's all you can do about it. It's decided.

296 This predestination doctrine of St. Augustine was taken over by the Lutherans and by the Calvinists especially. What happens to you is because you were predestined that way. Of course, you didn't live before you came here; you didn't earn it or anything like that. Origen tells us that in the early church they taught that you earned your position here before you came here. But that had to be out. All creation had to be instantaneously, simultaneously, and complete. Everything was completely there all at once, so you had no background or anything. You just find yourself here, and what's going to happen to you depends entirely on the will of God, whether you are damned or whether you are blessed. This doctrine takes its place, so they didn't need it [the plan] anymore. And they fought it. They not only didn't like all these elements of the plan, but they fought vigorously.

296,297      2 Nephi 9:13-16 Then he goes on: “And the spirit and the body is restored to itself again, and all men become incorruptible, and immortal, and they are living souls, having a perfect knowledge like unto us in the flesh, save it be that our knowledge shall be perfect. Wherefore, we shall have a perfect knowledge of all our guilt, and our uncleanness [it is all stored away in us right now, for that matter; a good psychoanalyst could get most of it up without having to have a record book or any account of your wicked deeds; it’s all stored right here, and you’re going to take it with you],... and the righteous shall have a perfect knowledge of their enjoyment, and their righteousness ... when all men shall have passed from this first death unto life, insomuch as they have become immortal, they must appear before the judgment-seat of the Holy One of Israel [that’s going to be a time],... and they who are filthy shall be filthy still [don’t think you will be automatically purified, he says].... And they shall go away into everlasting fire, prepared for them; and their torment is as a lake of fire and brimstone, whose flame ascendeth up forever and ever and has no end.”

297      2 Nephi 9:18 And what do you have to do to avoid this? “But, behold, the righteous, the saints of the Holy One of Israel, they who have believed in the Holy One of Israel, they who have endured the crosses of the world, and despised the shame of it [You are expected to do that; after all, what is the purpose of money? It is to avoid these things—to avoid the crosses of the world and the shame of it], they shall inherit the kingdom of God, which was prepared [in the plan in the Council in Heaven] for them from the foundation of the world, and their joy shall be full forever.” Now, that’s a scriptural passage too. Why don’t people believe that at the time the world was founded there was a plan prepared? There it is again, “according to the wisdom of the kingdom of God which was prepared from the foundation of the world.”

287,298      2 Nephi 9:21 “And he cometh into the world that he may save all men if they will hearken unto his voice [we come to a very interesting situation here about the

reality of these things]; for behold, he suffereth the pains of all men, yea, the pains of every living creature, both men, women, and children, who belong to the family of Adam.” He atones for the family of Adam. The question arises, how is it possible for anyone to suffer that much—to suffer the pains of everyone living, every living creature? Isn’t there a limit to suffering? There is a limit to physical suffering. Let’s consider two things: (1) How can you suffer for somebody else? and (2) How can you suffer for everybody and everything—men, women, and children, the whole family of Adam? How can one person suffer that much? Well, there are certainly limits to physical suffering. We have all had pain. At a certain point people pass out, but it’s amazing what you can take. There’s no problem there at all. If you have read Solzhenitsyn, you know what they have to suffer in Russian prison camps. There’s a limit to that, but what about mental suffering? There is no limit to it at all, just as there is no limit to imagination, and no limit to comprehension, and no limit to empathy. There’s no limit to what you can comprehend and take in. You know yourself that you can expand, and there’s no limit to it. You can imagine how it is with the Lord Jesus Christ who is the Son of God. His capacity for those things is very real. It tells us why he suffers—“for the sins and abominations of his people” it will tell us later on. It says he sweated [blood] from every pore, and it wasn’t from the pain of nails or the cross of thorns. You might not have been aware of that. That physical suffering is great, but it’s nothing compared to what he suffered. In Mosiah it talks about his sweating blood from every pore.

298,299      2 Nephi 9:22-26    The thought of [Christ’s Suffering] fills us so with pity, anguish, and remorse that we repent when we think of that. It does affect us and change our lives unto repentance. “And he suffereth this that the resurrection might pass upon all men, that all might stand before him at the great and judgment day.” That’s the atonement again. “And he commandeth all men that they must repent, and be baptized in his name, having perfect faith in the Holy One of Israel, or they cannot be saved in the kingdom of God [but ninety-nine percent of all

men haven't been baptized, as he tells us next]. And if they will not repent and believe in his name, and be baptized in his name, and endure to the end, they must be\* damned." That is it because they have refused; they have despised it and turned it down. But if you have never heard about it, as verse 25 says here, that's another matter. As I said, at least ninety-nine percent haven't. "Wherefore, he has given a law; and where there is no law given there is no punishment; and where there is no punishment there is no condemnation." He has given the law, and they should not refuse it or they will be damned, etc. But the law is that there is no punishment and no condemnation if people haven't heard the law. "The mercies of the Holy One of Israel have claim upon them, because of the atonement [that frees them]; for they are delivered by the power of him. For the atonement satisfieth the demands of his justice upon all those who have not the law given to them." That's what he is talking about here, and that's the vast majority of the human family. Of course, this the rationale for the temple work and everything behind it.

299 And this is another thing: the Jews very firmly believe in and the rabbis still teach atonement for the dead. What can you do for them? They say there are three things you can do for them: You can pray for them, you can give alms for them, and you can study the scripture for them. That's the best you can do. But anciently, it all went back to the temple. It was in the time of the Maccabees that that was lost. It's a very interesting story. The temple was used for work for the dead, and it still survives in the KADDISH which is the prayer for the dead. This is on the Day of Atonement. That's when you bring all things together and you have the KADDISH, which is the prayer for the dead.

299 2 Nephi 9:27 But here he is talking about those who have never had the chance because the law was not given to them. "They are restored to that God who gave them breath, which is the Holy One of Israel [that's fair enough]. But wo unto him that has the law given, yea, that has all the commandments of God, like unto us [we have them, he says], and that transgresseth them, and wasteth the days

of his probation, for awful is his state!” Now what is sin? Sin is waste. That’s all it is after all. It’s the misdirection of life. You use your energies, your appetites, desires, and passions, your gifts, and everything else, and misdirect them and waste them. You have a limited time here. You are given your great chance, and you waste that. Can you think of any sin that isn’t waste? Even the most vilely immoral things. What are they wasting? That’s waste in a big way, you see. Sin always tears down and destroys. You always lose something by it—something you can’t get back again. So you dig yourself in deeper and deeper with sin, and the whole thing is waste. It’s waste and loss. You have misdirected all your energies, and that certainly is what sin is. And it’s also a state of mind. An act that is virtuous in one situation can be wicked in another. But again there’s the waste of your insight, your mental energy, and all the rest, and the misdirection of it.

299, 300      2 Nephi 9:28 “O that cunning plan of the evil one! [there’s your plan again; he has his plan too, you see]. O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men!” This is an outburst of the wisdom literature. There is a lot being written today about Hebrew wisdom literature and Egyptian literature. They are being compared today for the first time in a big way. Everybody is writing about them. They always suspected that they were very much alike because Egyptian is full of Bible quotations. The Egyptologists wouldn’t accept it. They thought that was impossible—that couldn’t be. They explained it as pure coincidence. Well anyway, today it’s the big thing that the wisdom literature of the Jews and the Egyptians is very much alike. They are things having to do with the folly of men—their teaching of wisdom and ways of getting along in the world, etc. There is also wisdom that breaks out into oration like this and becomes very eloquent: “O that cunning plan of the evil one! O the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! [They are hopeless.] When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves [it’s a very interesting thing], wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them



not. And they shall perish.”

301 Question: How can we know when we are rich? Answer: Well, that's a very interesting thing. Rich was defined very well by Brigham Young and by Paul in 2 Timothy: “Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. Who seeks for more falls into temptation and a snare.” He uses the word [which means] trapped in the rapids, the same word that Sophocles uses in the same situation. They get caught in the rapids and swept along by many foolish desires, wishes, and lusts. They want more and more; there is no limit to what you can want. That's a proverb you will find all over the place. The Greek tragedies are full of it, etc. There's no limit to the greed of a person; the more they get, the more they want. These are well-known truisms. “Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.” If you want more than that, you are in real trouble, he says, because you are. He says that this has brought many from the faith because they want more than that. They despise the poor and the meek. If you have more than you need, of course, you are rich. If you have less than you need, you are poor. There should be some sort of balance there. By definition [the rich] have more than they can possibly need or eat. And if you are poor, you have less than you need or should eat. The solution is obvious, isn't it? But we are not going to do that, no.

303 2 Nephi 9:40 “Do not say that I have spoken hard things against you.” How often do we preach these things today, but we don't like them? You notice that these are not smooth things. Remember, they asked Isaiah, “Speak to us smooth things; we will listen to you if you talk smooth things.” You get this later in Abinadi and a lot of other prophets. We speak the things that we want to hear, but you don't need to hear those things. If the Bible only told us what we wanted to hear, we wouldn't need it. Yet those are the things we are willing to hear, and the other things we can smooth over very easily. We wouldn't need the words from the prophets if they were not hard to take. So the people said to Isaiah, “Speak to us smooth things.” The false prophets are very glad to oblige. “I know that the

words of truth are hard against all uncleanness; but the righteous fear them not, for they love the truth and are not shaken [a real test].”

304 2 Nephi 9:41 “Behold, the way for man is narrow, but it lieth in a straight course before him [so you can stay on it all right; and here is one of my favorite verses from the Book of Mormon; this is really a beauty], and the keeper of the gate is the Holy One of Israel; and he employeth no servant there.” What a comfort in that, to know there is no middle management. There are no officious clerks. This is one of the great resounding passages. He will take your hand personally, identify himself, and show you the signs and tokens— as he did when he came to the Nephites, one by one, even the children, and gave them each a personal blessing. Well, you may think that would take forever and ever, but you’d be surprised. There’s plenty of time, etc. There are certain things that are not limited.

305 2 Nephi 9:41,42 So here is the personal greeting we get: “And whoso knocketh [at the gate], to him will he open.” Notice, he is the keeper of the gate, and if you knock at the gate he will give you that personal greeting. Incidentally, with the Atonement, as we were told, there was no other who could pay the price of sin. The Atonement makes the delegation of his authority impossible. He is not going to delegate it. He is the keeper of the gate, and he employs no servant there. We are talking about the Atonement when he greets you. This is the embrace we are talking about That’s the Jewish KPR, which is the embrace at the veil, the KAPPORETH of the tabernacle. The ark was inside. When the Lord receives Israel on the Day of Atonement, it says the Lord speaks from the tent and accepts the sacrifice and accepts Israel. But again, there is only one who can atone; no one else can do that. So, of course, he is not going to delegate. He has atoned for you, and he is not going to delegate to anybody else. Believe me, that is reassuring.

305 2 Nephi 9:42 Notice, you knock and he will open. But what if you come to him wise, learned, rich, and puffed up because of your learning, your wisdom, and your riches?

“They are they whom he despiseth” (verse 42). Now, this is the most terrifying verse in the Book of Mormon— the idea of God despising anything, since he loves all creatures and loves them completely. How could he despise them? Well, the word is *DESPICIO*. The person at the gate looks down; the gatekeeper is always in the little thing with the person down below. The keeper is above the gate. That’s the gate of appearances, where the family looks down, etc. In Egypt you have some beautiful things. Above the gate of the temple or the palace, there is a balcony. There’s where the royal family goes, and when visitors come they look down on them. But *DESPICIO* means to look down on. It says, “He will not open to them.” He looks down and sees, and he will not open to them. The gate is kept closed. “Yea, they are they whom he despiseth.” As I said, it’s a terrible thing because this is self-deification. That’s what it amounts to. I’ve heard this from various teachers, etc. They would say, “Look, God and all that stuff, that silly religion of yours ...” So many of my friends believed not only that it was absurd and they wouldn’t believe it, but they didn’t believe I believed it. They didn’t believe for a minute that I believed this stuff. Now, isn’t that funny? That was self-deification. They would say, “Look, you’ve got it all wrong; I’ll tell you how it is. I’ll give you the answers. Now, that’s deifying yourself in the field of knowledge, and that’s what they do, actually.

306 2 Nephi 9:44 “O, my beloved brethren, remember my words. Behold, I take off my garments, and I shake them before you.” Of course, that was the ancient custom. In the Oration on the Crown, Demosthenes talks about it when a person is banished from Athens. And Paul said to the Corinthians, “I thank God that I baptized none of you” (1 Corinthians 1:14). In Acts 18:6 he denounced the Corinthians. He said, “Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.” I’m through with you. At the beginning of his letter to the Corinthians, he said, I testify that I am free of your blood this day [paraphrased]. Then he literally shook his garments before them to show that he was free of their blood and was going to leave them and go to the Gentiles.

He was through with the Jewish community at Corinth. It's a dramatic gesture. On Mars Hill in Athens the chief priest would shake a scarlet robe when a person was banished, to shake him off and get rid of him. It's like shaking the dust off your feet from a rebellious town or a wicked people. That is used in Acts a good deal, shaking the dust off their feet. But Paul shakes his garments, and he does the same thing here. He says, "O, my beloved brethren, remember my words. Behold, I take off my garments, and I shake them before you [as I said, it's a very old custom that was full blown in Lehi's day]; I pray the God of my salvation that he view me with his all-searching eye [he wants to be tested]; wherefore, ye shall know at the last day, when all men shall be judged of their works, that the God of Israel did witness that I shook your iniquities from my soul, and that I stand with brightness before him, and am rid of your blood."

306,307      `2 Nephi 9:45,46 Notice, he can only advise them, and he cannot assume the guilt of another because he's not responsible. What is he doing, getting rid of his responsibility? Yes, he is free of their blood now. He can advise them, but he can't assume guilt for them. They are responsible for their own doing, so he leaves them now and says this—showing again that things are not going too well with the Nephites. Verse 45: "O, my beloved brethren, turn away from your sins; shake off the chains [notice this tie where they tie words together here] of him that would bind you fast [you shake that; I'm shaking my garments; now you do a bit of shaking too]; come unto that God who is the rock of your salvation [but you must do this yourself, you notice—you shake off the chains]. Prepare your souls for that glorious day [he ends on an upbeat here] ... that ye may not remember your awful guilt in perfectness [you need no accuser; you will remember your guilt all right], and be constrained to exclaim: Holy, holy are thy judgments, O Lord God Almighty—but I know my guilt." You will have to admit that God's judgments are just. This is what you will have to say, "I know my guilt." Notice, it is all individual. As the scripture says, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." You can't justify your dirty work by the fact that

everybody is doing it. And so we have here, “I know my guilt; I transgressed thy law, and my transgressions are mine; and the devil hath obtained me, that I am a prey to his awful misery.” That’s the saddest thing about him, of course, that he is utterly miserable and wants others to be miserable like him. You might say, “That’s absurd, isn’t it? Why should anyone want to be miserable? Well, you tell me. That’s what we see all around us, nothing but people who make themselves miserable. Why do they need to do this?”

307 2 Nephi 9:47 In verse 47 he says he is talking about real things: “But behold, my brethren, is it expedient that I should awake you to an awful reality of these things?” You think that we are just talking a lot of old-fashioned tribal mumbo-jumbo or something like that. Not a bit of it, he says. And this is where we all fall down; we don’t really accept the reality of things. We don’t take them seriously enough. And again, Jacob is not popular, we get from this. They don’t like him to preach this way. Later in the book of Jacob he really bears down on them even more. He says, If you were holy, I would speak unto you of holiness. But as you are not holy and you look upon me as a teacher, you asked for it [paraphrased]. Then he is back to this again, “Come, my brethren, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money.” See, he keeps digging them on that because, as we learn at the beginning of the book of Jacob, they started finding an awful lot of rich minerals around here. They started hoarding the stuff and getting very class conscious about it, etc. And remember, this is very characteristic of barbarians—to load yourself with all you can, women of central Asia, etc. I have lived in communities where the women wear all the money, all the family fortune, right around their necks—all these heavy, massive gold and silver coins. It’s both for display and because it’s in the family.

307,308 2 Nephi 9:51 The idea that people are interested in collecting vast wealth doesn’t come with civilization at all; that’s a barbaric trait. The barbarians live by looting and plunder, as you know. Don’t do that,

he says. Verse 51: “Come unto the Holy One of Israel, and feast upon that which perisheth not [no money].”

308 2 Nephi 9:52,53 “Behold, my beloved brethren, remember the words of your God; pray unto him continually by day, and give thanks unto his holy name by night.” Is this the Arabic FATRA? The FATRA is a prayer that you never stop uttering, day and night. If a Moslem does any rhythmic work, if he saws, he has to say ALLAH, Allah, the name of God with every stroke. Or hammering, or walking. They do an awful lot of walking in the desert. Allah, Allah, etc., is the Ofra, the unceasing prayer. But this is talking about a normal way. We do things constantly. It means CONSTANTLY and REGULARLY when you do it continually. You say, “He fasted continually, or he studied continually, or he exercised continually. Or he was a man who smiled continually.” That doesn’t mean he never stopped in his sleep or anything like that. It means on a regular, reliable, constant basis. That’s what we do when we “pray unto him continually by day and give thanks to his holy name by night [your prayers in the day and your prayers at night]. Let your hearts rejoice.” There’s no reason why this can’t be fun, he says. There’s no reason why we shouldn’t enjoy this. He ends on an encouraging note here. In spite of all this, he tries to be cheerful. Verse 53: “He has promised unto us that our seed shall not utterly be destroyed, according to the flesh [that’s the best he can do], but that he would preserve them; and in future generations they shall become a righteous branch unto the house of Israel [that’s good news].

308,309 2 Nephi 10:1-6 “And now I, Jacob, speak unto you again ... concerning this righteous branch of which I have spoken.” This is a prophetic one. This goes for the land of promise. First, there is a review of what’s to happen in Israel. The author of this book could have picked up this part easy enough from the Bible. But then when we get to verse 9, he starts prophesying into the future. Since that was 150 years ago [when the Book of Mormon was published], we can start checking up on that and see if that’s the direction that has gone in. So he says in verse 2:

“Many of our children shall perish in the flesh because of unbelief [that happens, but] our children shall be restored. ... It must needs be expedient that Christ... should come among the Jews, among those who are the more wicked part of the world; and they shall crucify him [as I said, he could have got that elsewhere].... But because of priestcrafts and iniquities, they at Jerusalem will stiffen their necks against him, that he be crucified [the gospel doesn't have a chance anywhere it seems]. Wherefore, because of their iniquities, destructions, famines, pestilences, and bloodshed shall come upon them; and they who shall not be destroyed shall be scattered among all nations.” Of course, that was the great destruction of A.D. 70 and 130 when it was capital punishment for a Jew to be found in Jerusalem. The destruction was massive, as we can see from the Dead Sea Scrolls and from Josephus. The rest were scattered among all nations, and they are much more widely scattered than we think.

309 2 Nephi 10:7-9 “But behold, thus saith the Lord God: When the day cometh that they shall believe in me, that I am Christ, then have I covenanted with their fathers that they shall be restored in the flesh, upon the earth. And it shall come to pass that they shall be gathered in from their long dispersion.” Then the gathering—of course, this is important. This is the standard pattern we had before in this tenth chapter. “Yea, the kings of the Gentiles shall be nursing fathers unto them. “ Which they have been all through the ages, whether they wanted to be or not, consciously or not. Remember, we talked about the various royal families that you find in the Assizes of Jerusalem, for example, that ruled the world—all related to each other throughout Europe, etc. They were all heavily intermarried with Jews, especially Jewish women, who had an irresistible appeal to the kings, princes, and dukes of Europe. And their main ministers of finance were smart Jews they depended on, like Abravanel who financed Columbus, Joseph C. Oppenheimer who financed the Duke of Saxony, and other important men. They could be thrown out on a moment's notice; they had no rights and no defense at all. But they were mingled in everywhere. For 700 years they were not

only in France but in Toulouse which we mentioned last time. Toulouse was practically a Jewish enclave. It became Moslem and the Moslems were very tolerant for a while. It became the Kingdom of Toulouse with a Jewish center, mostly of those who had fled from Jerusalem when it was destroyed at the time of Christ. In southern France you will find them all along there in the Vaudois etc.



## Lecture 20 2 Nephi 25

### **The Jews and Jerusalem [Two Types of Prophecy] [Nephi Glories in Plainness]**

311 We have come to those chapters where he talks about Isaiah. We are not going to read all the Isaiah chapters. They take up a good deal of the book of 2 Nephi. He gives his explanation in chapter 25, and that's what interests us. Let's start at chapter 25 where he gives his explanation of Isaiah which is very important for understanding these things. "Isaiah spake many things which were hard for many of my people to understand." Isaiah himself often mentions the fact that the people ask him to speak smooth things. They want to hear smooth things. I am not going to teach you smooth things, he says. If I just gave you the smooth things you want, you wouldn't need them [paraphrased]. If the scriptures told us only what we wanted to hear, of course we wouldn't need them.

311 You notice it all changed under the rabbis; the interpretations became different. Isaiah is much too literal [for them], etc. Then, of course, they accepted the University abstractions and became more philosophical and intellectual in the interpretation of everything. That happened after the fall of the temple. But the temple hadn't fallen in Lehi's day. He said that it was hard for many of his people to understand, and he is talking about his own people now. They had an even harder time because they didn't know "the manner of prophesying among the Jews."

Now, prophecy is a special idiom. There are various ways [of prophesying] that he is going to tell us about. He [Isaiah] has the special type; he does not follow the established lines of prophecy which have to do with chants and incantations. They had to have a special meter and be pronounced in a certain rhythm, depending on where you find it. That's what the oracle is. Like the Norns, where their oracle is, they speak in RUNES; they speak in rhymes. When you are inspired, you are swept away. This was supposed to be a sign of inspiration to speak in that inspiration language.

312,313      2 Nephi 25:3 “I write that they may know the judgments of God, that they come upon all nations, according to the word which he hath spoken.” This is a prophetic section we are going into. He is going to prophesy what is going to happen—not only up to the time when the Book of Mormon is revealed, but thereafter. So we can check on that part. Verse 4: “For because the words of Isaiah are not plain unto you, nevertheless they are plain unto all those that are filled with the spirit of prophecy. But I give unto you a prophecy, according to the spirit which is in me; [notice this] wherefore I shall prophesy according to the plainness which hath been with me from the time that I came out from Jerusalem with my father.” He doesn't use rhymes and that manner.

313      2 Nephi 25:4,5      You notice Nephi says, “I shall prophesy according to ... plainness.... Yea, and my soul delighteth in the words of Isaiah.... I know that the Jews do understand the things of the prophets, and there is none other people that understand [them—only the Jews understand that particular idiom that they talk in].... But behold, I, Nephi, have not taught my children after the manner of the Jews [the Jews had strayed; they left just before Jerusalem was destroyed]; but behold, I, of myself, have dwelt at Jerusalem, wherefore I know concerning the regions round about.” (See, he has the cultural background; he knows the setting and how they do it.)

314      2 Nephi 25:7      He is talking to his audience now in verse 7: “But behold, I proceed with mine own prophecy,

according to my plainness.... Wherefore, they are of worth unto the children of men, and he that supposeth that they are not, unto them will I speak particularly, and confine the words unto mine own people [if you say these prophecies are not important, I'm speaking to you, he says, and I'm speaking to my own people]; for I know that they shall be of great worth unto them in the last days." In the last days they shall understand them. Wo to the generation that does understand them because it will be the last days.

314,315      2 Nephi 25:9-17      Now, here comes a very important passage. He is talking about Jerusalem. The Book of Mormon has a lot to say about Jerusalem as the central city that gets destroyed and then is rebuilt again. Verse 9: "And as one generation hath been destroyed among the Jews because of iniquity, even so have they been destroyed from generation to generation according to their iniquities [destruction doesn't mean wiped out to the last man; it means DESTRUO—destructured, broken, shattered, scattered, etc.] and never hath any of them been destroyed save it were foretold them by the prophets of the Lord [they were warned and they paid no attention, of course]. Wherefore, it hath been told them concerning the destruction which should come upon them, immediately after my father left Jerusalem [587 is the date given to it now; the date was moved around a lot, but that's where it has finally settled—just 13 years after they left Jerusalem. It was conquered by Nebuchadnezzar in 597, and then he went back again. He had put Zedekiah on the throne, and Zedekiah tried a revolution. Then back he came and really destroyed it the second time]; nevertheless, they hardened their hearts [and wouldn't listen]; and according to my prophecy they have been destroyed ... [but] they shall return again ... [this is the situation when they return:] they shall have wars, and rumors of wars [boy, have they had that, and do they have it]." Then it says they will crucify the Lord. This is talking about the wars at the time of the Romans and between them, after the Old Testament times, second temple. Then it tells about the Lord after he has risen from the dead and manifested himself unto his people, "unto as many as will believe on his name."

That's an important limitation, as we will see. Verse 15: "Wherefore, the Jews shall be scattered among all nations [well, this had all happened; anybody could know that in Joseph Smith's day, but now it goes on and tells us a few things]. ... And after they have been scattered, and the Lord God hath scourged them by other nations ... until they shall be persuaded to believe in Christ, the Son of God, and the atonement, which is infinite for all mankind ... [he talks about the atonement here—then]. And the Lord will set his hand again the second time to restore his people from their lost and fallen state. Wherefore, he will proceed to do a marvelous work and a wonder among the children of men [the reestablishing of Jerusalem].

## Lecture 21 2 Nephi 25-28

**Nephi's Prophecy of Our Times**  
**[Deadness of the Law Without Christ]**  
**[Days of the Gentiles (Today) Described]**  
**[Speaking of the Future in the Present Tense]**  
**[Loss of the Spirit Without the Temple]**  
**[Growth of Secret Combinations & Priestcrafts]**  
**[Aspire, Accuse, Contend, Coerce]**  
**[Promise That Records Will be Preserved]**

327 2 Nephi 25:18 Now, Nephi is in his prophetic vein, and he is going to take us all the way. We are on 2 Nephi 25. Here we go in verse 18: "Wherefore, he shall bring forth his words unto them, which words shall judge them at the last day." The purpose of these words is the "convincing them of the true Messiah,... for there should not any come, save it should be a false Messiah which should deceive the people." There were many false Messiahs that came forward.

329,330 2 Nephi 25:21- Now notice all this emphasis on writing in verse 21. "Wherefore, for this cause hath the Lord God promised unto me that these things which I write shall be kept and preserved and handed down unto my seed, from generation to generation, that the promise may be fulfilled unto Joseph, that his seed should never perish as long as the earth should stand [why is it necessary to preserve the seed?]..... These things shall go from generation to generation as long as the earth shall stand; and they

shall go according to the will and pleasure of God; and the nations who shall possess them shall be judged of them according to the words which are written [the importance of writing all the time; we will be judged by them]. For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ.” The Dead Sea Scrolls show this. They do write everything. After all, how did the law come down? The Lord wrote it, supposedly, with his own finger on the tablets and handed them to Moses. Just like Moroni had painfully written it with his fingers and handed the plates to Joseph Smith later on. It’s a strange thing, this handing down.

330 2 Nephi 25:24-27 Notice verse 24: “We keep the law of Moses, and look forward with steadfastness unto Christ, until the law shall be fulfilled.” Professor Frank Cross of Harvard, who has been here quite a number of times, gave the Dead Sea Scrolls people the name “The Church of Anticipation.” As Norman Golb has shown now, the Dead Sea Scrolls people were always looking forward. They sound like Christians, but they are not Christians—they’re Jews. Since they always looked forward, he called it “The Church of Anticipation.” Everything was anticipating the Christian church. That’s exactly what we have here. He says, it points our minds forward. We are anticipating what’s to come. That’s why we keep the law of Moses—in anticipation of other things to be revealed. That’s exactly what happens in the Serekh Scroll, for example. “For, for this end was the law given.” But it is really Christ, the Messiah. The whole thing has to do with him. This comes right in the right place here. To what do they look forward? To one thing, to Christ. They are obsessed with that. He says, “And we talk of Christ, we rejoice in Christ, we preach of Christ, we prophesy of Christ, and we write according to our prophecies; ... we speak concerning the law that our children may know the deadness of the law.” Why would you teach the law if it was just to teach the deadness? Well, the law is the iron rod; the law is the Liahona. Remember when Mormon showed it to his son when he was ten years old. There was the Liahona. It was kept among the national treasures, but it didn’t work anymore. Once it had performed its function

of leading them through the desert, then it became excess baggage. It's the same thing with the iron rod. When you reach [the end of] the iron rod, you have to let go. The rod is not the goal. It will take you where you are going, but when you are there you let go. It was to be guidance.

331 2 Nephi 25:27-30 “Wherefore, we speak concerning the law that our children may know the deadness of the law; and they, by knowing the deadness of the law, may look forward unto that life which is in Christ, and know for what end the law was given.” It's guidance—it's to lead us there. But remember, it becomes the obsession. After the temple was destroyed, what could they do except discuss the law? They went on, and that's why we have the Talmud, the Mishnah, and all that. It's all discussion of the law. That's what the Talmud does, discusses the law, and boy do they split hairs! When is it day and when is it night? The new day begins at a certain time, and it's important to determine when it happens. It's when you can distinguish between two strings, a black string and a white string. Well, how black and how white? How long do those strings have to be? At what distance do they have to be? It says “at arm's length.” At whose arm's length? At the arm's length of a man six feet tall. So it goes. You are splitting hairs and trying to find out exactly what is what. This is the “letter of the law,” but it's the only thing they were left with after they rejected the Messiah. Notice, they hardened their hearts against him when the law ought to be done away. They became hard, like hardening arteries. You get hardened and set in your ways, and you will not be receptive anymore. The thought has to be fluid. That's the expression we use for that sort of thing. The law is “sufficient to teach any man the right way.” Notice, verse 30 is important: “Ye must keep the performances and ordinances of God until the law shall be fulfilled which was given unto Moses.” The ordinances and performances aren't going to save you, but you must keep them because they point your mind forward until the law shall be fulfilled. They will keep you on the path. It's a discipline, and that discipline is important—the law having no particular effect or virtue in itself.

332 2 Nephi 26:4-9 We're going on here; we have to get to the prophecy of our times. After Christ came generations would pass away. Then the proud that do wickedly shall burn and be as stubble. Notice that complete consumption in verse 4. Then one of those emotional outbursts of Nephi in verse 7: "O the pain, and the anguish of my soul for the loss of the slain of my people! [he sees it all]. For I, Nephi, have seen it, and it well nigh consumeth me before the presence of the Lord; but I must cry unto my God: Thy ways are just [it's almost more than he can stand]. But behold, the righteous that hearken unto the words of the prophets ... shall not perish." It's interesting that every time it mentions this being consumed as stubble, [the righteous are mentioned]. That means by fire and completely—overburn. That's what it is. After the field has been cut, then you bum it over. That's the great overburn of the stubble. But the righteous are told they shall not perish. We are not told how; we have to leave that up to the Lord. The only concern with you is to be righteous; this is the point. Verse 9: "But the Son of righteousness shall appear unto them; and he shall heal them, and they shall have peace with him, until three generations shall have passed away."

333 2 Nephi 26:10 : "And when these things have passed away a speedy destruction cometh unto my people.... When the Spirit ceaseth to strive with man then cometh speedy destruction, and this grieveth my soul." That's ATE when the Spirit will no longer strive with them. And he says, "My spirit will not always strive with man."

333 2 Nephi 26:12-20 "It must needs be that the Gentiles be convinced also that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God; and that he manifesteth himself unto all those who believe in him, by the power of the Holy Ghost; yea, unto every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, working mighty miracles, signs, and wonders, among the children of men according to their faith." He will be received according to the faith to receive him. It will be done according to your faith. "But behold, I prophesy unto you concerning the last days [now this should interest us from here on] when the



Lord God shall bring these things forth unto the children of men [this is our time]. After my seed and the seed of my brethren shall have dwindled in unbelief, and shall have been smitten by the Gentiles; yea, after the Lord God shall have camped against them round about [The Indians were pretty strong at this time in the 1820s. They occupied most of the country, and they had received the horse and become very warlike and effective. There were whole great nations, but this shows us the Indians completely ground down, just reduced to where there is almost nothing left before the tide is going to turn here.] ... and after they shall have been brought down low in the dust, even that they are not, yet the words of the righteous shall be written [he's talking about the record], and the prayers of the faithful shall be heard, and all those who have dwindled in unbelief shall not be forgotten. For those who shall be destroyed shall speak unto them out of the ground, and their speech shall be low out of the dust [we mentioned the Nahal Hever caves, etc.].... They shall write the things which shall be done among them [there are the Dead Sea Scrolls, among other things].... And it shall come to pass, that those who have dwindled in unbelief shall be smitten by the hand of the Gentiles [now it's the Gentiles' turn]. And the Gentiles are lifted up in the pride of their eyes, and have stumbled [notice, he is using the present tense], because of the greatness of their stumbling block, that they have built up many churches."

333,334      2 Nephi 26:20,21    It's an interesting thing that in Greek historical accounts you only use the present tense for future or past because as you talk about it, it is happening. You only use the present tense in historical narrative. They just stick to the present, and he is doing the same thing here. Of course, this is 2500 years ahead of him. He says, "And the Gentiles are lifted up in the pride of their eyes, and have stumbled, because of the greatness of their stumbling block, that they have built up many churches [the great and abominable' is a composite]; nevertheless, they put down the power and miracles of God, and preach up unto themselves their own wisdom and their own learning [notice the two things], that they may get gain and

grind upon the face of the poor [positivism and materialism become the main trends in Christian studies]. And there are many churches [he told us before that there was one church—that’s the big composite that covers everything] built up which cause envyings, and strifes, and malice.” Of course, they are always competitive, but that happens within every church. All churches are full of envyings, strife and malice—including ours (you know that), in some wards, not everywhere. But that happens because it’s human nature.

334 2 Nephi 26:22 “And there are also secret combinations [this gets more serious, you see], even as in times of old, according to the combinations of the devil, for he is the founder of all these things; yea, the founder of murder, and works of darkness; yea, and he leadeth them by the neck with a flaxen cord, until he bindeth them with his strong cords forever.”

334,335 2 Nephi 26:23-27 “I say unto you that the Lord God worketh not in darkness.” This is interesting because of the militant orders that rose after the time of the Crusades. They were very secret. I’m talking about the Templars and the others. They degenerated into the schlerafian and fraternities and things like that. They have been all over the place, and some of them have been quite militant and full of mischief. “For he loveth the world, even that he layeth down his own life that he may draw all men unto him. Wherefore, he commandeth none that they shall not partake of his salvation [of course, the Church is not exclusive]. Behold, doth he cry unto any saying: Depart from me? Behold, I say unto you, Nay.... Behold hath he commanded any that they should depart out of the synagogues, or out of the houses of worship? [Notice, he recognizes them. Corruption and cynicism should not turn us away from religion itself. We start out with that. That’s what we have to have, and then which direction you take is up to you to decide.] Behold, I say unto you, Nay. Hath he commanded any that they should not partake of his salvation? Behold I say unto you, Nay; but he hath given it free for all men; and he hath commanded his people that they should persuade [so we

have to work on it] all men to repentance.” That is the first thing. That is the message of the missionary, “Speak nothing but repentance to this generation,” because that’s what we have to have. That’s what we need to do from day to day and always, all the days of our lives, as the ninth chapter of Nephi says. He has lengthened our days just to give us a better chance to repent. And no one has less need to repent than another because the greater your virtues the greater the responsibility you have for the things you haven’t done, etc. I mean if you know more than someone else, you have a greater responsibility than someone who knows less, so you have to repent just as much if not more than he does that you are not studying enough, that you are not doing enough.

335 2 Nephi 26:28,33 “All men are privileged the one like unto the other, and none are forbidden.” Notice right across the page there, if you have this edition, in the end of the last verse of this chapter he says, “And he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile.”

335,336 2 Nephi 26:29-33 “He commandeth that there shall be no priestcrafts; for, behold, priestcrafts are that men preach and set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion.” That’s very interesting when he says, “They seek not the welfare of Zion.” He’s talking about somebody who is in Zion in that case who sets himself up for a light and wants to get gain and praise. Well, I know lots of businessmen and others who have had a free ride on the Church. It’s sad. But you’ll find that in every church, too. We might as well be frank about these things. How do we deal with these people? The next verse makes it clear. You should have charity; you don’t judge them at all. Of course not. “The Lord God hath given a commandment that all men should have charity, which charity is love. And except they should have charity they were nothing [so this is how we deal with these things: we have charity and love, and without that you are nothing].

Wherefore, if they should have charity they would not suffer the laborer in Zion to perish.” Notice, he is talking about Zion here. If they had charity, they wouldn’t suffer the laborer in Zion to perish. Then he really hits it hard: “But the laborer in Zion shall labor for Zion; for if they labor for money they shall perish [laboring in Zion; wow, we’d better watch it here]. And again, the Lord God hath commanded that men should not murder; that they should not lie; that they should not steal.” Notice the list of things. Here we have the real prime-time TV show. This is the best hours of the evening when you see murder, stealing, envy, malice, contention, and whoredoms. They make the program. That is the rich mix that makes the big selling TV program today that will go over everything. Then he invites all “to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white.” Notice, he moves between these things. He sees the evil and gets right to the heart of it and then says, but you must forgive; you must tolerate these things; we are all being tested together; the Lord wants everybody to have a chance, etc.

336 2 Nephi 27:1,3; 2 Nephi 28:21 Then he really warms up in the next chapter: “But, behold, in the last days, or in the days of the Gentiles [notice, the last days are called ‘the days of the Gentiles’; they certainly haven’t been the days of the Jews]—yea, behold all the nations of the Gentiles and also the Jews, both those who shall come upon this land and those who shall be upon other lands [that’s all of us], yea, even upon all the lands of the earth, behold, they will be drunken with iniquity and all manner of abominations [this is the way they are]... . And all the nations that fight against Zion ...” We’ll see who Zion is if you turn to 2 Nephi 28:21. You don’t identify yourself with that to establish your virtue. “All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell [if they do that].” There’s too much of that, you see. But notice it’s the theatromania. This third verse is marvelous, and of course, it’s quoted from the prophet. “And all the nations that fight against Zion, and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a night vision; yea, it shall be unto them, even as unto a hungry

man which dreameth, and behold he eateth but he awaketh and his soul is empty; or like unto a thirsty man which dreameth, and behold he drinketh but he awaketh and behold he is faint, and his soul hath appetite; yea, even so shall the multitude of all the nations be that fight against Mount Zion.”

336,337 Notice the state of mind you are in: You think you have it made. This is the delusion of drugs, or the delusion of wealth and plenty, or whatever it is. But you notice we are in a sort of dream state now. The wildest things happen. People feel no outrage at the most terrible crimes that are committed in our midst, etc. But the whole thing is like a dream. It's what the ancients called THEATROMANIA. I still have an article I've got to write on THEATROMANIA. As you can see, it means theatre mania. The appearance or the show is everything—a mania for the theatre, for spectacles and sights. Everybody becomes a spectator, a watcher. People spent all their time at the games and shows. Athletics became everything with them. They had these enormous coliseums and stadiums. We still use their words for that. We still have the same sort of games, and they get rougher and rougher and more violent, just for violence's sake—like tag wrestling, roller derbies, demolition derbies, and such cultural events as those. What a society! But it is all unreal, and when you awaken it's a coming around and killing yourself that's a terrible thing.

337 2 Nephi 27:5 “For behold, the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep sleep. For behold, ye have closed your eyes, and ye have rejected the prophets; and your rulers, and the seers hath he covered because of your iniquity.” It uses the very interesting old Hebrew word KDFAR. He has taken them from you; he has covered them. We are out of touch with reality; we definitely are.

337,338 2 Nephi 27:6 “The Lord God shall bring forth unto you the words of a book [now this isn't the Book of Mormon he is talking about; this is another book apparently], and they shall be the words of them which have

slumbered. And behold the book shall be sealed; and in the book shall be a revelation from God, from the beginning of the world to the ending thereof.” The Book of Mormon doesn’t go from the beginning of the world to the end, but the sealed part does. This is just a small part. The big part was sealed (the big plates), and this is what he is talking about. “Wherefore, because of the things which are sealed up, the things which are sealed shall not be delivered in the day of the wickedness and abominations of the people. Wherefore the book shall be kept from them.” They do get the Book of Mormon, but not the sealed words. Notice verse 10 talking about the man to whom the book is delivered: “But the words which are sealed he shall not deliver, neither shall he deliver the book. For the book shall be sealed by the power of God, and the revelation which was sealed shall be kept in the book until the own due time of the Lord, that they may come forth; for behold, they reveal all things from the foundation of the word unto the end thereof.” The book of Moses comes nearest to that, but the book of Moses is a very small book. That’s not the one that is sealed. It’s another thing, and it’s every bit as remarkable as the Book of Mormon. Well, the book “shall be read upon the house tops” when it comes, and “all things shall be revealed” then. “The book shall be hid from the eyes of the world.”

338 2 Nephi 27:12-26 Then it talks about three witnesses because there are always three witnesses. It doesn’t have to be the three witnesses of the Book of Mormon. The scripture says, “In the mouths of three witnesses shall all things be established.” This one has three witnesses too. This in verse 15 could refer to the case of Charles Anthon when Martin Harris took the plates [the translation] to him. Why did he take it to Charles Anthon? In 1830 [1828] Charles Anthon couldn’t read Egyptian; nobody could. He claimed he recognized the signs, etc. and could read them, but he said, “How can I read a sealed book?” Well, Martin Harris had to take them to the most learned man, and he was. Charles Anthon was without any doubt the best classical scholar—the best antiquarian in the country, one of the very best in the world. He produced a magnificent and masterful dictionary of antiquities. It was so they could never say to

Joseph Smith after that, “Oh yes, you gave a translation of it. You had the characters and the plates, but you never took them to a real scholar. You never got a top opinion on it, did you?” He did have Harris take it to the best scholar in the world, and he got his opinion on it. He said that he couldn’t read a sealed book. Then he said, “Bring them back and I will read them to you.” He got huffy about it. Of course, he couldn’t read them. He was bluffing; that’s why he got so huffy. But we couldn’t say that the world wasn’t given a chance [to give an opinion] in that case because, as it says in the verse 20 here: “The learned shall not read them. . . . Touch not the things which are sealed [that’s very particular here].... Then shalt thou seal up the book again, and hide it up unto me, that I may preserve the words which thou hast not read, until I shall see fit in mine own wisdom to reveal all things unto the children of men.” This is the way it happens, and this is why in verse 25: “Forasmuch as this people draw near unto me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their hearts far from me, and their fear towards me is taught by the precepts of men.” Is this the situation today? We certainly draw near to him with our lips, but have we removed our hearts far from him? Not everybody. No, there are people in the world whose hearts are set because of their sufferings. And if they fear God because of the precepts of men, that’s better than nothing. But he says he’s got to bring forth “a marvelous work and a wonder.”

339 2 Nephi 27:27 Notice here in verse 27: “And their works are in the dark; and they say: Who seeth us, and who knoweth us?” Did you ever hear about insider trading? There’s big money in that, but this is the whole thing. These things are all done in the dark; they are arranged by officers in certain places. “Who seeth us, and who knoweth us?”

339 2 Nephi 27:28 Here’s prophecy again in verse 28: “And Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field; and the fruitful field shall be esteemed as a forest.” It’s interesting that they pick Lebanon for the big ecological change because Lebanon is the great paradox. Lebanon is the richest; that’s

the old Phoenician country, and they still call themselves Phoenician

339,340      2 Nephi 27:31    “For assuredly as the Lord liveth they shall see that the terrible one is brought to naught, and the scorner is consumed, and all that watch for iniquity are cut off.” So let’s not watch for iniquity. There are four things you must never do. Joseph Smith separately discusses four things. The first, of course, is “to aspire.” Satan aspired, and that was his undoing. Never aspire and never be ambitious. You don’t aspire in this world if you’re going to get anything you want in the next. Never accuse. Of course, Satan is “the accuser.” The word DIABOLUS from which the name devil comes means accuser. He is called “the accuser of his brethren” in the scriptures. Adam said to Satan, “I will not bring a railing accusation against thee. Let God judge between me and thee.” Adam would not accuse Satan after what Satan had done to him, you see. So we don’t accuse anybody, no matter how guilty they are. Then you do not contend. The first thing the Lord says to the Nephites is there shall be no more contentions among you as there have been. This is my gospel that there shall be no contentions. All contention shall cease, for contention is not of me, but all contention is of the devil who stirreth up the children of men to anger to bloodshed and things like that [paraphrased]. So we never contend and never coerce, if that’s the case. And those are the four things that everybody wants to do today. Everybody is aspiring to high office, and everybody accuses in order to get it. Everybody contends; it’s a very contentious world we live in, a competitive world. And we back it all up in the end; the bottom line is force. We have to have the force, coercion. We have all four things.

340      2 Nephi 28:4    We’ll move along here. The prophecies are continuing in chapter 28. The churches which are built up contend one with another. I like verse 4: “And they shall contend one with another, . . . and they teach with their learning, and deny the Holy Ghost, which giveth utterance.” Learning will always be inadequate. To do that the usual thing is to deny the Holy Ghost. It’s vanity. In



denying that they deny the power of God. “Behold, hearken ye unto my precept; if they shall say there is a miracle wrought by the hand of the Lord, believe it not; for this day he is not a God of miracles; he hath done his work. Yea, and there shall be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die; and it shall be well with us. And there shall also be many which shall say: Eat, drink, and be merry; nevertheless, fear God [they want it both ways in other words]—he will justify in committing a little sin [because it’s human nature; we do it, of course]; yea, lie a little, take the advantage of one because of his words, dig a pit for thy neighbor.”

341 2 Nephi 28:7,8,14; Mormon 8:39 “Tomorrow we die” means “live it up like there was no tomorrow.” But if there is, well, “God will beat us with a few stripes.... Yea, and there shall be many which shall teach after this manner [in this sort of manner. This isn’t an article of faith or anything; this is the type of doctrine that will be taught], false and vain and foolish doctrines, and shall be puffed up in their hearts, and shall seek deep to hide their counsels from the Lord; and their works shall be in the dark [they have Swiss accounts, you see—that’s works in the dark; then someone pays for it] And the blood of the saints shall cry from the ground against them. Yea, they have all gone out of the way; they have become corrupted.” Then we read in verse 14: “They have all gone astray save it be a few, who are the humble followers of Christ; nevertheless, they are led, that in many instances they do err because they are taught by the precepts of men.” Because of the pride, the false teachers, the false doctrines of the churches, they rob the poor for their fine sanctuaries and their fine clothing. In Mormon 8:39 it takes this right home to us today. This is quite explicit there, “Why do you adorn yourselves with that which hath no life, and yet suffer the hungry, and the needy, and the naked, and the sick and the afflicted to pass by you, and notice them not?” We studiously notice them not.

341,342 2 Nephi 28:15-21; 2 Nephi 10:16 Notice in verse 15 that these are the three vanities: the wise, the

learned, and the rich— those who are clever, those who know so much, and those who have it. They “are puffed up in the pride of their hearts, and all those who preach false doctrines, and all those who commit whoredoms.” We think this means nothing anymore. “Wo unto them that turn aside the just for a thing of naught [ah, the technicalities of the law] and revile against that which is good, and say that it is of no worth! For the day shall come that the Lord God will speedily visit the inhabitants of the earth; and in that day that they are fully ripe in iniquity they shall perish.” He’s giving us a lot of rope; you notice that. When they are fully ripe, they will take care of themselves. That’s ate again—when you reach the point of no return, when you are fully ripe. “But behold, that great and abominable church, the whore of all the earth, must tumble to the earth, and great must be the fall thereof.” Then we go back to 2 Nephi 10:16 where he says that all those who fight against Zion are the “great and abominable.” Who is Zion? Well, don’t flatter yourself on that because we come right to that now. Verse 20: “For behold, at that day shall he [Satan] rage in the hearts of the children of men, and stir them up to anger against that which is good.” All you have to do is name a few buzz words, and people get absolutely furious. Now here is Zion: “And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion [who claims to be Zion?]; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.” Notice that this trick has been carefully arranged, this equation here—”he leadeth them carefully down to hell.”

342 You notice that prosperity, like life itself, is a blessing. But it’s not a sign of blessedness, as Wilford Woodruff and John Taylor said. When the Church started being prosperous in their days, they started warning the Saints, “Don’t mistake prosperity for virtue.” You seem to think because the Lord blesses the Nephites when they are good for just three generations that if you’re rich that means you’re good. At least you’re smart How many great composers do we have? How many great poets do we have? Have many great painters do we have? People count

them on the fingers of one hand, and yet we have literally millions of millionaires. This is a sign of the greatness of achievement. “Yea, Zion prospereth [notice the emphasis on PROSPERETH], all is well—and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell. And behold, others he flattereth away, and telleth them there is no hell; and he saith unto them: I am no devil, for there is none.” This is a very common belief that there is no devil, he’s not personal, etc. You make people feel good and you’ll win in our society. You’ll sell your product. There’s this terrible competition.

342,343      2 Nephi 28:23-24      “Yea, they are grasped with death, and hell; and death, and hell, and the devil, and all that have been seized therewith must stand before the throne of God, and be judged according to their works, from whence they must go into the place prepared for them, even a lake of fire and brimstone, which is endless torment [notice, that is a metaphor]. Therefore, wo be unto him that is at ease in Zion! [I try to make myself as uncomfortable as possible]. Wo be unto him that crieth: All is well!” But he is going to win. He is going to win if he says all is well. He’ll win every time, you’ll notice. Don’t criticize. “Yea, wo be unto him that saith: We have received, and we need no more!” How many returned missionaries say they’ve now done their work? They’ve received their testimony; now they can settle down to business?

343      2 Nephi 28:29,30      Well, with this faith-promoting talk let’s finish the chapter here. Verse 29: “Wo be unto him that shall say: We have received the word of God and we need no more of the word of God, for we have enough! For behold, thus saith the Lord God [he says I’m going to continue to give it]: I will give unto the children of men line upon line [the scriptures], precept upon precept, here a little and there a little.” Of course, he goes on; God doesn’t cease at all. It’s funny that we have thousands of volumes adding to the gospel’s teachings. That’s what the councils of the churches do. They reinterpret. That just means they are adding elements that are missing, and they have to be supplied by their wit and wisdom. As the late Cardinal

“what’s his name” said, “Men can add to the gospel, but God may not.” He has spoken his final word, he can’t, but we can add to it all we want by reinterpreting, etc. “For unto him that receiveth I will give more; and from them that shall say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have.” That’s so in any art or science, any study you are doing. If you say you have enough, “I’ve got my terminal degree and that’s it,” you’re not going anywhere then.

343 2 Nephi 28:31,32 “Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, or maketh flesh his arm, or shall hearken unto the precepts of men [the experts in other words. Notice this government military business; they put their trust in man and maketh flesh their arm].... Wo be unto the Gentiles, saith the Lord God of Hosts! ... They will deny me; nevertheless, I will be merciful unto them ... if they will repent and come unto me.” If they will repent, it will be all right with them. So that’s that happy chapter.

343,344 It’s a prophetic book, and it’s full of all sorts of things. I’ve been finding many things about the early practices of the Hebrew atonement rites, which were the whole purpose of the temple anciently. That’s what it was for, the sacrifice of the atonement. I find more in the Book of Mormon than in the Old Testament. It’s just amazing the customs that emerge. You bring them up with the Talmud and the Mishnah, and you see that the Book of Mormon knows what it’s talking about. Whether I do or not, the Book of Mormon does. That’s why I stick to the text. You’ll notice that.

## Lecture 22 2 Nephi 29-31

**Scripture and Canon**  
**[Remember the Strengths of the Jews]**  
**[The Lord Speaks to Many Nations]**  
**[We Will Be Judged From**  
**What is Written in Books]**  
**[Record Keeping Required]**  
**[Become White and Delightful**  
**When They Believe]**  
**[All Earthly Seals Shall Be Broken]**  
**[Satan Shall Have No More Power]**  
**[John The Baptist Baptizes Christ]**

345 2 Nephi 29:2,3; 1 Nephi 17:35 We are on 2 Nephi 29. He [the Lord] is talking about when he sets his hand again in these last days the second time to recover his people. “I would remember your seed [too],” he says. There are no “God’s privileged people,” as we read in 1 Nephi 17:35. He loves one as much as the other. He starts bringing his words again in verse 3: “And because my words shall hiss forth” (a very interesting word). “HAS MIPPENAYWKOL HA-ARETZ. Let all the earth be silent in his presence.” There’s hiss and hush. Of course, it means “go forth in a quiet, unassuming way.” It won’t be like a trumpet on a mountaintop. Notice how the Book of Mormon was introduced. It wasn’t highly publicized. It wasn’t in all the papers; they didn’t announce a great book coming forth, etc. All the advertising was done by the enemy for quite a long time. As soon as Joseph got the plates, it started a scandal. The Painesville Telegraph

and some other newspapers started talking about it and started publicizing it all over the place long before he had ever produced it. How you would panic if you had promised to produce a book. It [the newspaper] said “gold plates” and told that story, and people were waiting for it to come out: “All right, wise guy, where’s the book?” He had to produce it. He produced it on the line, and it was all there. Then they said, “Oh, well, it’s nothing.” They wouldn’t even read the book. It got publicity all right, but it hissed forth out of the dust. It’s a good word, isn’t it? The word is whispered around; it just gets around that way. The Lord doesn’t trumpet it forth, and the angel doesn’t come to the whole human race. Because of that, when they start finding out about it, “many of the Gentiles shall say: A Bible! A Bible! We have got a Bible, and there cannot be any more Bible. [Notice in verse 6] Thou fool, that shall say: A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible. Have ye obtained a Bible save it were by the Jews?”

351 2 Nephi 29:4 It’s the same thing with the Jews [having previously recounted the strengths of Jews in general]; they go all the way. That’s why it’s talking about them here. He describes their weaknesses beautifully here. Remember, when they are too smart for their britches and always looking beyond the mark. They want to make an intellectual problem of everything. No, that’s Jacob who tells about that. We’re soon going to get to it because he was Nephi’s brother. Verse 4: “... the travails, and the labors, and the pains of the Jews, and their diligence unto me, in bringing forth salvation unto the Gentiles?” You might say, “Well, they didn’t do it willingly; that wasn’t their objective.” Yes, it was. There were great and righteous men among them. There have always been holy men among the Jews, as there always have been in the world. All churches have had very good, holy, righteous people, but not very many. But the Jews have made special effort because they had to. Remember, George Albert Smith, Sr., used to say, “We came out here of our own free will because they made us.” It’s the same thing with the Jews. They did all these wonderful things because they were forced to do them.

351, 2 Nephi 29:5 “O ye Gentiles, have ye remembered the Jews, mine ancient covenant people? Nay; but ye have cursed them, and have hated them, and have not sought to recover them. But behold, I will return all these things upon your own heads; for I the Lord have not forgotten my people. Thou fool, that shall say: A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible. Have ye obtained a Bible save it were by the Jews?” It’s interesting that not only the New Testament was all written by Jews, but the Old Testament too was what gave them the Bible. Remember Jerome? The Latin Bible is Jerome’s Bible. Reuchlin with the Reformation was the first one to really get into the Hebrew Bible. It was the Hebrew and Jerome’s and Luther’s Bible [that influenced the King James], Jerome lived fifteen years in Bethlehem. He worked among the Jews all that time. He gave us the Latin Vulgate, the standard Roman Catholic Bible. He lived right among the Jews when he wrote it, all those many years in Bethlehem. Reuchlin and Luther were busily studying Hebrew. It’s from them we get our King James Bible more than anyone else. The King James Bible translators relied quite heavily on Luther’s Bible. They depended a lot on Luther. In order to do this, of course, Reuchlin and the others became ardent Hebraists. They worked with the Jews, etc.

351,352 2 Nephi 29: 7,8 “Know ye not that there are more nations than one? [That’s an important thing.] Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, have created all men [now it’s going to get universal; there’s no reason for being snooty about it and because you’re Jews start pushing people off the sidewalk], and that I remember those who are upon the isles of the sea.” You’ve never seen such arrogance in the world. The way they are behaving toward the Palestinians now isn’t very nice. After all, there are complaints. The Lord told them, “Remember that you were a stranger in Egypt.” You were roughed up and you didn’t like it, so remember other people the same way. This is another important thing in verse 8: “Wherefore murmur ye, because that ye shall receive more of my word?” Some of these apocryphal writings, these writings that were discovered later, belong to the Bible. There are works in the Bible that shouldn’t

be there, and some writings that are not in there should be there. That's a big problem today. It was at the Council of Dordrecht in 1670 in which the Protestants all got together and ruled that they would not have anything to do with these apocryphal writings. There was just the Bible, just that particular text, and nothing else. Well, who determined the canon of the Bible and set the limits to it? This was all done by committees that claimed no revelation whatever, no inspiration whatever. There are many books and many writings they left out. Who gave them authority to leave them out? Who gave them authority to say what should be left in and what shouldn't? They didn't claim it. As wise men they would argue about it on literary and philosophical grounds, etc. But the Synod of Dordrecht in the Netherlands decided that they would reject entirely what they called "the miserable Apocrypha." Of course, the miserable Apocrypha has some very important writings in it. The Book of Enoch is there. These things are very highly respected now. The two most respected of all are the book of Abraham and the Book of Enoch. Of course, these are the very two that Joseph Smith gave us. He gave us the book of Abraham, and in chapters 6-8 of the book of Moses he gave us the Book of Enoch. They are of great importance now. With the Dead Sea Scrolls you have the Genesis Apocryphon, Abraham's activity in Egypt, etc. These things line up very well, not only with Jewish tradition but with the Bible itself. And they are older versions.

352 2 Nephi 29:8 "Know ye not that the testimony of two nations is a witness unto you that I am God, that I remember one nation like unto another? [He does.] Wherefore, I speak the same words unto one nation like unto another [now, this is interesting—the gospel will be given as far as they will take it; we are going to see how it goes]. And when the two nations shall run together the testimony of the two nations shall run together also." Of course, this is the test, as the Indians say. This is the same one that the Arabs use, too. I can remember telling John Wilson, the Egyptologist, about this. He was quite surprised because the Egyptians have the same idea of running side by side. It means the same thing, and there's a hieroglyph for it. I'll think of it in



a second. When two run side by side, they go this way, so they say, "Mormons and Hopis like this."

353 2 Nephi 29:9 "And because that I have spoken one word ye need not suppose that I cannot speak another [the expanding gospel]; for my work is not yet finished; neither shall it be until the end of man, neither from that time henceforth and forever." Can't God go on doing his own work and adding if he wants to, saying what he wants? The Gospel of John ends that way. Remember, he says, "I think if all the deeds of Christ were written the whole world wouldn't contain the books." Well, he must have done an awful lot of things, but all the words of Jesus Christ can be read in half an hour now, as we have them in the New Testament. I'm sure he spoke marvelous things more than that. Of course, now when you find a very early document, it will almost always have the title "The Words of Jesus Christ Spoken to the Apostles in Secret after the Resurrection." These are the really important teachings of the forty-day ministry.

353 2 Nephi 29:11 Now we have a really interesting picture of what is going forth here. Verse 11: "For I command all men, both in the east, and in the west, and in the north, and in the south, and in the islands of the sea, that they shall write the words which I speak unto them." In other words God has not neglected the world just because we have these little people, the Jews. They didn't accept it; they were a stiff-necked people, always looking beyond the mark, etc. As I said, there are always righteous people here and there. It's interesting. We are going to have real trouble now, aren't we, if this really happens? "For out of the books which shall be written I will judge the world, every man according to their works, according to that which is written." There is yet a great deal more to discover. Well, we have a library here. It wouldn't take you so long as you might think to read through the nearly four million books in our library. They are there but nobody reads them, as you know. A few of them we read, but you don't need to read [all of] them. A few books comprise everything all the others have to say.

354 2 Nephi 29:12,13 “For behold, I shall speak unto the Jews and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto the Nephites and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto the other tribes of the house of Israel, which I have led away, and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto all nations of the earth and they shall write it.” Well, that’s every nation, not just civilized nations. We have records taken by visitors to all the tribes of the Indians. There’s a lot that gets lost there, but they all write their record. They all leave their record in various forms, whether it’s in account books, or in law books, or in journals, or whatever it is. You know President Kimball was so great on this idea of journals, etc. It turns out that they really are important; it’s a funny thing. I mean even though your journal doesn’t say anything and it’s terribly boring, there’s a purpose for keeping it, if only to keep you on your toes. We have the Greek contribution here, the Septuagint. The oldest and best version of the Old Testament that we have is by the Greeks; they handed it down to us. And there are the Hermetic writings, although we never search them anymore. Well, anyway they have each other’s words. Verse 13: “The Jews shall have the words of the Nephites, and the Nephites shall have the words of the Jews; and the Nephites and the Jews shall have the words of the lost tribes of Israel; and the lost tribes of Israel shall have the words of the Nephites and the Jews [this mesh is interwoven here]. And it shall come to pass that my people, which are of the house of Israel, shall be gathered home unto the lands of their possessions.”

355,356 2 Nephi 29:14 You notice this is working toward one particular objective, this getting together. Well, there is nothing exotic [to travel and see] anymore. It’s all being brought together into one—into one tight community as a matter of fact. It’s altogether too snug for comfort when we get all the overpopulation. He [Nephi] is talking about this gathering process. First they connect with each other. Then they “shall be gathered home unto the lands of their possessions [notice it’s plural]; and my word also shall be gathered in one.”

355 I think Plato is right; there is such a thing as an

ideal culture. He said he had it in his mind. You know what it is, and when it is right you recognize it. When something is wrong you recognize it. He used the KALOS K'AGATHOS, "the good, true, and beautiful." You recognize what should be, but we don't have it. How do you know that? And we all agree on it too. That's ANAMNESIS; remember it in the back of our minds from another life. We know what is right. When we see a properly constructed object, it pleases us immediately. We don't have to analyze it because we have a dim memory of it. It's an act of recognition. When you see anything good, true, or beautiful, you embrace it eagerly because that's what you have been looking for. It's an act of recognition when you see it. Here we are suffering from nostalgia; we are far from home here.

357 2 Nephi 30:1,2 He [Nephi] has been talking about the wonderful things [promised] to the Jews, Israel etc. But don't let Israel get the big head, he tells us in the first verse of the next chapter. "For I, Nephi, would not suffer that ye should suppose that ye are more righteous than the Gentiles shall be. For behold, except ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall all likewise perish [what is more]; and because of the words which have been spoken ye need not suppose that the Gentiles are utterly destroyed. For behold, I say unto you that as many of the Gentiles as will repent are the covenant people of the Lord." All they have to do is repent, and that's it. Ezekiel makes that perfectly clear. Chapter 18 of Ezekiel is a wonderful treatment on this. You're righteous if you repent. No matter how bad you have been, you are righteous. You are the chosen people. And if you don't repent, no matter how good you may have been until now, then you are the lost. So if the Gentiles repent, they are the covenant people. "And as many of the Jews as will not repent shall be cast off [the opposite of atonement is to be cast off]; for the Lord covenanteth with none save it be with them that repent [that is the basic principle of covenant] and believe in his Son, who is the Holy One of Israel."

357,358 2 Nephi 30:3-7 Now here is the work of the Gentiles. Verse 3: "For after the book of which I have

spoken shall come forth, and be written unto the Gentiles, and sealed up again unto the Lord, there shall be many which shall believe the words which are written; and they shall carry them forth unto the remnant of our seed [he is talking about the Bible here].... And the gospel of Jesus Christ shall be declared among them; wherefore, they shall be restored unto the knowledge of their fathers, and also to the knowledge of Jesus Christ.. .. And then shall they rejoice [he is talking about his people]; ... and their scales of darkness shall begin to fall from their eyes [Is he talking about real scales? No, of course he isn't. I say this because of the rest of the sentence]; and many generations shall not pass away among them, save they shall be a white [white has been changed to pure in recent editions] and a delightful people.” Does that mean literally [white] any more than the scales fall? White means delightful if you consider the various meanings of white. Next he says that the Jews “shall also become a delightful people.” Were the Jews black? This is using white and delightful in the broadest sense, as against the dark and uncivilized.

358 2 Nephi 30:8,9 “And ... the Lord God shall commence his work among all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, to bring about the restoration of his people upon the earth.” His people everywhere. He will work among them all to bring his people back. Who are they? Those who will repent. Those are his people. “And with righteousness shall the Lord God judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth.” What does it mean by that? Well, the poor are the ones that don't get the breaks; all the judgments pass against them. He shall judge the poor correctly and righteously with equity and fairness. He will be the advocate of the meek “and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth [He pleads in their behalf and reproves their oppressors]. And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.” This fierce rebuke is a deadly sentence. It's very interesting that the word for sentence, a sentence of condemnation in a court, in Hebrew and in English is the very same thing as a sentence of utterance or speech.

358 2 Nephi 30:9 “And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth; and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.” The rod of his mouth will pronounce the sentence. The mouth and the lips are the speech; that’s the sentence. And he will cause a great division among the people so he can destroy the wicked by fire. Then this is the famous passage of paradise. This from verse 12 on is certainly another culture, isn’t it?

359 D&C 49:19, 21 It’s interesting that all the presidents of the Church, some of them very fervidly, have condemned hunting. They [some people] pay absolutely no attention when it comes to things like that. President Joseph F. Smith and both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young never hunted. Here they were living in the wild west with all this game around, and they never hunted. Well, that’s not human, but it wasn’t right for a man of the priesthood to go out and slay the creatures unless it was for necessity. Then nature gladly contributes. There have been plenty of young couples I’ve known here at BYU that couldn’t get through the winter without their deer. That’s all right. Section 49 of the Doctrine and Covenants makes that perfectly clear: “The beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and that which cometh of the earth, is ordained for the use of man for food and for raiment, and that he might have in abundance.... And wo be unto man that sheddeth blood or that wasteth flesh and hath no need” (D&C 49:19, 21). If you need it, fine—that’s what the Lord has put it there for.

359,360 2 Nephi 30: 15-17 “They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.... All things shall be made known unto the children of men.” What things? Well, all things, including these. He goes on: “There is nothing secret save it shall be revealed [it’s revealing the secrets he’s talking about here]; there is no work of darkness save it shall be made manifest in the light; and there is nothing which is sealed upon the earth save it shall be loosed.” In other words we are talking in this verse about the [fact that] through centuries and centuries people have been bound up by custom and usage—the

“dead hand” laws and things like that which keep people locked into a system very close and tight. Whether it’s feudal or the legal system, the whole thing will be loosed. As he says, it will be let go. Everything that is sealed upon earth shall be loosed; all earthly seals shall be broken. All contracts don’t apply anymore after death, and they don’t apply after the Millennium anymore either because they are worldly. They are works of expedience, mostly of greed. These works of darkness and these secret things of the establishment shall be exploded and blown sky high. Why does it exist? It exists to accommodate men’s vices actually, so that won’t happen [anymore]. “Wherefore, all things which have been revealed unto the children of men shall at that day be revealed; and Satan [notice that’s who he’s talking about] shall have power over the hearts of the children of men no more, for a long time.” So this is the end of Nephi’s prophesy. Nephi has been prophesying all along here. Now he is going to talk concerning the doctrine of Christ, and this becomes very important.

360 2 Nephi 31:3-8 “For my soul delighteth in plainness.” He doesn’t want to get us confused. We are told that he speaks to all men everywhere. Well, what about the islands of the sea? Does he speak to them the same way he speaks to us? “For he speaketh unto men according to their language, unto their understanding. He gives them as much as they can take and in their own idiom. Nephi saw the mission of John the Baptist here. Then the question immediately arises, Why the need for baptizing? Verse 5: “If the Lamb of God, he being holy, should have need to be baptized by water, to fulfil all righteousness, O then, how much more need have we, being unholy, to be baptized, yea, even by water! And now, I would ask of you, my beloved brethren, wherein the Lamb of God did fulfil all righteousness in being baptized by water? Know ye not that he was holy?” Notice that this is a very interesting thing. In every lexicon, the word QADDSH meaning holy in Hebrew is translated in this sense. What does QADDSH mean? It means “set apart,” “not of this race.” It means “essentially alien or different.” Of course, HOLY means that. But, of course, it’s the Greek HAGIOS, the same as our word HEDGE. Holy is to be on

the other side of a fence or HEDGE. QADOSH means “cut off or separated”—the road is cut. And a SANCTUM is a fence around a holy place. Sanctum means “to set apart” and “divide by a fence.” All our words ? for holy have that meaning. It always means “set apart and not belonging to the ordinary world.” That’s what it is; it belongs to another world. If it’s SANCTUM, if it’s QADDSH, if it’s HOLY, if it’s HAGIOS, it means that it is “set apart.” That’s what we have here, see.

360,361      2 Nephi 31:6-10      The story of John the Baptist is a classic example here. Robert Eisler has written massively on that particular subject. Josephus, who writes about John the Baptist, never found out his name. He didn’t know his name because when he came and taught the people, they asked him, “Who are you?” They thought he was Enoch come again. He told them, “I am Enos, I am the man.” That was the only answer he would give them, so they said, “A wild man has come among us.” Remember, John the Baptist let his hair grow long, walked about in a camel skin robe, and lived on wild locust (grasshoppers) and honey. He was a wild man, and he scared people. Remember in the book of Moses what people say about Enoch? “There is a strange thing in the land; a wild man has come among us.” When John the Baptist came among the people, they said, “It is Enoch come again.” We learn from Josephus that this spread throughout the whole area because he was a wild man, a strange man—not belonging to their nature at all. He was a different sort of person. As I said, he was a rather frightening person. “A wild man has come among us.” You notice that means he was holy. Here he is talking about Christ being holy. Verse 7: “Know ye not that he was holy? But notwithstanding he being holy, he showeth unto the children of men that, according to the flesh he humbleth himself before the Father, and witnesseth unto the Father that he would be obedient unto him in keeping his commandments [he did the things he did as a demonstration, especially in the baptism here].... It showeth unto the children of men the straitness of the path, and the narrowness of the gate, by which they should enter, he having set the example before them.” He said, “Follow

me.” He is the leader, the director, the PARALEMPTOR that we read lots about. These things come out now in these early documents, especially the Coptic documents that weren’t there before. The PARALEMPTOR is the one who accompanies you through the temple and makes sure that you perform all the ordinances correctly, that you know what you are doing, that you don’t blunder and use the wrong words, etc. And Jesus is the PARALEMPTOR for all of us (cf. John 14:3).

361 2 Nephi 31:10-12 “And he said unto the children of men: Follow thou me. Wherefore, my beloved brethren, can we follow Jesus save we shall be willing to keep the commandments of the Father? [so he leads us to the Father]. And the Father said: Repent ye, repent ye, and be baptized in the name of my Beloved Son. And also, the voice of the Son came unto me, saying: He that is baptized in my name, to him will the Father give the Holy Ghost, like unto me; wherefore, follow me, and do the things which ye have seen me do.” He is the great example who says, “Follow me and do what I do.” The Son does only what he has seen the Father do, so he says, You do whatever you see me do; I do whatever I see the Father do [paraphrased].

361,362 2 Nephi 31: 13,14 There’s your atonement again. When the time comes, we will all be together and you can live in his presence. That’s what we are coming back for. Verse 13: “If ye shall follow the Son ... witnessing unto the Father that ye are willing to take upon you the name of Christ by baptism [that’s what you do to show that you are following the Son; that’s the example, a simple enough and easy example he set, the least we can do]—yea, by following your Lord and your Savior down into the water, according to his word, behold, ... yea, then cometh the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost; and then can ye speak with the tongue of angels, and shout praises unto the Holy One of Israel.” Then you will be transformed if you want to be. You’ll cross that bridge when you get to it, but first you must do this and be baptized this way, witnessing to the Father when you go down into the water—this tangible connection we have here. “After ye have repented of your



sins, and witnessed unto the Father that ye are willing to keep my commandments, by the baptism of water, and have received the baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost," you can speak with a new tongue. You are an alien yourself now. I said that the language was a model of the culture, a perfect mirror. So after you have gone through all this, then you will find yourself in this alien culture. Then you "can speak with a new tongue, yea, even with the tongue of angels, and after this [you can't deny me; you've seen it now] should deny me, it would have been better for you that ye had not known me [at all]." So this takes us to a different culture, and then we must endure to the end.

362 2 Nephi 31:18-21 Let's go on here to the end of this chapter. Verse 18: "And then are ye in this strait and narrow path which leads to eternal life [there's always this image of the path; this is the way we are to follow]; yea, ye have entered in by the gate.... After ye have gotten into this strait and narrow path, I would ask if all is done? ... Nay." You've just begun to do things. You have to be born again, and then "ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life." Of course, that is the goal; that's what we are after. That is the [answer] to the terrible question, Is this all there is? If you go through these things, you will find out. But if you don't, don't come complaining to me that there's nothing but darkness ahead. Notice the final statement in this chapter where he says, "And now, behold, this is the doctrine of Christ, and the only and true doctrine of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is one God, without end." That's at-one-ment, that's atonement. When you are at one, then you are one. This is the thing that John brings out so beautifully.

362 Now we come to a very interesting question in the next chapter.

## **Lecture 23 2 Nephi 32-33; Jacob 1-2**

**Rejecting the Word of God  
[We Must Pray & Gain Knowledge  
From The Holy Ghost]  
[Nibley on How Prayer Unblocks Us]  
[The Words of Christ Tell Us All We Need to Know]  
[Difference Between Nephites  
and Lamanites is Political]  
[Nephi Bids an Everlasting Farwell  
if His People Do Not Repent]  
Jacob Denounces the Love of  
Riches, Pride, Unchastity]**

363,364      2 Nephi 32:1,2 “And now, behold, my beloved brethren, I suppose that ye ponder somewhat in your hearts concerning that which ye should do after ye have entered in by the way.” Notice we don’t ponder anymore; pondering is against the rules. After you’ve got on the path of salvation, what do you do next? What are you going to do for a thousand years? That is a very provocative question because you are going to be stuck with eternity whether you want it or not. We cannot die, the Book of Mormon tells us, and it’s true. “Do ye not remember that I said unto you that after ye had received the Holy Ghost ye [for one thing] could speak with the tongue of angels?”

364      2 Nephi 32:2,3; 1 Corinthians 2:9 Well, that means

you are out of your present league. When you start speaking with the tongue of angels, it's something else. When you start talking with the tongue of angels, you will be in another league. We'll talk about that when we get to it, he says. Meanwhile we've got to fulfill our capacities here. So this is the answer, he says. "Wherefore, I said unto you, feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do." You can't anticipate. As Paul says, "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him [1 Corinthians 2:9]." You can't even imagine it or guess what it is like for those who love God and are going to go on.

364 2 Nephi 32:3-5 He says here that the words of Christ will tell you all things that you have to do. You can't anticipate until you get there, and we haven't got there at all. Then it tells us in verse 5: "I say unto you that if ye will enter in by the way, and receive the Holy Ghost [if you go about it the right way], it will show unto you all things what ye should do." Then there won't be anything to worry about. But there's always more to come. But what is the trouble? Why is a question like that a poser? We should ask this question, incidentally. He says in verse 4: "Wherefore, now after I have spoken these words, if ye cannot understand them it will be because ye ask not, neither do ye knock." You don't ask and you don't knock. "Ask and you will receive; knock and it will be opened unto you," but you have to ask first. You have to make the first move, as Abraham did. It tells us in the book of Abraham, "Thy servant hath sought thee diligently; now he hath found thee." You have to get off dead center because that is your responsibility. That's why you are here [on earth] now.

365 2 Nephi 32:5,6 Then enter by the right way. You have been given the commandments; you know what to do if you follow them, he says. If you receive the Holy Ghost, "it will show unto you all things what ye should do." But there is always more to come. Notice he tells us in verse 6 that there will be no more doctrine given until after the Lord comes. So there's enough for you to live by now. They

were living by the law of Moses. But when we speak by the tongue of angels, we will no longer be limited by the ambience in which we find ourselves. As I said, we will go on to a higher math then. But, of course, we should ask questions, and that's one thing we don't do. People say, "Don't ask questions; don't rock the boat." There are questions we should ask. Verse 6: "And when he shall manifest himself unto you in the flesh, the things which he shall say unto you shall ye observe to do." You will cross that bridge when you get to it.

365 2 Nephi 32:7 Now, what's wrong? Notice verse 7 here: "And now I, Nephi, cannot say more; the Spirit stoppeth mine utterance, and I am left to mourn [he says, 'People can't take any more than this; I'd not only be wasting my time, but I would be putting them in jeopardy'] because of the unbelief, and the wickedness, and the ignorance, and the stiffneckedness of men [this is wisdom literature; Nephi is distressed]; for they will not search knowledge, nor understand great knowledge, when it is given unto them in plainness, even as plain as word can be." This is all very true, you know. The most difficult scientific problems are really elementary. It's their simplicity that stops people cold. It's always something extremely simple and naive that gets the Nobel Prize—it's a surprising thing. Once it's given to people they say, "Well, we knew that all along." No they didn't. You know the story of Columbus and the egg, don't you? Well, when Columbus got back they were giving a dinner in his honor. They said, "Well, anybody could have done that. All you had to do was just go sailing. It was quite possible, no problem at all. So he said, "Can any of you make an egg stand on end?" They passed it around and tried it, but nobody could do it. Columbus took the egg and gave it a slight tap; then it stood on its end. They said, "Oh yes, anybody can do that." He said, "Yes, anybody can do that after you have been shown what to do." It's the same way with discovering America; anybody can do it once it has been done.

365 2 Nephi 32:8 This is the same thing. They won't search knowledge, not even "when it is given unto them in

plainness, even as plain as word can [possibly] be. And it grieveth me that I must speak concerning this thing.”

367,368 This is not the real world; this is a fake. Everybody knows it's a fraud. It's as phony as it can be, and it's getting more that way all the time. We are living in a TV world now where everything is imagination and make-believe.

368 2 Nephi 32:8,9 We get this very strong with Nephi on this downbeat here. He's distressed and feeling the same way about it. Then he tells you what to do. They will not search knowledge; now what are you supposed to do? Verse 8: "I perceive that ye ponder still in your hearts; and it grieveth me that I must speak concerning this thing. For if ye would hearken unto the Spirit which teacheth a man to pray ye would know that ye must pray." There's nothing more destructive, as you know, than a mental block—a block of any kind in which you grind to a halt. [It could be] caused by drugs. It's guilt feelings that cause those mental blocks, and that's what keeps you from praying. It's a block just like the heavens are brass. There's nothing more destructive than these mental blocks because of the guilt that's in us. By praying, this frees us up. This frees the mind and thaws it out. Jacob uses the word hardened a lot. But this causes a thaw and causes things to flow again when you once start praying, maybe with a flow of tears. In public prayer, congregational prayer, we concentrate our minds on a single object. We are all thinking together there, and this concentration is a very important thing. But in private prayer when you are alone, that frees the mind and lets you go. You're not putting anything over on the Lord. Verse 9: "I say unto you that ye must pray always, and not faint; that ye must not perform any thing unto the Lord save in the first place ye shall pray unto the Father in the name of Christ, that he will consecrate thy performance unto thee, that thy performance may be for the welfare of thy soul [which is the optimum voice]." If you don't do these things, what do you do? If you are not interested in this, there are comfortable clichés and platitudes, routine sermons, and superficial research. We can have those

things.

368,369 2 Nephi 33:1 In the next chapter he says, “Neither am I mighty in writing, like unto speaking; for when a man speaketh by the power of the Holy Ghost, the power of the Holy Ghost carrieth it unto the hearts of the children of men.” Should we have speech writers if we claim to be inspired? Brigham Young never wrote a note, nothing. It was all strictly “from the cuff.” He just swung from the shoulder and delivered. Although he’d had only had eleven days of school, he delivered in this marvelous, vigorous, forthright, direct, and powerful prose. He was a great master of prose style, but he never took a note or anticipated what he was going to say.

369 2 Nephi 33:2-5 “They cast many things away which are written and esteem them as things of naught.” People aren’t going to take them seriously. These things are written, but people don’t really pay much attention to them. We read fast. We go through and we’re not very careful about it. Notice verse 3: You may not think it is important, “but I, Nephi, have written what I have written, and I esteem it as of great worth, and especially unto my people, For I pray continually for them by day, and mine eyes water my pillow by night, because of them.” These idiots—they won’t pay any attention at all. He can’t sleep. The poor man is sick about it. This is his farewell, and it’s not a happy one. “And the words which I have written in weakness will be made strong unto them.” Notice he lists five things he wishes to achieve in his writings in verses 4 and 5: “For it persuadeth them to do good; it maketh known unto them of their fathers; and it speaketh of Jesus, and persuadeth them to believe in him, and to endure to the end, which is life eternal.” That’s what we want, you see. You wouldn’t have anything to endure at all if this was the kind of world people wanted God to make it, the perfect world—a thing that upset St. Augustine so much. “And it speaketh harshly against sin, according to the plainness of the truth; wherefore, no man [who’s against sin] will be angry at the words which I have written save he shall be of the spirit of the devil.”

369 2 Nephi 33:7-9 Then he ends on a charitable note. He wants to end on an upbeat here, but he is having an awfully hard time doing it. Verse 7: “I have charity for my people, and great faith in Christ that I shall meet many souls spotless at his judgment-seat. [Secondly] I have charity for the Jew [because I am a Jew, too].... I mean them from whence I came. I also have charity for the Gentiles. But behold, for none of these can I hope except they shall be reconciled unto Christ, and enter into the narrow gate, and walk in the strait path which leads to life” and endure to the end. This is one of the objections people always have: It’s always so narrow-minded and so demeaning. Why is it so narrow? Why do so few get through the door? Why is it so limited? Well, to be on target. Here in this world we are on a vast, wide, almost endless plain. We can wander anywhere we want here, and we are prone to wander and go into all sorts of things. With this field to wander in, we can show whether [or not] we have the sense to go in the right direction. You will choose what your heart desires when it’s left entirely up to you. You will gravitate in the direction in which you really want to go. It will expose you as you really are.

370 2 Nephi 33:11 So here we are, and he says you must keep on the strait and narrow; you must go that way. This will answer all your questions. Of course they are terrible; we tell you that all the time. You can get out of it by going straight ahead. Keep in mind, as Mosiah says ... (We haven’t come to Mosiah yet, so we won’t quote that—that’s illegal). But Nephi says in verse 11: “and you and I shall stand face to face before his bar [and I think that is true—I have reason for believing that’s literally so]. ... I speak unto you as the voice of one crying from the dust: Farewell until that great day shall come. And you that will not partake of the goodness of God [he ends on a negative note after all], and respect the words of the Jews [the scriptures], and also my words, and the words which shall proceed forth out of the mouth of the Lamb of God, behold, I bid you an everlasting farewell [these words are all joined into one], for these words shall condemn you at the last day. For what I seal on earth, shall be brought against you at the judgment bar;

for thus hath the Lord commanded me, and I must obey.” Can you imagine a sadder ending than that? He was of a cheerful disposition—terribly optimistic, as you know. He was always dragging the family through dirty situations. But here he says, “For thus hath the Lord commanded me, and I must obey. Amen.”

370 Jacob 1:2,3 His brother Jacob carries on at this point, and then proceeds to take a real plunge. He goes down [in his warnings]. Jacob doesn’t have very much hope for what is going on here. This is very sad. This is an important point in verse 2: “And he [Nephi] gave me, Jacob, a commandment that I should write upon these plates [the small plates] a few of the things which I considered to be most precious,” and touch just lightly on historical things. So the Book of Mormon is not a history. Don’t expect the book to explain the New World in ancient times; that’s not its purpose. It’s no handbook of archaeology. You can find out an immense lot reading between the lines when we get to the battles and migrations. Meanwhile, this is what you look for. He says he is just supposed to write these things. The history is in other books which are to be had, but not at this time. This is what he’s supposed to put in. This is a tractate; he is not going to write a history, but a tractate.

370,371 Jacob 1:4,8 “And if there were preaching which was sacred, or revelation which was great, or prophesying, that I should engraven the heads [just the principle parts; heads is the right word—the RA SHIM, the KEPHALAIA; that means the ‘main points’ of a chapter; in Hebrew, Greek, and other languages, the word for that was head, it’s the principal themes of preaching, revelation, and prophecy—just the most important things] of them upon these plates ... for Christ’s sake, and for the sake of our people. For because of faith and great anxiety, it truly had been made manifest unto us concerning our people, what things should happen unto them [so it is prophetic too, but he is full of anxiety]. And we also had many revelations, and the spirit of much prophecy [the authors are also directed] ... we labored diligently among our people, that we might persuade them to come unto Christ.” This is his writing.



It's PROTREPTIC, it's a SUASORIA. That's a type of writing that's devoted to persuading somebody to do something. PROTREPTIC is to enjoin somebody; a SUASORIA is to change your way of life, your behavior. It's an appeal, and that's what Jacob is here. He said, Our situation is the same as the children of Israel in the wilderness; we are always that way too. Notice: "... as in the provocation in the days of temptation while the children of Israel were in the wilderness." It's admonitory, it's warning—and we are still in the wilderness. We are not out of the woods, so to speak. "Wherefore, we would to God that we could persuade all men not to rebel against God [that's the least you can ask for; that's the dominant theme; so why so negative?] ... but that all men would believe in Christ, and view his death, and suffer his cross and bear the shame of the world."

372,373      Jacob 1:13,14 Now notice in verses 13 and 14 that the difference between Lamanites and Nephites is a purely political one, purely political. "Now the people which were not Lamanites were Nephites; nevertheless, they were called Nephites." That's what they really were. Notice the seven tribes; anciently, the pattern of seven tribes is a very well established one. I think you will find it in Sombart and others where they talk about the seven tribes and why they are. You can see various connections, seven planets and things like that. Anciently, the established pattern was seven tribes. Here they had seven tribes really within the Nephites. "They were called Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, Zoramites, Lamanites, Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites." They kept some of their ethnic marks, I suppose. This is a very complicated racial picture, you see. Who was called a "Nephite" or a "Lamanite" depended entirely on his politics. Now he says, "But I, Jacob, shall not hereafter distinguish them by these names, but I shall call them Lamanites that seek to destroy the people of Nephi [whose policy was anti-Nephite—they were Lamanites. There was plenty of Nephite blood among them, but they were the same family, after all. What do we mean by "Nephite blood?" They were brothers], and those who are friendly to Nephi I shall call Nephites, or the people of Nephi [those reigning in his stead] according to the reigns of the kings." That's what they were. Those

who are friendly to Nephi are Nephites and vice versa; it's a complicated picture from here on.

373 Jacob 1:15; 7:26 Already in the reign of the second Nephi people began to grow hard in their hearts. Well, according to the first Nephi, they were hard in their hearts already. But here [in verse 15] he says they began to grow hard in their hearts. Now see what the situation is. Here we have people rattling around like peas in a bag. We have histories of people who went into vast, empty spaces, but they weren't necessarily empty. There are continual hints of the former inhabitants of the land and other people around. But as Jacob told us, My brother told me to pay no attention to that sort of thing; that's not the history we are interested in [paraphrased]. And in the same way, he is not interested in political issues; he just grouped them all under two names and let it go at that, Nephites and Lamanites, not making any distinctions. It's the same way here. He doesn't go into any of the political or military complications of the wandering. He closes his book with a very eloquent statement: "We being a lonesome and a solemn people ... we did mourn out our days."

373,374 Jacob 1:15-19 The people were having a hard time, but aah, they discovered gold and silver and they went crazy. They had a gold rush here, [back to verse 15] "The people of Nephi... began to grow hard in their hearts, and indulge themselves somewhat in wicked practices." He said that they were already desiring many wives and concubines. They felt like kids out of school, I suppose; they can do anything they want now. Verse 16: "Yea, and they also began to search much gold and silver, and began to be lifted up somewhat in pride. Wherefore I, Jacob, gave unto them these words as I taught them in the temple, having first obtained mine errand from the Lord. For I, Jacob, and my brother Joseph had been consecrated priests and teachers of this people, by the hand of Nephi [so they weren't to be the kings. Second Nephi was the king, but they were priests and teachers and had been consecrated by their brother Nephi]. And we did magnify our office unto the Lord, taking upon us the responsibility [that's what the

priests had to do to rid themselves of the blood on their garments; we are getting back to the Atonement rites of ancient Israel], answering the sins of the people upon our own heads if we did not teach them the word of God with all diligence; wherefore, by laboring with our might their blood might not come upon our garments; otherwise ... we would not be found spotless at the last day.” (On the great day of Yom Kippur when everybody’s garments were to turn white.)

374 Jacob 2:2-8 These are teachings in terms of the rite of the Atonement which was familiar to these people. He talks about it in the next chapter: “I, Jacob, according to the responsibility which I am under to God, to magnify mine office with soberness, and that I might rid my garments of your sins, I come up into the temple.” Well, in the temple on Yom Kippur that’s what the priest did. You had to rid your garments. Now here he is feeling terrible, he says. Verse 3: “I have hitherto been diligent in the office of my calling; but I this day am weighed down with much more desire and anxiety for the welfare of your souls than I have hitherto been [things are getting worse than they have been]. For behold, as yet, ye have been obedient unto the word of the Lord, which I have given unto you.” But your thoughts “are beginning to labor in sins. [And this] causeth me to shrink with shame before the presence of my Maker, that I must testify unto you concerning the wickedness of your hearts. And also it grieveth me that I must use so much boldness of speech concerning you, before your wives and your children, many of whose feelings are exceedingly tender and chaste and delicate before God [the word we would use today is sensitive’, in Joseph Smith’s day they’d say delicate; they are very sensitive to these things]; . . . they have come up hither to hear the pleasing word of God, yea, the word which healeth the wounded soul.”

375 Jacob 2:9,10 A CONSOLATIO, a consolation; they wanted to be cheered up. We find out pretty soon that the women were overworked. They were practically captives and were under strain while their-husbands gallivanted around collecting the gold, etc. Their children suffered accordingly,

and they came to the temple to hear the consoling word of God and to be comforted. But what do they have to hear? he says. They have to hear this talk that is terrible. He said that it made him ashamed of himself. But he said that he had received from God a “strict commandment.” It was not his idea. This meant that things were very bad. It’s more than mere folly that’s going on here. He received a strict commandment from God “to admonish you according to your crimes [he doesn’t call them sins and follies’, he says your crimes], to enlarge the wounds of those who are already wounded, instead of consoling and healing their wounds ... to pierce their souls and wound their delicate [sensitive] minds. But, notwithstanding the greatness of the task, I must do according to the strict commands of God, and tell you concerning your wickedness and abominations.” I must tell you what God commanded me to tell you; I have no choice, he says, because I am “under the glance of the piercing eye of the Almighty God.” I can’t get away from it; I must carry this out.

375    Jacob 2:12-15 This is like pulling teeth; he hates it. Boy, does he hate it, but he has to go through with it here. He must declare the word. Verse 12: “And now behold, my brethren, this is the word which I declare unto you [he starts out with the number one sin in the Book of Mormon], that many of you have begun to search for gold [there has been a gold rush], and for silver ... in the which this land, which is a land of promise unto you and to your seed, doth abound most plentifully [they found rich mineral deposits, and when that happens the community goes mad; that’s what happened here]. And the hand of providence hath smiled upon you most pleasingly, that you have obtained many riches.”. Anyway, this is the word. “And because some of you have obtained more abundantly than that of your brethren ye are lifted up in the pride of your hearts, and wear stiff necks and high heads because of the costliness of your apparel, and persecute your brethren because ye suppose that ye are better than they [this is a strange thing. God doesn’t justify that; he condemns you].... He can pierce you, and with one glance of his eye he can smite you to the dust! O that he would rid you from this iniquity and

abomination. Think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you." To be rich is all right; you can all be rich together. But the rich don't like that, you see.

376 Jacob 2 18 Then Jacob goes on here in verse 18. This is a favorite passage. Latter-day Saints love this, because this gives you a hand. This frees you up to seek for riches all you want to: "But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God." [People say,] "Well, I've gone on my mission that takes care of that; now I can seek for riches." I've heard that plenty of times. It's idealistic at first but not after. "And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ ye shall obtain riches if ye seek them [you're not supposed to seek them, but if you insist on doing it you can seek them under one condition]; and ye will seek them for the intent to do good—to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick and the afflicted." That's the justification. Is this the profit motive? Either stop with verses 13-16 or do it this way. The others are unacceptable. But he says if you must seek [for riches] this is the way you do it. It's a very interesting thing here. As I said, this is a favorite. Notice he says it shall be "for the intent to do good." A person might say, "Yes, I intend when I get my second million to do that." There was something in here about a doctor whose brother is fabulously rich. He asked him, "When do think you'll have enough? Do you think you have enough?"

377,378 Jacob 2:20,21; Moses 1:39 "Ye were proud in your hearts, of the things which God hath given you." Isn't it a funny thing that people become proud of getting gold? That's a surprising thing. Why is finding metal something to make you proud? Or something to make you rich? It's not useful for many things. Gold is used industrially, and silver is used in a number of things. Then he goes on speaking of this greed in verse 20: "Ye were proud in your hearts, of the things which God hath given you, what say ye of it?" Incidentally, he gave them this advice: If you seek wealth, you shall do it for this purpose. Does anybody in the Book

of Mormon seek it for that purpose at all? Amulek, a very good man, didn't—not for a minute. So that's the way this goes. Did anybody take this advice? They did not. I see all these passages in the Book of Mormon I marked where the people couldn't do it. They immediately turned to the other way. They would hang on so long. Verse 21: "Do ye not suppose that such things are abominable unto him who created all flesh? [he hasn't mentioned chastity yet; he's going to get to that now]. And the one being is as precious in his sight as the other [this is impossible for us to get through our heads; it's hard to take that any other person is just as important to God as you are. That's one of the hardest things in the world to swallow, especially when you have an authoritarian structure; it's harder to swallow, isn't it?] . . . and for the selfsame end hath he created them, that they should keep his commandments and glorify him forever." To glorify him is to share in his glory. Remember Moses 1:39: "For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." To get us in it with him. That's the atonement to bring us back to him. That is his work and his glory and what he gives to others. The Son glories with him the same way. So you are able to glorify him forever. How can you glorify God? By doing what he tells you and sharing the glory with him. He wants you there.

378,379      Jacob 2:23-33      Now he must speak unto them concerning "a grosser crime." GROSS is a good word because it is gross. You see, he is talking about sex here. Verse 23: "For they seek to excuse themselves in committing whoredoms, because of the things which were written concerning David and Solomon his son." The scriptures give people excuses for all sorts of things. Verse 24: "Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord." He doesn't like the concubine system at all. Then the Lord says that he hasn't led them out of Jerusalem to go on with that same sort of thing. Verse 25: "Wherefore, thus saith the Lord, I have led this people forth out of the land of Jerusalem, by the power of mine arm, that I might raise up unto me a righteous branch from the fruit of the loins

of Joseph.” I took you away from all that, and “I the Lord God will not suffer that this people shall do like unto them of old.” Being taken off that track is one of the blessings of the promised land. Now what’s going to happen because of these whoredoms and abominations he talks about? The Lord will curse the land [verse 29]; the promised land will be cursed for their sakes. Immorality cancels all promises here. Notice the male chauvinism in verses 30 and 31. “For behold, I, the Lord, have seen the sorrow, and heard the mourning of the daughters of [Israel] ... because of the wickedness and abominations of their husbands.... For they shall not lead away captive the daughters of my people [the women are practically prisoners; they have a very male oriented, chauvinistic society; the women have to do all the cooking and set up the tepee and everything else] ... for they shall not commit whoredoms, like unto them of old, saith the Lord of Hosts.”

379 Jacob 2:35 That’s a verse I like. It’s very appropriate this morning, so I can use it. Verse 35: “Behold, ye have done greater iniquities than the Lamanites, our brethren. Ye have broken the hearts of your tender wives, and lost the confidence of your children [they had wrecked the family], because of your bad examples before them;... And because of the strictness of the word of God, which cometh down against you, many hearts died, pierced with deep wounds.” Notice that the word of God had specifically forbidden it, and because of that it was even more painful on the women and the children. The gospel had always taught them that you shouldn’t do those things. The disruption of LDS families is doubly tragic, and it does happen too. “Many hearts died, pierced with deep wounds” knowing of these lusts. The word of God is strict, and breaking it compounds the disaster. The time is up now. Are we going to get anything cheerful out of Jacob? We shall see what we have to expect here. But I wish it wasn’t so close to home. It’s beginning to make me uncomfortable. I think it’s time we changed to the Doctrine and Covenants, isn’t it? So we can get out of these things and feel better.

## Lecture 24 Jacob 3-4

**Filthiness and the Atonement**  
**[Lamanite Righteousness Exceeds**  
**That of the Nephites]**  
**[Lamanites Have Only One Wife**  
**Unlike the Nephites]**  
**[Predestination Divides the Church**  
**Starting With St. Augustine]**  
**[The Atonement Brings You Back Home]**  
**[Truth is Things As They Really Are And Will Be]**  
**[The Olive Tree Story Will Show How the Jews**  
**Obtain A Sure Foundation]**

380 We're on the book of Jacob. I've decided that more than any book in the Book of Mormon this has the ring of absolute truth, historical and everything else. When they first arrived there, you'll notice, the first thing they did was go scrambling after gold and silver because there was a lot in the mountains.

381 Jacob 3:1,2 The poor people are trying to hang on and hold to some shred of morality and sanity. Jacob is encouraging them in chapter 3. He tells the pure in heart to look to God, hang on, and do the best they can. "Look unto God with firmness of mind, and pray unto him with exceeding faith, and he will console you in your afflictions." They were obviously having a rough time. Good people do.. People that try to be conscientious minorities in some societies have a very rough time. You know that. But he told them not to be



silly. Being pure, you have your faith to “console you in your afflictions. ... O all ye that are pure in heart, lift up your heads and receive the pleasing word of God, and feast upon his love; for ye may, if your minds are firm, forever.” But your minds had better be firm; don’t go off the deep end with all sorts of wild propositions, visionary nonsense and things like that. You’ll know the real thing when it is there. The firm mind goes along with this faith and this way of life. It isn’t enough to do things that are easy.

381,382      Jacob 3:3 Then he talks about two types of filthiness.. They became awful snobs here, and a mutual resentment was building up. They knew already that Laman and Lemuel hated Nephi, and that tradition was handed on to their children, as he is going to tell us here. There was that prejudice, but now in reply the Nephites are building up their prejudice. It’s just as bad and even worse, he says. Verse 3: “But, wo, wo, unto you that are not pure in heart, that are filthy this day before God [notice he uses the word filthy here; he uses it in the next verse, and then he uses it right across the page there in verse 9, but in different senses]; for except ye repent the land is cursed for your sakes [they were the ones who were to be so blessed]; and the Lamanites, which are not filthy like unto you, nevertheless they are cursed with a sore cursing, shall scourge you even unto destruction.” That was the prophecy that was made to Nephi, of course, and he got it from Nephi too, I suppose. This is turning the tables, isn’t it? The Lamanites are bad enough. They are cursed with a sore cursing, but just because they are bad people doesn’t make you good people. My friend’s enemy is my enemy, etc. If you are an enemy to the wicked, that must make you righteous [they supposed]. But it’s the wicked that destroy the wicked. Remember, the Lord said, “The wicked shall destroy the wicked.” That’s the way it is going to happen. No other people ever go to war with each other except those that are both wicked—both sides are wicked. The Lamanites shall “scourge you even unto destruction [that’s strong stuff, and they’d better do something about it]. And the time speedily cometh that except ye repent they shall possess the land of your inheritance [you were meant to

inherit this land, but they will get it if you don't repent; we find out at the end that they didn't], and the Lord God will lead away the righteous out from among you." That's the principle—God leads out the righteous to precious lands. If a certain land won't contain them anymore, he leads them away somewhere else. There's this constant motion—Israel in the wilderness, always wandering, always being led. That was Abraham, of course, LEKH LEKHA, always wandering from one place to another. "Behold, the Lamanites your brethren, whom ye hate because of their filthiness." See, they are filthy in that sense.

383 Jacob 3:5-9 "Behold, the Lamanites your brethren, whom ye hate because of their filthiness [you think you are more righteous because of that, but that won't do],... for they have not forgotten the commandment of the Lord ... that they should have save it were one wife, and concubines they should have none [a concubine was considered legal], and there should not be whoredoms committed among them." Verse 6: "And now, this commandment they observe to keep; wherefore, because of this observance ... the Lord God will not destroy them, but will be merciful unto them; and one day they shall become a blessed people [they will be rewarded for that]. Behold, their husbands love their wives, ... [they love their children]... How much better are you than they in the sight of your great Creator?" Notice, that he uses filthiness in two different ways. He says, Your filthiness and their filthiness is not the same. In verse 5 he says, You hate them because of their filthiness [paraphrased], but in verse 9 he says it differently. It's the same thing here [in verse 8] with whiteness. You can use it in two different senses. "How much better are you than they [and]... their skins will be whiter than yours [using this white in the moral sense of the meaning of white]."

383,384 Jacob 3:9-12 "Wherefore, a commandment I give unto you, which is the word of God, that ye revile no more against them [he is saying, 'No more of this racism; this is no good at all that you think you are superior because of their lower culture] because of the darkness [he doesn't call it blackness', it's dark because their way of life

has turned it dark; that's the proper word to use; if you go out and live like them, you'll become dark, too] of their skins; neither shall ye revile against them because of their filthiness; but ye shall remember your own filthiness [see, there are the two kinds of filthiness; you say they don't wash enough; I say you wash too much], and remember that their filthiness came because of their fathers [they inherited this tradition; they've stuck to it and it has made them worse]. Wherefore, ye shall remember your children . . . [keep the next generation in mind].... And also, remember that ye may, because of your filthiness, bring your children unto destruction [your filthiness will bring destruction on them just as sure as anything], and their sins be heaped upon your heads at the last day. O my brethren, hearken unto my words; arouse the faculties of your souls." You have to make an effort; it's exactly like a drugged sleep that you get into. You get deeper and deeper, and it takes you right out of this world. To be wakened up is going to take an awful lot of black coffee, walking back and forth, and shaking your shoulders. This awakening isn't gentle. It's rude, decisive, and urgent, but it must be done, he says. You've got to wake up to this. "Arouse the faculties of your souls; shake yourselves that ye may awake from the slumber of death; and loose yourselves from the pains of hell that ye may not become angels to the devil [to be captive], to be cast into that lake of fire and brimstone which is the second death." Do we make any effort there? Then this is what he is talking about. Verse 12: "And now I, Jacob, spake many more things unto the people of Nephi, warning them against fornication and lasciviousness [that's the general hedonism of our time; anything goes, you see], and every kind of sin, telling them the awful consequences of them." It isn't as light as you think. [Hedonism] invites instant yielding. To any temptation at all you are supposed to yield, and there's the jaded, hypocritical taste. He talked about the morals here because that was a very important issue. These are the commandments of God here. Then the larger plates deal with the wars and contentions and reigns of kings. We go into them; that's the usual history. They are called the "plates of Joseph," and they were made by the hand of Nephi.

384,385 Now we have this marvelous fourth chapter which introduces us to the fifth chapter. Chapter 4 is the ongoing doctrine of the Atonement. First he talks about the plates by which they are handing it down. They are handing their tradition down on these plates. He talks a lot about them here. They take them very seriously because this is the only way they can do it. “(And I cannot write but a little of my words, because of the difficulty of engraving our words upon plates).” The Copper Scroll shows that very nicely here, where it is talking about John Allegro’s book on copper plates. He said, “The business of writing on such plates was hard and distasteful work. The scribe, not without reason, appears to have tired toward the end [we think of Jacob here], and the last lines of writing were badly formed and rather small. One can almost hear his sigh of relief as he pushed out the last two words in the middle of the final line. How clearly this recalls protests and exclamations of our Book of Mormon writers where Jacob says, ‘I cannot write but little of my words because of the difficulty of engraving our words upon plates. Mormon says, ‘I would write it also if I had room on the plates, but I have not.’ Writing on the plates requires a cramped and abbreviated script [Moroni explains that you have to have another script].

385 Jacob 4:2 In this fourth chapter he talks about the engraving and the words. Verse 2: “But whatsoever things we write upon anything save it be upon plates must perish and vanish away.” That’s true— there are many things that perish. [They had] stone, paper, and parchment. Of course, they had tapa made of bark and things like that. Gold is the one thing that lasts, but gold plates are not cheap.

386,387 Jacob 4:2-5 He [Jacob] says, “but we can write a few words upon plates, which will give our children ... a small degree of knowledge concerning us, or concerning their fathers [this shows his concern for future generations]. Now in this thing we do rejoice; and we labor diligently to engraven these words upon plates [it’s a big thing], hoping that our beloved brethren and our children will receive them [a sad story, but it’s a happy story too]

with thankful hearts, and look upon them that they may learn with joy and not with sorrow [the Book of Mormon is a sad and sorrowful book, but it is written for our joy], neither with contempt, concerning their first parents. For, for this intent have we written these things, that they may know that we knew of Christ.” Now here we get the continuing line. There has always been an alert cadre, a bridging of time; I think the Baptists call it “a trail of blood” (something like that). The doctrine of atonement is at-one-ment in many ways. It’s a good word, you see—bringing things at one. The body and the spirit are brought at one in the resurrection. Four chapters of John talk a great deal about in what sense the Father and the Son are one, and may the apostles be one with them “even as we are one.” And may those whom they convert also be one with them. There’s this idea of everything at one and bringing everything together. That’s the whole idea of the temple, of course; that’s what a temple is. The Babylonian word for it is MARKETS SHEMAIEMU ERSITI. It is the “knot point,” the bringing together point of all the heavens and the earth. It’s halfway between heaven and earth. It’s MIDGARD and it’s at the center of all horizontal distances, so the sign of it is the quadrate circle with the four points of the compass on it. That’s what *TEMPLUM* (Latin for temple) is. In Latin *TEMPLE* is a *TEMPLATE* in which you locate yourself in the universe. You make your circle; it’s the *QUADRATA*. You divide it into the four parts—north, south, east, and west. We have here this bringing together of all things. Remember, “a gathering together of all things,” and that includes the records. In the Salt Lake Temple, until there were too many for it to hold them, all the records of the past were kept there. All our genealogy was kept in the basement of the temple because the whole thing looks toward the past, the present, and the future. We are doing work for those who lived before us, and the whole thing looks toward the eternities and the things which are going beyond [the world].

387 Jacob 4:4,5 Here he ties everything together. I had completely ignored this fourth chapter [of Jacob] in all this stuff I have been doing on atonement, and it’s the best

ongoing description I have seen of the Atonement anywhere. This holds the whole tradition together from the earliest times. So he says here in verse 4: This is why we have written these things, to tie all these things together and have this ongoing atonement, a perennial order of things. “For, for this intent have we written these things, that they may know that we knew of Christ [see, it will show the future children that they knew], and we had a hope of his glory many hundred years before his coming [it’s going to tie them together here]; and not only we ourselves had a hope of his glory, but [now he is taking it back] also all the holy prophets which were before us. Behold, they believed in Christ and worshiped the Father in his name, and also we worship the Father in his name.” Then he takes it back to the law of Moses. We are talking about atonement. The atonement was the celebration, and he is going to refer to it throughout this chapter of the great celebration of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, when the offerings and the firstfruits were brought, etc., as we are told in the book of Mosiah. But here, it’s particularly good. “And for this intent we keep the law of Moses, it pointing our souls to him [so they go clear back to the law of Moses because it points them forward; now we are getting this connection; they are the link between all these things, and it goes on]; and for this cause it is sanctified unto us for righteousness [if we do it we will be blessed; then it takes it clear back to Abraham, long before Moses], even as it was accounted unto Abraham in the wilderness to be obedient unto the commands of God in offering up his son Isaac.” The Jews still think that the sacrifice of Isaac was the atonement, but it didn’t take place; Isaac was not sacrificed. A ram, which they say had the name of Isaac, was to take his place. The vicarious work, the proxy, is the important thing. When the Lord saw that Abraham was willing to go through with it, the Lord wouldn’t let him do it. Abraham was demonstrating to himself, you see. “Lay not they hand upon the lad for now I know.” He was determined to be faithful, but he didn’t have to go through with it because a sacrifice had already been provided. It was the ram in the thicket, and the ram was sacrificed instead as a similitude of the One who would be sacrificed for all of us. So Isaac didn’t have to be

sacrificed; He [the Savior] was to be sacrificed instead. This is the Atoning Sacrifice that he is referring to here. This was celebrated by the Jews on the Day of Atonement. They called it the ATONEMENT, the KIPPUR, and the KAFAR is to atone.

388 Jacob 4:5,6 Jacob tells us here that Abraham's sacrifice "is a similitude of God and his Only Begotten Son." That was Isaac. When they say that Isaac was the atoning sacrifice for the world, that's not so because he wasn't sacrificed. That was only a similitude for what was to come because it was repeated again in the temple every year. They went through this on the Day of Atonement. In verse 6 he says, "Wherefore, we search the prophets, and we have many revelations and the spirit of prophecy." Notice the presence of living prophets doesn't supersede the teachings of the others. Remember when the Lord came to the Nephites. At the end of the gospel of Mark, he tells that the Lord opened the scriptures to them, and then their eyes were opened. After the Resurrection, the Lord explained the scriptures to them, and then their eyes were opened. We are not given the sermon he gave to them on that occasion, and that's very important. That's why any very early writing from the church that's discovered now is almost sure to bear a title something like "The Secret Teachings that Jesus Gave the Apostles after the Resurrection." Then they went forth. Before that, they had scattered—gone home, gone fishing, etc. They didn't know—the Resurrection hadn't really registered on them yet until He started appearing. Remember, when John and the women went and reported the Resurrection, the apostles didn't want to believe them. They said, "You're crazy."

388,389 Jacob 4:6,8,18 So this is the similitude here. "Wherefore, we search the prophets, and we have many revelations and the spirit of prophecy [we are carrying on; we are right in the tradition. But you have to have the record too, beginning with Moses and the prophets. Jacob explained the scriptures though he is right with them himself]; and having all these witnesses we obtain a hope, and our faith becometh unshaken, insomuch that we

truly can command in the name of Jesus.” Notice we have a very peculiar community here. Those that really kept on are in the full flood of the tradition that the Jews had lost at this time. The temple was destroyed shortly after Lehi left Jerusalem. And this is a very interesting thing: The KAPPORETH, the tent, the Holy of Holies were never restored. The second temple didn’t have them at all. People don’t realize. Notice in verse 18 at the end of this chapter, he apologizes for having gone a little too far and got too excited about it. “I will unfold this mystery unto you; if I do not, by any means, get shaken from my firmness in the Spirit, and stumble because of my overanxiety for you.” He is overanxious; he is pouring it on here. But these are more than figures of speech, you know. In what sense do we control the elements? A mountain climber thinks he subdues a mountain or something like that. This great fervor comes with the big picture they have here. Notice, he gets excited because here they are living out by themselves, etc. How far does power go? He says if you have faith enough you would be amazed what can happen. Then he sees the whole natural world as entering into cooperation with this in verse 8, which I had overlooked, incidentally. “Behold great and marvelous are the works of the Lord [then he goes into a special nature documentary here]. How unsearchable are the depths of the mysteries of him; and it is impossible that man should find out all his ways. And no man knoweth of his ways save it be revealed unto him; wherefore, brethren, despise not the revelations of God.”

389 Jacob 4:7-9; Moses 1:4, 38 Then he starts talking about the bottom line, which is power. Back up in verse 7 he says: “The Lord God showeth us our weakness that we may know that it is by his grace, and his great condescensions unto the children of men, that we have power to do these things.” Well, to what extent did they do them? I guess you have subdued a mountain if you cut off the top of it and put a temple on it, or something like that. These are figures of speech, and he says he is carried away. Verse 9: “For behold, by the power of his word man came upon the face of the earth [as we read in Moses 1:4, 38, he gave the command and the work was done; we are talking about the



Council in Heaven, etc.], which earth was created by the power of his word [there's power again]. Wherefore, if God being able to speak and the world was, and to speak and man was created, O then, why not able to command the earth, or the workmanship of his hands upon the face of it, according to his will and pleasure?" See, he is talking about the whole natural world and everything else in it.

390 Jacob 4:10 "Wherefore, brethren, seek not to counsel the Lord [he knows the answers, and you don't. I like this passage here; I remember we once had to learn it], but to take counsel from his hand [ask him how to do it; don't try to do it yourself, wise guy. You'll get into a lot of trouble. The mad scientist ends up in the soup, you know]. For behold, ye yourselves know that he counseleth in wisdom, and in justice, and in great mercy, over all his works." He will tell you only what is wise, what is just, and what is merciful. What more do you want? That covers everything. Do men counsel in wisdom, and justice, and mercy?

390,391 Jacob 4:11 "Wherefore, beloved brethren, be reconciled unto him through the atonement of Christ, his Only Begotten Son." As I said, the word for atonement today is translated in the Revised Standard Version as reconciliation. They don't use atonement anymore in the Revised Standard text. But reconciliation means the same thing, you see. CONCILIO is a seating together in a council. Our word council comes from that. Reconciliation is to be called back to the council and sit down again. You are called to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—to return. Every term, every translation, every equivalent of atonement has the idea of coming back. Redemption means you will be bought back again. You must have been with him before if he buys you back again, after the Fall. Resurrection is to rise up again. After you have been in the flesh before, then you rise up again but now in a resurrected body. It all has to do with the return to a former state. You can't get along without the preexistence here, which comes in very strongly.

391 Well, what happened to the preexistence? I told you about how St. Augustine fought with that subject. If you

can't have preexistence, you must have predestination. That's what St. Augustine went for, so we will put predestination down on the board. (St. Augustine died in A.D. 425) That was accepted until the ninth century when it was challenged by Hincmar, the abbot of Fulda [Reims]. Then there was this big fight. He wanted to soften infant damnation. St. Augustine hated the doctrine of infant damnation, but he said you can't get along without it. [According to him] infants that are born into this world have the original sin, so unless they are baptized they are damned. The only explanation he could find for that was a "gentle damnation." It didn't please him, and it never pleased anybody.

391,392      Every major split, every major breaking off of a new church from the original was always on the basis of predestination because people didn't like it. Later on Luther and Melanchthon made a joint statement on the subject of predestination. But there was no escaping it—that man was damned and that he had no capacity of his own to do good, none whatever. You were damned or you were blessed, and there was nothing you could do about it. Melanchthon didn't like that, so he started to soften it. There was a break between the two, and Luther won that round. Then along came John Calvin and the extremists. He was all for damnation. He had a double damnation. There were various interpretations. Zwingli, who was a Swiss, opposed that. In fact, he said, "This goes altogether too far." Then there was a showdown, and the Consensus of Geneva in 1550 decided that predestination should win. That led to more trouble.

392      [The Calvinists] built up this idea and philosophy that you are absolutely right or wrong, absolutely damned or absolutely blessed. Everything was black and white, which is what you get with the stubborn Dutch in South Africa today. They will not make concessions and this sort of thing. We are stuck with that because of a vote in 1619 at the Council of Dordrecht they decided for the strict Calvinistic, absolute damnation or absolute blessedness. We are the good guys; you are the bad guys—absolutely

good or absolutely bad, black and white. We are still having trouble because of that.

392,393 That was the reason why in 1741 John Wesley and George Whitefield split. They worked together. Neither of them wanted to leave the Church of England, but again it was the problem of predestination that arose. St. Augustine's idea of predestination was accepted, and it had its effect on society. It makes people cruel, as a matter of fact, if they think of somebody as damned. Augustine's idea that you would never know who was blessed and who was damned had softened that part of it. "We know we're the blessed and you're the damned." But Whitefield wanted to temper it again. In 1741 there was a break in the Methodist Council. Wesley became the standard, and Whitefield went off to America on tours and gave 18,000 speeches, etc. But they have always split on this subject of predestination. Why? Nobody likes it. It's not a good doctrine, but the only alternative is preexistence. For Aristotle that was a no-no. That's why they got rid of it. I mean preexistence was an absolutely solid doctrine in the early Christian writings; the earliest fathers were full of it. But later on they got rid of it because Aristotle said, "There can't be another world; there can't be other intelligent beings. We are the only ones that are possible." So there we go.

393 Jacob 4:11 But this is very important to be reconciled. Reconciliation is coming back. These words from the Latin that begin with re always imply going back to a former state, returning home again. We repeatedly have the formula in the Book of Mormon, "Will you have place with us?" Come in and have place to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Then he goes on here in verse 11: "Wherefore, beloved brethren, be reconciled unto him through the atonement of Christ [it's the Atonement that reconciles you; it's the at-one-ment that brings you back home to sit down in the company of the whole family. Joseph Smith couldn't have known this. You see, all this comes in beautifully], his Only Begotten Son [the Son of the family; the Son and the Father are completely reconciled, and we are to be reconciled to them], and ye may obtain a resurrection [there it is, a

rising again], according to the power of the resurrection [the power that will raise you again] which is in Christ, and be presented as the first-fruits of Christ unto God [it was on the Day of Atonement that the Jews had to bring their first fruits, and they had to make an offering of the best thing they owned; it had to be the best of the first fruits, which was a symbol of the atonement of the Father who “so loved the world that he gave his Only Begotten Son,” just as Abraham was willing to do the same thing, and every Jew had to do the same. Everyone had to bring his sin offering on the Day of Atonement, and they were the first fruits. So notice how nicely all these things tie together in the old temple economy], having faith, and obtained a good hope of glory in him before he manifesteth himself in the flesh.” The atonement always anticipated the Messiah, preceded by Elijah, etc., and it was the first fruits brought in on the Day of Atonement. So this all hangs together beautifully.

393,394      Jacob 4:12      “And now, beloved, marvel not that I tell you these things; for why not speak of the atonement of Christ [that’s what he is talking about], and attain to a perfect knowledge of him, as to attain to the knowledge of a resurrection and the world to come?” Notice, there are two stages. The Atonement accomplishes two things; it accomplishes the Resurrection, and then it accomplishes the second resurrection, the second life or eternal life to come with the judgment. To accomplish our early career is a major gain, the first one, “as to attain to the knowledge of a resurrection.” Then to get back into the eternal order of things—that’s the important thing. That’s why you have to be baptized, etc., and that’s why we have to face the judgement to get back on track again after we have come here. Well, why did we offer to come here? Why did we throw the whole thing away? Everything was running smoothly, and then interrupted it with this ghastly life. The scriptures don’t say nice things about this life at all. Here we have no abiding kingdom, etc. “While you are here, fear and tremble,” said Paul to the Corinthians. It’s because we return with greatly enhanced knowledge and experience. Before we can proceed on the way, there are a few things we have to learn. There’s a particularly nasty kind of evil

that we had never become acquainted with before we came here. As Irenaeus and Origen, the two earliest Christian fathers, both tell us, "They taught that in the early church, but we don't teach it anymore." So we have the Resurrection and the world to come.

394 Jacob 4:13 Then he says: "For the Spirit speaketh the truth and lieth not." This is a major issue in science today. What is real? This is the whole thing. He has been talking about this which is all very spiritual. But, like John, he is going to make the whole thing real. You cannot make it spiritual in John. He makes the thing quite tangible. Remember, he starts out (first letter of John), We tell you what we have seen, what we have felt with our hands, what we have heard with our ears. I'm not just making this up [paraphrased]. Then he repeats that again and again. "This is what we have actually seen of Jesus Christ." Notice in verse 13 that the Spirit "speaketh of things as they really are [he wants to be literal about this], and of things as they really will be; wherefore, these things are manifested unto us plainly for the salvation of our souls. But behold, we are not witnesses alone in these things; for God also spake them unto prophets of old."

394,395 Jacob 4:14,15 But the Jews didn't want to take it that way. They didn't want to take it literally. They were too wise, he says, and the next stage is exactly what you suppose would be there. "But behold, the Jews were a stiffnecked people; and they despised the words of plainness, and killed the prophets... . Wherefore, because of their blindness, which blindness came by looking beyond the mark [always being too smart], they must needs fall; for God hath taken away his plainness from them. They don't want to settle for a plain doctrine. As Jacob says, "God hath taken away his plainness from them, and delivered unto them many things which they cannot understand because they desired it [they like this sophisticated talk and all that Woody Alien chatter]. And because they desired it God hath done it, that they may stumble [and, of course, there's a great deal of stumbling],... that by the stumbling of the Jews they will reject the stone upon which they might build

and have safe foundation.”

395 Jacob 4:16 Again, Jacob knows the traditions here, you see. Verse 16: “But behold, according to the scriptures, this stone shall become the great, and the last, and the only sure foundation, upon which the Jews can build. And now, my beloved, how is it possible that these, after having rejected the sure foundation, can ever build upon it, that it may become the head of their corner? [he asks an important question which is not a rhetorical question; then he says he is going to give them the answer to it; these very people are the ones upon whom the Lord is going to build] Behold, my beloved brethren, I will unfold this mystery unto you [he is going to tell them how in the next chapter, but he says, I have to control myself; I get shaken up by these things; he is really passionate]; if I do not, by any means, get shaken from my firmness in the Spirit, and stumble because of my overanxiety for you.”

395 Then he goes into the story of the olive tree. Here are seventy-seven verses all about the olive tree, of all things. Do you notice what the idea of it is? Do you labor through it? Do you enjoy reading it again and again? Does it enlighten you? I see somebody it doesn't enlighten. It's the ethnic picture of the New World. Notice what we have here. This is Abraham's seed sown among all the nations of the earth. What we have here is this long, fitful motion and mixing and separation and collision and ebb and flow and breaking and joining and scattering—springing there, expanding here, withering there. Absorbed, rejected, leavening the whole lump, like yeast—this constant churning around that makes all of the blood of Israel. There isn't anybody here who doesn't have the blood of Israel in him [or her]. This is the way these things mix up. If you have gone into genealogy, you know that is so. You cannot keep certain things out of your genes, so we are all Jews. No, we aren't—Judah is just one of the tribes of Israel. We'll take up with the olive tree. Fortunately, in the next chapter after it he explains it. He says, “I'm going to explain the olive tree now.” There is a reason for his putting this in here, and he dwells on it.

## **Lecture 25 Jacob 5-7 Enos**

**The Olive Tree; The Challenge of Sherem**  
**[Modern Olive Culture Described]**  
**[Quoting Zenos on the Prophecy of the Olive Tree]**  
**[Sherem Denies Christ and Smitten of God]**  
**[Jacob Gives the Plates to Enos]**  
**[Enos Wrestles Before God]**  
**[Wrestle Defined]**

397 Jacob 4:13 In the fourth chapter of Jacob he rings the gong in verses 13 and 14. What he is talking about here is absolutely basic. Notice that verse 13 is one philosophy of life, and verse 14 is the other philosophy of life.. He contrasts the two lines here. Notice, in verse 13 Jacob says, You lunkheads. He is trying to get through to them. He says, Can't you see what I'm talking about is real? Notice the words he uses: "For the Spirit speaketh the truth and lieth not. Wherefore, it speaketh of things as they really are [if they are true], and of things as they really will be [he keeps repeating that, and they are plain]; wherefore, these things are manifested unto us plainly, for the salvation of our souls." There's no reason why you should fight them. We are not the only witnesses; the prophets are too, he says.

397,398 Jacob 4:14,18 Then in the next verse he says the Jews wouldn't settle for that. They were too smart; they didn't want it that way. They didn't want plainness. He says they are "looking beyond the mark." They have to be

smart and intellectual. It can't be as simple as all that, so that's the way Faust puts it. In the opening lines of the play he says, "I've studied everything." Then he goes on, "I'm the most famous man of my time. I know everything; I've studied everything. I've got to the depths of all the sciences and everything. Then here I am, poor old fool, and don't know any more than I ever knew before. So I've committed myself to magic; I'm going to take up magic studies now, that through the power of the spirit and revelation I might know the meaning of many secrets. He finally decides to commit suicide, and what stops him is that Satan comes in and says, "I'll give you what you want." So he makes a pact with Satan, and the play goes on. But that takes us to the Pearl of Great Price. We won't go into that. But notice that this is absolutely basic. Here are two final solutions. They won't settle for the spiritual one, and Jacob said that's the way things really are. Well, how are we going to know it? If you start looking in the other direction, you will look forever because all scientific tests are tentative anyway. But that's the way they wanted it and, of course, they stumble. They'll always stumble on these things. But then he says, How do you think these crazy people will ever be [accepted by] the headstone of ; the corner? How is God ever going to build on them? he says. Well, surprise, surprise, I'm going to tell you, he says, in verse 18, "I will unfold this mystery unto you; if I do not, by any means, get shaken from my firmness in the Spirit" and get carried away by these things. He gets carried away in the olive tree story here. We can save some trouble with this story on the olive. As I said, it goes on for seventy-seven verses.

398 This is information on the olive culture. Joseph Smith was a farmer, but he didn't have an olive farm. It was believed in his day and mine too that olives would not grow out of sight of the Mediterranean—they had to grow on the Mediterranean shores. The olive culture is a very specialized thing, and it is described here in full detail—how to take care of olive trees and the peculiar nature of the olive tree, as the man says here. Of course, in the Book of Mormon there's no sign of olive cultivation in the New World. The olive tree [allegory] is taken from Zenos. He has



taken from the prophet Zenos who lived way back between Moses and Elijah. He was an old prophet whose works were lost, but around 1906 the works of Zenos were discovered in the Pseudo Philo.

398,399        So here we go. First of all, this olive culture should be mentioned because this is good as an indication of reliability of the Book of Mormon. Nobody knew much about that then. Zenos' treatise on ancient olive culture, Jacob 5-6, is accurate in every detail. Olive trees do have to be pruned and cultivated diligently. The miracle of the olive tree is that it can't be killed. There are olive trees three thousand years old. The original olive trees are supposedly still in the Garden of Gethsemane. Whether that was the Garden of Gethsemane [in Jerusalem] or not, the olive trees are still there in Athens. You can cut down an olive tree until nothing is left, and the shoots will start coming out persistently. It's the source of life for the Mediterranean people. It supplies the oil. Everything is cooked in olive oil; it's nourishing in its own right. They didn't have soap. Soap was invented by the Saxons, so they always rubbed oil all over themselves and then scraped it off. That was the way to clean your pores, etc. They used it for everything. Remember our friend Solon, a contemporary of Lehi, was in the olive oil business. It's a great thing. That's why it is the Greek symbol of Athens—it's immortal, it springs up forever, etc. I grew up amid hundreds of acres of olives. Our house was right in the middle of an olive grove. They were harvested and made very high quality olives, but they had to be treated like this. Olive trees do have to be pruned and cultivated diligently. The top branches, as Jacob tells us, are the first to wither. The new shoots do come right out of the trunk. The olive is indeed the most plastic of trees, surpassing even the willow in its power to survive the most drastic whacking and burning. After a city had been destroyed, the one thing that would survive would be the olive trees. They could start life again as long as the olive was there.

399        A good olive tree is greatly cherished. Notice he cherishes them and weeps about olive trees. A tree can be

just like a pet because the quality of one olive tree isn't the same as another. When you have a good one you stick to it and do anything to keep it from dying out, deteriorating, and withering. No end of pains are taken to preserve, even through many centuries. Really superior fruit is very rare and difficult to obtain and perpetuate. The ancient way of strengthening the old trees, especially in Greece, was to graft in the shoots of the oleaster, which was the wild olive. All over the valley here, you'll notice, the one tree that grows everywhere is the Russian olive. You know these grayish trees? They [the pioneers] brought them in for shade, but they just grow wild everywhere. They don't bear olives, of course. They call them Russian olives because they belong to the family of the olives, and their leaves are just like olives. But they grow wild—too wild as a matter of fact. So you have to graft in the shoots of the oleaster, the wild olive. Also shoots from valuable old trees are transplanted. Another thing is that it will not only grow up just like that if you whack it off, but also it is the easiest tree in the world to graft. You just have to stick a branch into it and it's growing. It's an amazing tree. Too much grafting produces a nondescript and cluttered yield of fruit, as we find in Jacob's story. The top branches, if allowed to grow up—as in Spain and France where they plant them along the road and use them for shade among other things—while producing a good shade tree (they form that way) will indeed sap the strength of the tree and give a poor crop. Fertilizing with dung is very important (he uses that word dung a number of times here) in spite of the preference for rocky ground, and has been practiced since ancient times. You notice, to the master's surprise, in the poorest ground it grows very well. The thing to be most guarded against is the bitterness of the fruit. That's why you soak it in brine for so long. All of these points, taken from a treatise on ancient olive culture, are duly, though quite casually, noted in Zenos's Parable of the Olive Tree.

400    Jacob 5:2    So here we have a real olive tree going on here. He talks about it, and, as you said, what about this? Well, you see the nature of the olive tree is best to compare with this. You can cut, you can spread it, you can scatter it,

you can try to destroy it. In parts where it became inferior, then all of a sudden it improved later on. Another part that was very superior suddenly and surprisingly started giving bitter fruit. This will happen. It will fool you an awful lot. So this is sort of a complex ethnical figure in the New World. This is Abraham's seed among all the inhabitants of the earth, mixed in all together. So Zenos spoke of the house of Israel. "Hearken, O ye house of Israel, and hear the word of me, a prophet of the Lord. For behold, thus saith the Lord, I will liken thee, O house of Israel like unto a tame olive-tree, which a man took and nourished in his vineyard; and it grew, and waxed old, and began to decay." So we go down the list here. He pruned it. You can list the number of operations that take place; there are quite a number. There's not as much duplication as you think. And you may think of the laborious, boring style here. Remember, Jacob apologizes for being carried away in his style, etc. This long thing wouldn't bore an ancient audience, necessarily, but it's a display of Jacob's own versatility.

400 We proceed here with the grafting on the branches and the like, and the various things you can do with the olive tree. There are other writings like this that you could compare with it for style. And you ask this question when you look at it here: How does it describe the condition of the world today? You'll find that description in here too. I mentioned before those four chapters, 14-17, in John where he is talking about the relationship of the Father, the Son, the apostles, and the people to whom the apostles would preach—and also the world comes in. He goes over and over and over it again. He seems to be repeating, but he isn't exactly repeating. All those four chapters are taken up with just that. There are hundreds and hundreds of prepositions tied together by nouns, and also the pronouns: I and me, me and thee, thee and them, etc. In one chapter I think there are over 200 of those personal pronouns. That's the same sort of thing. You'd think John would get tired and worn out talking like that, but he knew exactly what he was talking about and made it very clear. He had to rub it in too.

400,401 Well, this [Jacob 5] goes on with various things. There's this thing about the garden. I mentioned that it [the olive tree] prefers the rocky land. . . . But here the word actually means either one. It means a vineyard or it means an olive grove, and they grew together. So when you see KEREM in the Old Testament, you can translate it as either one. That's exactly what Jacob has done here. Of course, he was not a cultivator; he was born after the family left home. But he is talking in terms of the scriptures because he says he is quoting Zenos; he is taking his story from Zenos. It's not his own experience at all. So it is very old, and you can use garden or orchard (it's six of one and half a dozen of the other).

401 Jacob 5:17,18 He talks about preserving the roots and about transplanting here. Then he goes on about improvement of the crop in verse 17. The roots assert themselves, as they will—they'll catch on (verse 18). It's marvelous that they can grow in that rocky soil. They bring forth tame fruit, and then there's a problem of storage, "I shall lay up against the season, unto mine own self." It's like wine; the rarer vintage you keep.

402 Jacob 5:21-30 "How comest thou hither to plant this tree, or this branch of the tree? For behold, it was the poorest spot in all the land of thy vineyard." Notice, in the poorest spot. Here was experimental planting; you do that all the time. You have to try things because you never know what's going to happen. "And the Lord of the vineyard said unto him: Counsel me not; I knew that it was a poor spot of ground.... And thou knowest that this spot of ground was poorer than the first." He not only let it grow there, but he planted it in even poorer, marginal ground. He was determined on expansion, and it brought forth much fruit. He wanted to expand his enterprise. Another branch also brought forth fruit. You can lose all, and you can gain all. Notice that he talks about the hybrids here in verse 25: "Behold, this have I planted in a good spot of ground; and I have nourished it this long time, and only a part of the tree hath brought forth tame fruit, and the other part of the tree hath brought forth wild fruit." Well, that happens too.

It would surprise you, these hybrids that come. Then the pruning is so important. It will stand almost any amount of pruning. "Pluck off the branches that have not brought forth good fruit, and cast them into the fire [then you have to rake up the orchard].... The servant said unto him: Let us prune it, and dig about it, and nourish it a little longer, that perhaps it may bring forth good fruit unto thee, ... and the end soon cometh." Then there's corruption. The tree can be spoiled, and once it's gone what are you going to do? He tries desperately to save it. He's talking about Israel now, you see. Verse 30: "And they came to the tree whose natural branches had been broken off, and the wild branches had been grafted in; and behold all sorts of fruit did cumber the tree."

402,403      Jacob 5:33-42      Israel is mixed up with everybody here, and I think you could show that if you put a sociologist on that. And it had tastes of every sort. There was this bad tree that had no good fruit on it at all. The Lord said, "What shall we do unto the tree, that I may preserve again good fruit thereof unto mine own self?" And the servant wanted to save it. They grafted in the oleaster, but what happened? In verse 37 the wild branches overrun the roots. They take complete control of the fruit, and the roots begin to perish. The natural branches become corrupt, and then they all become corrupt. Then the poor Lord of the vineyard wept because it was a precious olive tree, and he said, "What could I have done more for my vineyard?" He keeps calling it a vineyard because olive grove is two words. They use the same word for both (*kerem*), and in English we prefer one word to using two, I'm sure. It's greater economy. So all had become corrupted. It's getting bad in verse 42: "And now all the trees of my vineyard are good for nothing save it be to be hewn down and cast into the fire." This is the last day. Boy, this is where we are now, you see. It's cause for alarm. "Who is it that has corrupted my vineyard?" He goes into that and it goes on and on. Verse 77: "And then cometh the season and the end; and my vineyard will I cause to be burned with fire." That's the final end, and you can see all the episodes in between—all the things that can happen to Israel.

403 Jacob 6:1-4; John 1:11-12 Then he explains it in chapter 6. “This is my prophecy—that the things which this prophet Zenos spake, concerning the house of Israel, in the which he likened them unto a tame olive tree, must surely come to pass.” So he’s going to explain what’s going to happen to the house of Israel. Zenos’s [account] is in terms of the olive tree. This is in terms of Jacob himself. He begins at the end. He is going to go backwards. Then the rest are flashbacks. But he tells how it’s all going to end. (This is a common dramatic form; especially in movies they do this. You see what brought this all to pass, and then it goes back and tells you the story of how this came to be.) He’s talking about “the last time, that the servants of the Lord shall go forth in his power, to nourish and prune his vineyard.” Verse 3 “And the world shall be burned with fire [wow!]. And how merciful is our God unto us, for he remembereth the house of Israel, both roots and branches [but they don’t like it; they fight him].... They are a stiffnecked and a gainsaying people.” Then why bring a plan to such people? The gospel has no better chance on the earth than a snowball in hell. People aren’t going to accept it. They didn’t in the time of Moses, they didn’t in the time of Christ, and they don’t today. They gave Joseph a bad time from the first, you see. Then John tells us why they didn’t [accept the gospel]. As he said in the beginning, “He came unto his own, and his own received him not.... The light shineth in the darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God” (see John 1:11-12). Now isn’t that worth doing, just for a few, if it is possible? There’s the power again. And we have here: “They are a stiffnecked and a gainsaying people; but as many as will not harden their hearts shall be saved in the kingdom of God.” So there are some that won’t, and for the sake of them it’s worth it. That’s what the test is all about, as John tells us—that as many as would hearken become sons of God.

403,404 Jacob 6:5 So the theme is repent because all are capable and all are culpable. Notice that He cleaves to us. It’s up to us. God is waiting for any old time that you’re willing to come around. Remember, he will cleave unto you.

“And while his arm of mercy is extended towards you in the light of the day, harden not your hearts.” But work, he says, for the day cometh when no man can. The day isn’t going to be here forever, so it’s very urgent. He uses the expression, Don’t procrastinate, whatever you do. Don’t put it off because an awful lot is at stake here. Why would we make just a few short years [decide our situation for] a whole stretch of eternity hereafter? Could that thing really be so? It really is. There are just a few bugs to get out of our existence here to perpetuate our life. There’s no [point in] living forever unless you have reason to live forever. We’ll come to that later, but Nephi explained that too—why you would live forever. He said you will cross that bridge when you get to it. The Lord will tell you everything you are going to do hereafter, and you don’t worry about it as you go. When you get there you will know there is plenty to be done, but meantime you can’t bear the thought of living [in this world] for a thousand years. It would bore you stiff.

404 Jacob 6:6 But you have to go on living. As we learn here in the Book of Mormon very definitely, they cannot die. You have to go on whether you like it or not because that has already been arranged. As I said, in theory there’s no reason why that can’t be so. There is a time limit. Notice verse 6 says today. “Yea, today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts; for why will ye die? ... After ye have been nourished by the good word of God all the day long, will ye bring forth evil fruit [there’s the vineyard], that ye must be hewn down and cast into the fire?”

404 Jacob 6:8 So is the crisis so great? The word crisis means “the point of judgment, the point of decision.” Why would you be hewn down and thrown in the fire just for being a human being—fiddling around and doing the things that normal human beings do, making a fool of yourself the way we all do, etc.? Why would you be damned like that? Hewn down and cast into the fire. You have to make it [the decision]; you have to insist on it, he says. Notice verse 8: “Behold, will ye reject these words? Will ye reject the words of the prophets; and will ye reject all the words which have been spoken concerning Christ... and deny the

good word of Christ, and the power of God ... and quench the Holy Spirit.” Notice there are steps by which you do it here. First, you reject it. Then you vocally deny it. Then you quench it and do everything you can to stamp out the Holy Spirit. Then you mock it; you make fun of the whole thing. You mock the great plan of redemption.

405    Jacob 6:8-11    Well, what do you expect if you do that? You’ve asked for it. You “make a mock of the great plan of redemption, which hath been laid for you [you’ll never get home now if you are not careful, if you miss this time]. Know ye not that if ye will do these things, that the power of the redemption and the resurrection, which is in Christ, will bring you to stand with shame and awful guilt before the bar of God?” By that, you’ll have to stand at the resurrection and stand before the Lord in shame and awful guilt. You are brought back to stand trial. Then there’s this lake of fire and brimstone. This is a metaphor. “Ye must go away into that lake of fire and brimstone, whose flames are unquenchable, and whose smoke ascendeth up forever and ever, which lake of fire and brimstone is endless torment [that is what brimstone represents—just like the olive tree and the house of Israel; you’re not a real olive tree; don’t get that idea]. O then, my beloved brethren, repent ye, and enter in at the strait gate, and continue in the way which is narrow, until ye shall obtain eternal life.” There is a proper course to follow. It’s rather an easy one, but you have to watch now.

405,406    Jacob 7:2-5    Now there is a character by the name of Sherem who challenges this teaching. He is included in here because he gave Jacob a bad time. He didn’t want to take any of this, so this is the argument on the other side. This is the way most people go. He began to preach that there should be no Christ. As I said, I have plenty of friends who not only believe that Christ will never return, they don’t believe for a minute that I believe it. They can’t accept the idea that I would be fool enough to believe that, but I’m definitely sure of it. So he began to preach that there would be no Christ, “and he preached many things which were flattering unto the people.” He gave them what



they wanted to hear: God is dead, all is permitted. That's what they wanted to hear because, remember, these people were misbehaving. They were getting too rich, but above all they were being immoral. So they didn't want to hear this. What he told them was flattering to hear. There's no trouble at all; just go right ahead doing what you are doing. He was permissive, in other words, "that he might overthrow the doctrine of Christ." Notice that he was a rhetorician. He was a popular orator, a spellbinder. That meant a lot. Verse 4: "And he was learned, that he had a perfect knowledge of the language of the people [the vernacular; he knew how to manipulate]; wherefore, he could use much flattery, and much power of speech, according to the power of the devil." Make them feel good, butter them up. As Isaiah said, "They want to hear smooth things." Just talk smooth things to them and you are elected; you're in there. Joseph Smith said, "The devil is an orator." He certainly is. Jacob said, "For I truly had seen angels, and they had ministered unto me." But Sherem hadn't seen them. Sherem is being very orthodox. He thinks he is the religious one. He thinks he's pious. Notice that this is typical. You defend yourself by an attack. He said, Jacob is leading the people astray; he is teaching false doctrine. Constantine called the Council of Nicea in A.D. and Eusebius was there. He was there in person; he was a friend of the emperor. They were discussing things such as seating problems and all this protocol stuff, and they started debating issues. Finally, a rustic farmer who had been attending up in the gallery, got up and said he didn't know whether it was the greater miracle to make a stone speak or to make a philosopher shut up. Which is the greater miracle? Anyway, Sherem was this kind, and he was powerful. So he came up to him and said, "Brother Jacob [speaking to him very benevolently], I have sought much opportunity that I might speak unto you [I've been wanting to speak to you for a long time; he is posing as the zealous champion of truth]; for I have heard and also know that thou goest about much, preaching that which ye call the gospel, or the doctrine of Christ [oh, no]. And ye have led away much of this people that they pervert the right way of God, and keep not the law of Moses which is the right way." See, he is teaching the orthodox way; he's

doing what's right. He's Sherem, the defender of the faith of orthodoxy.

406 And you notice that it's not a case of believer versus nonbeliever, or atheist versus theist. No, this is our simplistic view of things. We always think of the Book of Mormon as these conflicts between the good guys and the bad guys, the people that believed and the people that didn't. No, he wasn't an atheist at all. We keep "the law of Moses which is the right way.... And now behold, I, Sherem, declare unto you that this is blasphemy [what you are teaching]." What does the word BLASPHEMY mean? What does it come from? What is BLASPHEMIA? To speak BLAPTO, which is what? It's to treat lightly, not with contempt, but not seriously. It is not to damn something to hell. It is not to say horrible and tremendous things, but to treat lightly. It's much worse to treat the gospel as trivia and laugh it off (you can't reach people like that) than it is to attack it savagely and say, "I'll show you where it is wrong," and really do some studying because then you are in danger. But that's what blasphemy is. We get the impression that when a person speaks blasphemy, he has spoken terrible things. He has denounced and used vile language. That's not it. Blasphemy is treating it lightly, "This is nothing; we'll laugh it off." It's laughing something off, which is the best argument if you want to crush something that you can't answer. You just laugh it off and walk out of the room. They ask plenty of questions about the gospel, but they never wait for the answers. I've noticed that, and I've had a lot of talks with some of those people.

406,407 Jacob 7:7,8 "I, Sherem, declare unto you that this is blasphemy; for no man knoweth of such things; for he cannot tell of things to come [that's true; you can't know for yourself].... But behold, the Lord God poured in his Spirit into my soul." That's an interesting expression. Is this a circumlocution for inspiration? He uses these eloquent expressions. The impression you get is a sudden idea or sudden inspiration. It suddenly came to him, just like that. We might express it differently. While I was talking with Sherem, he poured his spirit into my soul—I

knew exactly what I was to say; it was not myself speaking, “insomuch that I did confound him in all his words [I was able to stop him cold—that was it].” He doesn’t tell us the debate that took place in which he confounded him. All the schools are founded on *disputatio*, the disputation. That’s what you do. That’s how you train rhetoricians. We have mock courts here to train lawyers, etc. Rhetoric is a vile profession, as Socrates explained to his friend Gorgias, who was the greatest rhetorician of his time. Do you know our word *gorgeous* comes from his name because of the style of rhetoric he introduced. He came from Sicily, and he opened a school with his friend Protagoras. He was the first person to make a million dollars teaching law and rhetoric, how to win cases and sway legislatures, etc. That’s what he was.

407 Jacob 7:9-12 Notice Sherem has already backtracked in verse 9. “And he said: If there should be a Christ, I would not deny him [that’s all right; I’d accept him]; but I know that there is no Christ, neither has been, nor ever will be. And I said unto him: [well, what about the scriptures?] Believest thou the scriptures? And he said, Yea. And I said unto him: Then ye do not understand them; for they truly testify of Christ.” The Atonement is the subject of the Old Testament. Since I’ve done this thing on the Atonement, that I was supposed to finish up today (there are a lot of footnotes), that has come home to me so strongly. The whole thing is atonement; the whole thing is the mission of the Messiah. That’s what the whole Old Testament is about. Of course, the Jews won’t accept that. But the scriptures “truly testify of Christ... and it also has been made manifest unto me by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, I know if there should be no atonement made all mankind must be lost.” The atonement, the sacrifice of Isaac, was not complete. Isaac actually wasn’t sacrificed. They say that’s the atoning sacrifice.

407,408 Jacob 7:13-16 Notice he gets a bit sarcastic here. He falls back on the thing you’re sure he’s going to fall back on, “Show me a sign.” Give me a sign or a symbol. Verse 13: “Show me a sign by the power of the Holy Ghost,

in the which ye know so much.” You know so much about this Holy Ghost; you just try to tell me who the Holy Ghost is. This is very cynical and sarcastic. Jacob says he doesn’t want to tempt God to show a sign. “Nevertheless, not my will be done; but if God shall smite thee, let that be a sign unto thee that he has power, both in heaven and in earth.” Well, the guy had a severe stroke then. He was overwrought anyway; he had been losing the argument. I think he was all excited and ready to bust a blood vessel, so he collapsed completely and fell down. He had to be nourished for many days. He had a bad stroke and passed out completely. He was the high pressure type, Type A like me, that gets those things. We have to watch all the time, you see. When he came to himself, he asked that the people be gathered together. Verse 16: “I desire to speak unto the people before I shall die.” It’s clear because he was still claiming to be orthodox. He was still accepting the Bible, so he is still available. This brought him to repentance, and he saw that he had been wrong. “And he spake plainly unto them and denied the things which he had taught them, and confessed Christ.” He had done it out of vanity; this happens all the time. “For I denied the Christ, and said that I believed the scriptures; and they truly testify of him.” (Remember that Christ here is the Christian equivalent of MESSIAH, MASHIAH, which means the Anointed. CHRIO is the Greek word for ANOINT, and CHRISTOS is one who had been anointed, THE ANOINTED ONE. MESSIAH is the “one who has been anointed.” JEHOSHUAC, Jesus Christ means the SAVIOR, THE ANOINTED ONE.)

408 Jacob 7:19 “I have thus lied unto God,” [Sherem said].... And it came to pass that when he had said these words he could say no more, and he gave up the ghost, ... [The multitude were impressed] and they were overcome that they fell to the earth.” You notice in the Book of Mormon they fall to earth quite often when they are overpowered; there’s this spontaneous falling to earth. There are formal and traditional responses to certain stress, and they differ very greatly.

408,409 Jacob 7:23,24 Of course, by the miracle

Sherem had tipped the scales here. The people had attended the disputation here, and it was going both ways. Then Sherem lost it. When Jacob won hands down, it made a big impression. They were ready to be impressed now. Then Sherem himself came and admitted [his wrongdoing] and confessed it. Then when he died, the multitude immediately went down in the PROSKYNESIS and recognized [what had happened] with this spontaneous gesture which is very common in the Orient. "Since when have thy knees forgot their duty?" etc. If you don't do that, of course, you are in real trouble in the presence of the emperor or someone like that. Richard II has something to say about that. Verse 23: "And it came to pass that peace and the love of God was restored again among the people." So he [seems to] end on a happy note. But they tried to restore the Lamanites, and this was hopeless. He says they couldn't move them. Verse 24: "But it all was vain, for they delighted in wars and bloodshed, and they had an eternal hatred against us, their brethren. And they sought by the power of their arms to destroy us continually." There were these blood feuds. You thought it was going to end upbeat, but it ends on a very sad note in an extremely eloquent passage.

409 Jacob 7:26 I think there is nothing in the Book of Mormon more moving than this. The prose sounds like a solemn dirge here in verse 26: "I, Jacob, began to be old; and the record of this people being kept on the other plates of Nephi, wherefore, I conclude this record declaring that I have written according to the best of my knowledge, by saying [and this is it] that the time passed away with us, and also our lives passed away like as it were unto us a dream, we being a lonesome and a solemn people, wanderers, cast out from Jerusalem, born in tribulation, in a wilderness, and hated of our brethren, which caused wars and contentions; wherefore, we did mourn out our days." Notice the spondees.

410 Jacob 7:27 Now we come to the book of Enos. This is a fascinating book because it is a very good portrait study. Notice in verse 27 it says that Jacob gave the plates to his son Enos. Enos received the plates as his successor to the

highest religious office in the state. He was the grandson of Lehi, so he was a blue blood. He would have been the king, but remember that Nephi's people anointed his brothers to be the high priests. The kings were apparently minor figures, as you find them very often in history. The king is not the important person at all. Enos would be "king presumptive" as far as that goes. But the kings were named Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Nephi. You never read about them here, but this isn't the historical part anyway. But still Enos was a person of great importance who would be the next high priest. In this religious community, the kings are not the real leaders.

412 Enos 1:1,2 Notice that he had been taught in his father's language, "and also in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." He was a very thoughtful young man, and he really had a conscience. The uselessness of his life was worrying him sick. He says, "And I will tell you of the wrestle which I had before God, before I received a remission of my sins." Notice, it wasn't like Jacob wrestling with God (not the angel; it's translated "the angel" in our Bible, but that's not correct). When you wrestle before God, that means you try to .., What does a wrestler do when he starts to compete? He tries to strike position. They have to take up a position or a stance—you decide your approach, etc. [Suppose] you have been living in the world of daily life and been completely preoccupied with trivial things ("for to be carnally minded is death" comes strongly to me all the time; carnally minded is concerned with anything related to this world). If you think about that and then you are going to approach God, you can't do it just cold like that. You can't just say, "Hey God, listen to me; I have something to say." You are facing the Most High here, and you can't put anything over on him. He can see right through you, so you had better be careful what you say. It is going to be to your great advantage to see through yourself and everything else because he is going to see through you. So you wrestle with it; you have a struggle to tear yourself loose from your preoccupations and thoughts and your petty ideas. And to keep concentrated during prayer takes some effort. That is why in the ancient Christian circle, you concentrate your

mind, as in a burning glass, on a particular object. It takes great concentration; it's not easy.

412 Enos 1:3,4 With Enos it's a wrestle, and he is not content with his life at all. He feels he is not living up to his capacity or anything else. It's like a prince having a good time, wasting his time. He is hunting now and probably hunts too much. He says, This is getting me nowhere. He makes it very clear here. He went to hunt beasts in the forests, "and the words which I had often heard my father speak [they kept going through his head] concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart [he couldn't get them out. When he was hunting, he wouldn't want anything to do with that—riding along thinking of these things, or walking as the case may be]. And my soul hungered." He really needed something. I see the time is up now, so we'll leave hungry in that case. It won't do us any harm. We have four more meetings, and we may be able to get as far as the middle of Mosiah. Mosiah is an extremely important book. That is absolutely tops. It takes a different tone entirely from these others.

# Lecture 26 Enos; Jarom; Omni

## The Struggle of Enos

[Enos Desires The Welfare of the Lamanites]

[Lamanites Will Not Repent]

[Jarom Writes To Benefit the Lamanites]

[Mosiah Leads People to Zarahemla (Red City)]

413 Who was Enos in the Bible? Does anybody know? Remember Adam had the sons Cain and Abel, among others. Cain disqualified, though they had great hopes for him. You know what happened to Abel. Then the next one in succession had the name of Seth, which means successor, substitute, double Adam, next Adam. His son was Enos, which means Adam or man again. It's the same meaning exactly. It means a human being. So we have three Adams in a row there. Also there are other names [that are interesting]. You notice we had that Sherem. Who would Sherem be? All names are epithets; they describe something about where a person lived, what he looked like, and something like that in all languages. Sherem means snub nosed or pug nosed. It's the same as the Latin Simus. They had Rufus for red hair, and Curtis for short man, etc. So Enos is man, and these other names have meanings too.

413 Enos 1:1 Enos is an important book, but we have to race through it here. It's just one chapter, you notice, but what a chapter! Remember that he was very well taught. His father was the high priest. His uncle was Nephi. That would make him a duke, I suppose. He was of princely descent. His father taught him in his language "and also in



the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” His father was the high priest, and in this type of state the high priest ranks as high as the king because this is inherited from Egypt too. In the Egypt of Lehi’s day, the high priest of Thebes was equal to the Pharaoh. The Theban Pharaohs would marry their daughters or their sons into the high priestly family of Thebes in order to fix themselves because some of them were foreign dynasties. Or if it was the Tanidic or Semitic group over in the east delta, they would also take over the high priesthood. The king himself would take it over, as in the case of Korihor (good old Book of Mormon name). Or he would marry his daughter with the title “Daughter of the God,” and she would be married to the high priest of Thebes. But the priesthood and the kingship just went like that. There was much rivalry between them, and you see that Alma is quite aware of them when he talks about priestcraft later on. But here it’s the same thing; there are parallels anyway. Enos speaks of “admonition of the Lord,” so he was very well trained by his father. He had this wrestle, not with the Lord (like Jacob) but before God. He had things to settle here.

415 Enos 1:3-6 Enos said he wrestled with himself, struggling in the spirit before God before he received a remission of his sins. Notice he tells us right at the beginning here that he went to hunt beasts. It’s an intensely personal history. The words of his father “concerning eternal life and the joy of the saints” kept going through his head. This is what sunk deeply into his heart. He knew there must be something better than this [hunting], in other words. He wasn’t having any of it, so he said he was missing it terribly. “And my soul hungered; and I kneeled down before my Maker [he asked and said, I’ve got to have something here’; he was absolutely desperate], and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul [he hungered—he wasn’t getting what he knew should be there; his father had taught him all these wonderful things]; and all the day long did I cry unto him [he wouldn’t let up; ‘get me out of this,’ he said]; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens. And there came a voice unto me saying: Enos, thy sins

are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed. And I, Enos, knew that God could not lie; wherefore, my guilt was swept away.”

415,416      Enos 1:6-8      See, this was his obstacle. That’s what guilt is—the great obstacle. It’s guilt that gives you a sense of your inadequacy. That’s one place where Freud was right. Your guilt builds into you whether you cover it up or not. Your guilt will accompany you, and the more you get the worse it gets to overcome. You get mental blocks, you hesitate, you’re uncertain, you lose all confidence because that guilt is behind you. And you know it if it is only in your subconscious. He said, “My guilt was swept away,” so he was free to act then. The only thing that can break it down is faith, as he says in the next verse. “Because of thy faith in Christ,” this happened. You’ve got to get confidence from somewhere, and what is faith? We could write an essay defining that, couldn’t we? The interesting thing, as we said before, is that you don’t pray for faith—you exercise faith. You pray for health, the necessities of life, wisdom, and all sorts of things. But you have to supply some of the faith yourself; you have to be self-generating. It’s at the very center of your existence, of your consciousness and your awareness. If you didn’t have that [you couldn’t act; for example], you could convince a person that he couldn’t move his hand. He couldn’t move his hand unless he thought he could move it. I’ve seen that happen many times. Once a person really thinks he can’t do something, he becomes absolutely paralyzed. You can hypnotize persons that way. It’s a lack of faith. As soon as he gets faith and knows he can, there’s nothing to it—it can be done. But you have to generate some of the faith in yourself. We generate it with various stimuli. That’s what the preaching and the miracles serve for.

416      Enos 1:8-10      “Wherefore, go to, thy faith hath made thee whole. Now, it came to pass that when I had heard these words I began to feel a desire for the welfare of my brethren, the Nephites.” They are his brethren. He is a responsible person; his father is the big man. It was Jacob who brought the people to the temple, etc. This is a great

responsibility for the people, so next it turns to that. It says, “a desire for the welfare of my brethren,” so it’s a personal concern for his brethren the Nephites now. They become his next concern; how about them being saved? And here we have a very interesting thing. The Lord will not make him any promises, and he gets the point here. “And while I was thus struggling in the spirit, behold, the voice of the Lord came into my mind again saying . . .” He is struggling with what? Professor Budine, the old Danish philosopher used to say that sorrow is our limitations. It’s your limitations that make you sad. There you are again— your limitations are due to your guilt. The inadequacies are the things you have given in to. You went for easy solutions; you wouldn’t exercise your capacity or expand it or anything. So your limitations haunt you on all sides. “Cooped, cabined, cribbed, confined, bound in by saucy doubts and fears, we can’t move at all.” So we struggle with our own limitations. That’s what we are struggling for. If you had the power to take care of anything you thought was wrong, you wouldn’t worry at all. You’d enjoy doing it, wouldn’t you? Well, there you are.

416 Enos 1:10-14 So he was struggling in the spirit, and the voice came to his mind. Notice, did a loud voice resound through the forest? No, he says, “The voice of the Lord came into my mind [there is such a thing; that’s where you are going to receive it] again, saying: I will visit thy brethren according to their diligence in keeping my commandments [he knew they weren’t diligent at all; what’s going to happen here now?] I have given unto them this land, and it is a holy land; and I curse it not save it be for the cause of iniquity; wherefore, I will visit thy brethren according as I have said; and their transgressions will I bring down with sorrow upon their own heads.” Now that’s the last word, and it’s not very encouraging: “Their transgressions will I bring down with sorrow upon their own heads.” When Enos heard that, he knew he was on the right track here, and his “faith began to be unshaken in the Lord.” As a very generous, great-hearted person, he prayed for his brethren, the Lamanites. Notice that the Lamanites are always referred to as their” brethren,” and not as “the

evil empire,” though look how evil they are in this book. “And I prayed unto him with many long strugglings for my brethren, the Lamanites.” And he tells us in verse 14, “For at the present our strugglings were vain in restoring them to the true faith.”

417 Enos 1:13-15 He didn’t get a cheerful promise for the Nephites, and he is not going to get one for the Lamanites either. So this is what he prays, and it is not a prayer that is full of hope and exuberance at all. Why does he even think of this in verse 13? This was his prayer, “I desired of him—that if it should so be, that my people, the Nephites, should fall into transgression, and by any means be destroyed.” So he sees that as a very distinct possibility; he got the point when he had a desire for the welfare of his people. We expect a reassuring and cheerful answer when we pray for the welfare, but you notice he doesn’t get it. Must He be so brutally honest here? God goes to the point. So he prayed that if the Nephites should fall by transgression, “the Lamanites should not be destroyed [he knew Nephi’s prophecy, of course], that the Lord God would preserve a record of my people, the Nephites ... that it might be brought forth at some future day unto the Lamanites, that, perhaps, they might be brought unto salvation [it’s not too hopeful for either one of them, is it? The best he can do is hope that maybe the Lamanites might get something]— For at the present our stragglings were vain in restoring them to the true faith [we couldn’t get anywhere at all]. And they swore in their wrath that, if it were possible, they would destroy our records and us, and also all the traditions of our fathers.” Well now, that was some situation! So he cried unto the Lord continually; the command was that he should ask Him. “Wherefore, I knowing that the Lord God was able to preserve our records, I cried unto him continually, for he had said unto me: Whatsoever thing ye shall ask in faith, believing that ye shall receive in the name of Christ, ye shall receive it.”

417 Enos 1:16-19 Then here he gets his answer in verse 16. He knows how it is going to turn out now. The promise is implicit in the answer. “And he [the Lord] covenanted

with me that he would bring them forth unto the Lamanites in his own due time [so it was the Lamanites that would get the record after all—there would be no Nephites around anymore. So he knows now how it will end; it comes clear];... wherefore my soul did rest. And the Lord said unto me: Thy fathers have also required of me this thing; and it shall be done unto them according to their faith.” Notice it’s the very same thing; we are back on square one again. Lehi asked the same thing, and so did Nephi when he asked what would happen. He got the answer that they [the Lamanites] would have no power over you [the Nephites], unless they also rebel against me. Then he goes forth just like Lehi did. “I, Enos, went about among the people of Nephi, prophesying of things to come.”

418,419 Enos 1:20 These things will be brought forth unto the Lamanites. Notice this interesting description of them; it’s about as gory as you can get. Are these children of nature? No, they are not. These are not primal or primitive people he describes here in this long verse 20. There are many recent studies on this. Lord Raglan, Joseph Needham, Giorgio de Santillana, and Levi-Strauss (the anthropologist) are showing that wherever you think you find primitives what you find is the remnants of former civilizations. After all, we believe that Adam started out at the top; he was the best and smartest man of them all. We have been going down hill ever since, and there’s plenty of evidence for that. With what we call “primitives,” you ought to be darn sure you’re dealing with people that are really primitive. They are very hard to find, actually.

419 Enos 1:20 “And I bear record that the people of Nephi did seek diligently to restore the Lamanites unto the true faith in God. But our labors were vain; their hatred was fixed, [notice this:] and they were led by their evil nature that they became wild, and ferocious, and a blood-thirsty people.” They are not children of nature; that’s not the way they have lived “for millions of years.” We think we can go out and find people, such as in Australia, living as people have always lived for untold millennia. There’s no evidence for that whatsoever we now know. [It was thought] that

all these primitive people throughout the world developed on parallel lines following rules of evolution wherever you go. But since [Sir James George] Frazer's day, they have all been connected. So they were all historically aware of each other; they have all been in occupied territories; they all live on the scenes of earlier civilizations. Look at the Central American Indians among those magnificent ruins, and nobody knows to this day exactly what went on there. Nobody has the vaguest idea what it was like in 1000 B.C. They had these tremendous civilizations. They were there, and we know these people are descended from them. If it weren't for the ruins, we'd say, "Well, obviously these are children of nature; they've always been here, etc." They became the "gentle savage" when they were discovered. It's the same thing here: "They became wild, and ferocious, and a blood-thirsty people."

419 People do become that way; that's an interesting thing. If we are left alone, we become that way.. You see it's possible to bring forth this thing in our natures; we'd all do it. He is going to tell us how they had to keep up the pressure so his own people wouldn't slide right into that very condition. The Lamanites became "full of idolatry and filthiness; feeding upon beasts of prey; dwelling in tents, and wandering about in the wilderness with a short skin girdle about their loins and their heads shaven; and their skill was in the bow, and in the cimeter, and the ax. And many of them did eat nothing save it was raw meat; and they were continually seeking to destroy us."

420 Enos:1:21 Ninety percent of [The American Indians] were agricultural; they weren't hunters at all. They cultivated and lived in villages, and they were settled people. Driver's study was published by the American Philosophical Association, and it's the best summary of American Indians to date, considering all their tribes, all their distribution, their culture, what they had, and everything. It's a big work. Anyway this is very different: "The people of Nephi did till the land and raise all manner of grain, and of fruit, and flocks of herds, and flocks of all manner of cattle of every kind, and goats, and wild goats, and also many horses." These

horses, etc., are very interesting; that has always been an issue. My friend Woodrow Bora worked for years on that at Berkeley. That was his field, and he was convinced that the Spanish didn't bring the first horses here at all. There were plenty of them, and he talks about that.

420 Enos 1:22 Then notice this: "And there were exceedingly many prophets among us [that means schools of the prophets—a strange situation like in the days of Saul]. And the people were a stiffnecked people, hard to understand." Considering what those called "Lamanites" had slid into so easily, they had to keep this from happening to their people. How could they do it?. [People thought] they could go anywhere [they] wanted and take anything [they] wanted—just help yourself. One thing the Indians were good for was to suppress that. Someone would go out ranching—out in Skull Valley, for example—and the next thing that was known their ranch house would be burned down [by the Indians]. Maybe the people would be found there, and maybe they wouldn't. A lot of that happened in Manti and San Pete County where my mother was born. People would go out and try to become too independent, and the Indians would take care of that because they would expose themselves when they did that. The Indians weren't particularly savage, but they had their reasons. They were hungry, too. "

420,421 Enos 1:23 This was the only thing [that would keep them in line]: "And there was nothing save it was exceeding harshness, preaching and prophesying of wars, and contentions, and destructions, and continually reminding them of death, and the duration of eternity, and the judgments and the power of God, and all these things—stirring them up continually to keep them in the fear of the Lord. I say there was nothing short of these things, and exceedingly great plainness of speech, would keep them from going down speedily to destruction [they would decline, and that's what it would mean]. And after this manner do I write concerning them." Notice this constant thing. But these people are constantly in danger of subsiding into the savage way of life. A good rock concert will show that. But

you have to have the New England frontier severity, the preaching, and the strictness to keep people in line.

421 Enos 1:24,25 “And I saw wars between the Nephites and Lamanites in the course of my days. And it came to pass that I began to be old, and an hundred and seventy and nine years had passed away from the time that our father Lehi left Jerusalem [he got to be very old; he talks about that]. And I saw that I must soon go down to my grave.” So he wrote this at the end of his life, and it had been 179 years since they left Jerusalem. Isn’t that an awful long time, you say. Wouldn’t he have to be about 140 years old? Well, not at all. I started wondering about that. It had been 179 years, and this is Enos, Lehi’s grandson. How would that be possible? Well, it’s easily possible; I started figuring out with my own family, etc. The successors aren’t necessarily the eldest. Joseph, Jacob, Ishmael, Nephi, and Israel were not the oldest sons. There could also be a lot of daughters. Lots of people live to be old. You don’t have to knock off even 100 from the 179, but if you do, that leaves you 79 years. His father, Jacob, was born 8 years after they left Jerusalem, so knock 8 years off the 79. His father would have been 69 or 70 years old when he was born. That was by no means rare among the Patriarchs. That’s not impossible. But anyway, it was quite possible. This is not a fantastic thing. It would be if they had been very young along there. It depends on his age, but he gives the impression of being very old. He began to be old and would soon go down to the grave. He reports this rather late; I would say eighty or ninety years later. That would [have been] plenty of time.

27 Enos 1:27 He has rejoiced above all things in the world in the gospel. Notice this verse 27. As I said, it brings in every point of the Atonement in proper order. First of all he says, “And I soon go to the place of my rest [that’s the thing that people do just after they die], which is with my Redeemer.” Note that the Redeemer is the one who has bought you back to where you were. You once belonged to him; now he redeems you. REDEMPTIO means someone who buys back something that he has sold before, talking



about a slave. If I sold a slave and now I buy him back, that's REDEMPTIO. I go back to where I started—to the Lord, dependent upon him. "For I know that in him I shall rest [next comes the rest]. And I rejoice in the day when my mortal shall put on immortality [that's the Resurrection that comes next], and shall stand before him [that's the Judgment], then shall I see his face with pleasure, and he will say unto me [this is atonement, being united, coming back home again]: Come unto me, ye blessed, there is a place prepared for you in the mansions of my Father. Amen." Of course, a mansion is a house which is yours, and there are many mansions where you stay overnight as you progress on your journey. When a great king or lord made his tour, the Royal Progress, where did he stop at night? He didn't camp; he had mansions. He had special houses built for him to stay overnight. The first year of his reign he had to make the complete tour of his kingdom. I wrote a long article on that in the *Western Political Quarterly* years ago. The mansion is the place where you stay during the course of your progress on your journey. You continue to have your mansion, and on you go. There you have your eternal progression; you have everything there in this one verse. How neatly he puts it together. They had the full gospel of the Atonement here.

422,423      Jarom 1:1 Now we come to Jarom. His name is interesting. Notice, these names are not in Hebrew. They are in Aramaic or Arabic which were near to the language of Lehi's people, I'm sure. Jarom means "to prosper or to get a good share of something." It means "to support one's family properly." It also means "to have good luck in business" or "finding something of value." It can also mean "to grasp or snatch something" or "to be a crook." That's the way these words do; one meaning leads to the next. They are very rich, but the basic meaning of Jarom is "to be prosperous, to be happy." What English word do we have? Well, Richard means the same thing, "to be rich, to be well off." So we will call Jarom, Richard here, just as we called Enos, Adam, and we called Sherem, Pug. And Jacob in Hebrew means the heel. Verse 1: "Now behold, I, Jarom, write a few words according to the commandment of my father, Enos, that

our genealogy may be kept. And these plates are small [he has just written a little bit] and as these things are written for the intent of the benefit of our brethren the Lamanites, wherefore, it must needs be that I write a little.” Now here is the important thing; you notice the secret is out here. He writes it for the benefit of the Lamanites. He’s not writing these Nephite plates for the Nephites. He knows they’re not going to be here after a while. He writes these plates for the “benefit of our brethren the Lamanites.” Now he does some prophesying too, “but I shall not write the things of my prophesying, nor of my revelations.” Now this is a very interesting thing. We talk about the living prophet. He prophesied and he had revelations, but he doesn’t write them down. Why not? Because they are already written down. “For what could I write more than my fathers have written? For have not they revealed the plan of salvation? I say unto you, Yea; and this sufficeth me.”

423 Jarom 1:2 Notice that the living prophet doesn’t supplant the scriptures. When we get to 3 Nephi 23, you will see how the Lord asked to see all the scriptures, went through them, checked them, and said, You are going to need these [paraphrased]. He corrected mistakes that had been made and added Malachi who wrote after Lehi left Jerusalem. Here was the Lord himself. He could have said, “Forget the scriptures—I’m the one that gave them.” No, he didn’t do that; he said that you use the scriptures. It’s the same thing in two passages at the end of the gospel of Luke—in the twenty-fourth chapter of Luke, verses 32 and 44. He opens the scriptures to the disciples in verse 32, and they begin to understand him. Right at the end they begin to understand, but they didn’t understand the scriptures before. Then finally it tells us, beginning with Moses and the prophets He went right through the scriptures after the Resurrection, explaining all things concerning himself. He wanted them to have those scriptures. So don’t think because we have living prophets they can supersede the scriptures—they don’t. You notice that the prophets cling more to the scriptures than anyone else. What’s the New Testament? In Matthew the angel comes, and all he does is quote the scriptures; he said nothing else. All throughout

the scriptures, the Lord when he preaches, and the apostles when they write the letters, are quoting the scriptures. We have this on-going library, and they all tell the same story. Jarom says he is not going to bother to repeat because you have it all here. You have it all if you pay attention to it.

423,424 Jarom 1:3,4 Why is it necessary to go into detail like this? It's the way people are. These are the same people we have been talking about all along. Verse 3: "Behold, it is expedient that much should be done among this people, because of the hardness of their hearts, and the deafness of their ears, and the blindness of their minds, and the stiffness of their necks; nevertheless, God is exceedingly merciful unto them, and has not as yet swept them off from the face of the land [another very hopeful record and commentary, isn't it?]. And there are many among us who have many revelations, for they are not all stiffnecked [ah, there's a ray of light, you see—this is why things go on] and have faith, have communion with the Holy Spirit." You know in the beginning of Luke, it uses the words Holy Ghost in the Bible. Mary was filled with the Holy Ghost. When they went to the temple and brought the Lord, Simeon was filled with the Holy Ghost. He repeated again, "I was told by the Holy Ghost that I would live to see the Messiah." Then the Prophetess Anna in the temple was filled with the Holy Ghost and bestowed a blessing. So the Holy Ghost, operative before the coming of Christ, is preparatory. The Holy Ghost prepares them that way, and it's that way here. "The Holy Spirit, which maketh manifest unto the children of men, according to their faith."

424 Jarom 1:5-7; Mormon 4:5 Well, two hundred years had passed away now, "and the people of Nephi had waxed strong in the land [this is twenty years later; Jarom and the priests have had twenty-one years working on them, and they have improved; it's very obvious]. They observed to keep the law of Moses and the sabbath day holy unto the Lord. And they profaned not; neither did they blaspheme. And the laws of the land were exceedingly strict [they are still keeping it, and the people are behaving]. And they were scattered upon much of the face of the land, and the

Lamanites also. And they were exceedingly more numerous than were they of the Nephites; and they loved murder [and all that sort of thing].... They came many times against us, the Nephites, to battle.” What could they do? They had to arm themselves, but the only defense they had was righteousness, it tells us here. Notice he says, “But our kings and our leaders were mighty men in the faith of the Lord; and they taught the people the ways of the Lord; wherefore, we withstood the Lamanites [because they were taught the ways of the Lord] and swept them away out of our lands.” Then they began to fortify their cities. There was pressure on them all the time, but throughout the Book of Mormon all battles take place on Nephite territory, every one until right at the end. In Mormon 4:5 he says, if we hadn’t invaded their territory, we would never have been defeated. Because of that the Lord told us we were asking for it, and we were destroyed. But their wars were always defensive and always the three-times rule. They let them invade, but it was always fought on Nephite territory. Don’t go fooling around with other nations. Remember, that’s what the Lord told Israel when they went into Palestine. He said, you are going to have them on your borders, but no matter how they treat you, no matter how dangerous they are, this is a commandment—you shall not meddle in their affairs [paraphrased]. This is a very important thing.

424,425 Jarom 1 8-11 “And we multiplied exceedingly, and spread upon the face of the land, and became exceedingly rich in gold.” They had quite a culture. There was great emphasis on metal work, and that’s what you do find. Whether you dig in Peru or in the Mississippi Valley, you find metal objects and things mixed with metal—malachite and turquoise and things like that. They got themselves prepared for war, but that didn’t keep the peace. “And thus being prepared to meet the Lamanites, they did not prosper against us. But the word of the Lord was verified, which he spake unto our fathers, saying that: Inasmuch as ye will keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land [there’s the secret]. And it came to pass that the prophets of the Lord did threaten the people of Nephi [all the time; they had to keep that up, you see; arms didn’t

make them secure], according to the word of God, that if they did not keep the commandments, but should fall into transgression, they should be destroyed from off the face of the land [that was the danger]. Then they kept the law of Moses, “and the intent for which it was given; persuading them to look forward unto the Messiah, and believe in him to come as though he already was.” We should live as if the Messiah had come, shouldn't we, because he has come before our time? In the sacrament we remind ourselves of that as much as we can. But we still put off the hard things until he gets here. We say, “Well, when he gets here we will start living the Law of Consecration, etc.” Is that what he wants? Verse 12: “And it came to pass that by so doing they kept them from being destroyed upon the face of the land [that's what happened; they preached to them constantly, threatening them, etc.]; for they did prick their hearts with the word, continually stirring them up to repentance.” It wasn't their military might; they were destroyed at the peak of their preparedness and their experience. The most magnificent army ever on the continent was that of the Nephites destroyed at Cumorah. As a matter of fact, smaller armies had beaten larger armies of Lamanites again and again, as Mormon tells us before they came up to Cumorah. That wasn't the thing at all. They had to keep running to stand still though. They were continually stirred up to repentance. Then we have more sidelines on race, etc. “After the manner of wars, and contentions, and dissensions.” That means going off and joining other groups in the woods or wherever they were. Dissensions are where people dissent, fall away, and go off and join other groups. That's in internal affairs, etc. And it talks about separate journals being kept. There are other plates of Nephi. If you want to read about the wars, that's where you read about them. The kings had their own records, and the priests had theirs—just as in Egypt from the twenty-second to the twenty-sixth dynasty when Lehi was living.

425,426      Omni 1:1-3 Now we come to the book of Omni, whose name is very obvious. It means belonging to Amon. Remember, Amon is the name in the Book of Mormon. There are more Ammon names and Amon compounds than

anything else because actually in the time of Lehi Amon was the god of the empire. It was the one time when God filled the earth. Amon filled the earth with the Egyptian Empire. They claimed everything, but always in the name of Amon. We have the marvelous sermons of Wenamun, the Egyptian ambassador to the court of Biblos. He was on business there when he talked about “Amon who rules all the seas and rules all nations.” We have songs in which we refer to Adam-ondi-Ahman and Amon as an epithet for God. Actually, it means “the one who is not known, the secret one whom we can’t name, whose name is not known to us.” But Omni means he who belongs to Amon. “I, Omni, being commanded by my father, Jarom, that I should write somewhat upon these plates, to preserve our genealogy. Wherefore, in my days, I would that ye should know that I fought much with the sword.... But behold, I of myself am a wicked man, and I have not kept the statutes and the commandments of the Lord as I ought to have done [no wonder things aren’t going too well here]. And it came to pass that two hundred and seventy and six years had passed away, and we had many seasons of peace; and we had many seasons of serious war and bloodshed.... And I make an end.” This man is not a very inspired writer. He admits he is wicked; he’s at least honest. He’s a patriot and a military hero, but not a particularly good man, although honest.

426 Omni 1:5,6 Then Amaron writes next. There’s your nation-ending again. Off-hand Amaron means our beloved. Amar is from Mary and Mar. It means good, great, and all sorts of things. That root is very rich. Mar is a chief or a prince. The chief friend of the king is a mar. It means friendly, friend, or anything like that. In verse 5 we get another chronology; it says “three hundred and twenty years had passed away” at that time. Well, you take off the 179 years that Enos talked about, and you get for these three men—Jarom, Omni, and Amaron—141 years, which gives them an average of 47 years. That is not fabulous by any means, but the chronology is moving right along here. Notice that the arms didn’t prevail after all. Verse 5: “And the more wicked part of the Nephites were destroyed.” How

very selective of the war, but wars are selective, aren't they. That [the destruction of the Nephites] illustrates the fact that "inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall not prosper in the land."

426,427 Omni 1:7 Wilford Woodruff made a point on this idea that prospering is a sign of virtue and righteousness. He said that many Latter-day Saints have the idea that since you prosper if you are virtuous, therefore wealth proves virtue. You must be righteous if you are rich. If you are so righteous, why aren't you rich, in other words? But the Book of Mormon explains that constantly. It says the settlement comes when the cup is full, when the fruit is ripe. The Lord gives you as much rope as you want. He lets you go all the way, as far as that goes. You can be as rich as you want. He won't mind about that, but you catch up with yourself. And I said that wars are selective. Look at verse 7: "Wherefore, the Lord did visit them in great judgment; nevertheless, he did spare the righteous that they should not perish, but did deliver them out of the hands of their enemies." This is where security lies then, and war is strangely selective—not just in great numbers, but individually. That's a thing one is very much aware of in the field. I could a tale unfold on that theme.

427 Omni ;1:8 "And it came to pass that I did deliver the plates unto my brother Chemish." Now that's an obvious word. Chemish is the same as the Latin Quintus. It means the fifth, either the fifth son, or the fifth in line of succession. Is he fifth? He looks more like sixth. If you have Jacob, Enos, Jarom, Omni, and Amaron, that would make him the sixth. Unless it is after Jacob; who knows? Anyway it is a perfectly good Semitic name which means the fifth. It's a common proper name too. There's the town of Chemish. As I said, the Latin word Quintus means the same thing, the fifth son. "Now I, Chemish, write what few things I write, in the same book with my brother [you see he wasn't the eldest; he was a younger brother, so he could very well have been the fifth brother, the fifth in the line; Nephi himself was the fourth; Sam was older than he was, I suppose]; for behold, I saw the last which he wrote." This is

how it was passed on; the records overlap here. He wrote it with his own hand while I looked at it; then he handed it to me to make sure I delivered it with my hand [paraphrased]. This is a typical colophon. The main thing in passing down a record is to ascertain where it comes from and how authentic it is. That is the Egyptian colophon which was always put on. "This was written by my own fingers," the scribe says, "and it was taken from a book in library So-and-So or it is from my own knowledge." That's what they keep doing in the Book of Mormon. The colophon is very important, you see. The Book of Mormon starts out with it, telling who wrote it and what time period it is. We call it colophon which means "something glued on, something added." When you had a roll how would you know what was in the roll? The roll goes around like this, looking at the end. Then you would glue on something here to tell you who wrote and what it is in the library so you can find it. Otherwise, you'd have to unroll the whole darn thing to find out what was at the beginning of it. You glue it on; it's not part of the roll itself, just something added. We have these things in the Book of Mormon, especially in the first part.

427,428      Omni 1:10,11 The next one is Abinadom. Now we have a good old Canaanite word. This is a Canaanite name. I'll bet ABINADOM means ABINETCHEM. It's a combination, a typical Canaanite name. It means ABI (my father) is friendly, gentle, loving. NETEM means sweet or agreeable in Egyptian, and it's a borrowed word. So Abinetchem could very well mean "my father is benevolent or sweet." These are guesses, but they are good. If you are inventing names, he couldn't do better. He is hitting targets right and left here. Verse 10: "Behold, I, Abinadom, am the son of Chemish. Behold, it came to pass that I saw much war and contention [and his was their way of life],... and I, with my own sword, have taken the lives of many of the Lamanites in the defense of my brethren. [And here are the parallel records:] And behold, the record of this people is engraven upon plates which is had by the kings, according to the generations [but they are sinking pretty low now; they are running down with all this fighting, etc.] and I know



of no revelation save that which has been written, neither prophecy [he knows of no revelation or prophecy in his day; the prophets were silent]; wherefore, that which is sufficient is written [because they don't want any more]." Well, it's time to do something now, so what happens? Ah here's the Rechabite motif again! Somebody has to move out, just as Lehi had to move out of Jerusalem and Nephi had to move out, leave their community, and go out by himself with the people of Nephi. They have become faithless and corrupt now, so somebody has to leave them. This is what Mosiah does; he decides to cut out with all the people he can get to go. This is that procedure which is the Rechabite formula. It's time to leave them.

428 Omni 1:12-15 "Behold, I am Amaleki, the son of Abinadom [of course, that's a simple name; Amaleki simply means my king]. Behold, I will speak unto you somewhat concerning Mosiah [a very interesting name, a combination of Moses and Yahweh, Jehovah; we come to him later and see why that is so, why his father gave him that name], who was made king over the land of Zarahemla." We haven't heard of Zarahemla so far. It always got me because there's an important trading center in the middle of the Sahara that goes by the name of DAR AL-HAMRA which means RED CITY. Of course, it depends on the dialect. Zarahemla means red city, but what attracts me about that is that the Hopis say that their people came from the "great Red City of the South when it was destroyed because of the wickedness of the people." They were led by prophets and came north. They call it "the great Red City of the South." Of course Zarahemla means red city. "For behold, he being warned of the Lord that he should flee out of the land of Nephi, and as many as would hearken unto the voice of the Lord should also depart out of the land with him, into the wilderness." So here we have the story again of fleeing out. They are leaving the Nephite society now and going out with Mosiah himself. Into the wilderness is where they go with their tents and all the rest of it. It's the story of the frontier. "And they departed out of the land into the wilderness as many as would hearken unto the voice of the Lord; and they were led by many preachings and prophesyings [there's DAS

WANDERNDE GOTTESVOLK, God's wandering people, like the Puritans, like the Pilgrims, etc. Like the Saints coming to the valley here, they were led by preachings and prophesyings]. And they were admonished continually by the word of God; and they were led by the power of his arm, through the wilderness until they came down into the land which is called the land of Zarahemla [how far that was we don't know]. And they discovered a people, who were called the people of Zarahemla."

429 We will stop with the people of Zarahemla because they weren't Nephites at all, and they are much more numerous than the Nephites. They are the main people in the Book of Mormon. We talk about "Nephites or Lamanites." Forget about that; these are the people Zarahemla. And they rejoiced exceedingly because they [Mosiah's group] brought a record of the Jews and they were another group that came from Palestine. Here in one verse they cover what has taken fifty pages to describe. Nephi describes in fifty pages how his people got from Jerusalem to here. Now these people came from Jerusalem too, and we are told how they came here in one verse. So this obviously is not a history of the Mulekites. This is the Mulekites that came here; it doesn't give them the name yet. It was a general migration. They would have left about 586 B.C., and they would have been here now about 350 years living this way. We get some racial complications here because they were visited by Coriantumr who was king of the greatest tribe of the Jaredites up north who had come there thousands of years earlier. They overlapped because he lived with them for nine months. So it goes.

# **Lecture 27 Omni; Words of Mormon; Mosiah 1**

**[Tower of Nimrod]  
[People of Zarahemla Come From Jerusalem]  
[Mosiah Appointed King of Zarahemla]  
The End of the Small Plates  
[Final Destruction is the Theme  
of the Words of Mormon]  
[Ancient Script Compared]  
The Coronation of Mosiah**

430 Omni 1:15,16 Well, now we've got to the point where in one verse they take care of the history of a larger people than the Nephites. It just simply says they crossed the ocean and landed here, and that was that. Why don't they talk about that? That's verses 15 and 16 of Omni here. Why doesn't he tell us more about a lot of people? We're going to get a lot of that here. Remember, the Book of Mormon is the religious history of one family, and that's all. They have told us that time and again. The kings and the wars are all there, but they're in other books—and they're small things. And so we go on here, and he's going to tell us about it. They had many wars and contentions. I'm not going to tell you about them, because I'm not even telling you about the Nephite wars, he says. Their language had become corrupted because they had no records. How corrupted had it become? Remember, they had come from Jerusalem, but they were a "mixed bag." When we

talked about Lachish, we saw they were mixed that way. They picked up people from everywhere. We don't know to this day—there's no agreement—whether the language talked in Palestine in the time of Christ was Aramaic or whether it was Hebrew. Some even think it was Greek. But their language became corrupted. Well, what do they mean corrupted? Any language you speak is the language of the people. That's what the LINGUA is; it's the LINGUA FRANCA, the language that everybody speaks. That's the official language, no matter how much has been changed. Every language has changed immensely. They had been separated from Jerusalem for 350 years, so they couldn't understand each other. It was a dialectical difference.

431 Omni 1:14,18 It wasn't just the people of Zarahemla, but there was a leader called Zarahemla among them. He seems to have been a very genial person; he agreed to all sorts of things. He united with Mosiah and agreed to have him made king. Notice in the verse 14 here it says, "And also Zarahemla rejoiced exceedingly." He was just too happy for words to find out about these records, because they [the Nephites] brought the plates. They knew about that. He was a leader, apparently; he knew more about it than most of them. Verse 18: "And it came to pass that after they were taught in the language of Mosiah [Would that take years and years? No, just a week or so. The language, being the two dialects, they would begin to understand each other—it wouldn't take very long], Zarahemla gave a genealogy of his fathers, according to his memory."

432 Omni 1:18,19 [A Samoan Brother Nibley knows] can recite the genealogy back twenty or thirty generations by heart. You see, they know their genealogy—the islanders do. And that's the sort of thing these people had done. Zarahemla knew it by heart because he was the chief. "Zarahemla gave a genealogy of his fathers according to his memory." See, this isn't the people, this is the man speaking. He was their chief, as we'd say. And that's the way it's done. Verse 19: And, the people of Zarahemla, and of Mosiah, did unite together; and Mosiah was appointed to be their king," with no objection from Zarahemla. As I

said he was a genial person, only too glad to have them. But Mosiah is the king only of the migrant Nephites and of the Mulekites here. He's not the king of the Nephites back home. Remember, Mosiah had to move out back here in verse 11. There was no revelation, no prophecy. The lights went out, and it was time to move on. Then Mosiah moved out with his people, and he took the records with him. So he was a person of importance there.

432,433      Omni 1:20 “It came to pass in the days of Mosiah there was a large stone brought unto him with engravings on it; and he did interpret the engravings on it by the gift and power of God.” How does that happen? Well, they started shipping crates of cuneiform documents from the British Museum in the middle of the nineteenth century. Grotefend and others were excavating in Ninevah. When they started getting these records, George Smith used to pile them up. He worked with them. Nobody knew how to read them. It was a complete [mystery] until it was finally cracked later. But George Smith suddenly was able to read them—just by dealing with them, just by handling them and looking at them. The same thing happened with Llewellyn Griffith. He could read Meroitic. That was the language of upper Egypt when the people were driven out of Jerusalem. The priests of Thebes fled and went to the upper Nile. They took Egyptian records with them, and they developed a language of their own called Meroitic that no one can read to this day. But Llewellyn Griffith could read it. He was a Welshman with a Welshman's mystic gift for language, I suppose. None of his pupils ever picked it up. But he had that great intuitive gift. An intuitive gift is a very important thing in something like Egyptian. Well, some of you language people would know that on a good day, it's like falling off a log. Everything is perfectly clear, and you wonder whatever bothered you. But if you have a day or haven't had enough sleep or if you lose confidence, you might as well forget it. You're not going to read anything that day. You can't do it if you don't have the faith and the confidence. But when you feel “gung ho” and have perfect confidence, you can just sail along with a Coptic or Aramaic text—no trouble at all. But other times, don't even give it

a try. So, it is a gift, and you know that from your own experience.

433 Omni 1:21; Ether 2:1 Well, they brought these stones. He [Mosiah] had the gift and power of God, and he told what they said. Coriantumr was discovered by the people of Zarahemla. They had been there 350 years. And he lived with them for nine months, which shows that the Jaredites survived at least until 500 B.C. They went [hundreds] of years before that, maybe back to 2000 B.C., and I think much earlier. It doesn't make any difference. They were the people who were destroyed upon the north country. The woods Indians, plains Indians, and others like that had a great culture up there once, but they had been destroyed. They came from the tower. Notice that it doesn't say the Tower of Babel. That's very important. As a matter of fact, we learn from the book of Ether in the Book of Mormon that the name isn't Babel, but it's Nimrod, which is exactly what it was. Remember it went north in the valley of Nimrod. Now we know through tradition and everything else that the tower was called "Nimrod's Tower," because Babel didn't come in until later. That was [determined] from the philological events, etc. And so they came out from the tower. It's careful not to say the "Tower of Babel," which was later. But Nimrod's Tower was that one, and it tells us in the first verse of the second chapter of the book of Ether that they went up into the valley northward where there never had men been, and it was the valley of Nimrod. Nimrod was the big name at that time. I've written a great deal about Nimrod, but we won't go into that here. At that time the language was confounded, "and their bones lay scattered in the land northward." That's a literary expression. Their bones could still be there, but in various stages of decomposition, I suppose. That's from their latest war.

433 Omni 1:23-26 Amaleki is writing this, you see. "Behold, I, Amaleki, was born in the days of Mosiah [he's looking back on history]; and I have lived to see his death; and Benjamin, his son, reigneth in his stead." And under King Benjamin the two governments fuse, of course.

Benjamin defended Zarahemla from Lamanite attacks; he drove them out of the land of Zarahemla. Verse 25: "I began to be old; and, having no seed ..." Amaleki has no children, so he hands the records over to King Benjamin. Remember that they had been kept in separate archives—the royal archives of the doings of state and the wars, etc., and the family archive of the revelations and inspirations that's been handed down. (That's the one we're getting.) But here they're joined in one, and from now on King Benjamin keeps all the records in his archive. And Benjamin has a passion for these records. He's a great antiquarian, we'll find out. He's keeping the records after he ceases to be king. Benjamin is the man to have them, so the two governments fuse, and the plates are now in the hands of one king again. And Amaleki says, "I shall deliver up these plates unto him, exhorting all men to come unto God, the Holy One of Israel, and believe in prophesying, and in revelations, and in the ministering of angels, and in the gift of speaking with tongues." Notice "in the gift of speaking with tongues, and in the gift of interpreting of languages." They had these gifts among them, which indicates they had more than one language. They must have had quite a number of languages or dialects, as far as the case may be. Then in verse 26 he testifies to the Atonement. "Yea, come unto him, and offer your souls as an offering to him, and continue in fasting and praying, and endure to the end [that's the formula: fasting, praying, and enduring to the end] and as the Lord liveth you will be saved."

434 Omni 1:27 Now, there were a certain number that wanted to go back. Remember, Mosiah had led them out when things had become too corrupt in the land of Nephites. Now people wanted to go back to the old country. They were homesick and wanted to see what it was like back there—like we want to go back to Jackson County. Verse 27: "A certain number went up into the wilderness to return to the land of Nephi; for there was a large number who were desirous to possess the land of their inheritance." That was their country. Perhaps it was a better country than the one they were in, I don't know. So they migrated back again, but here's a nice psychological touch, a true

touch. Many an enterprise has been ruined by a leader with too much authority. Notice that their leader was a strong and mighty man. And the same sort of thing happens here. There was contention, and they were all slain save fifty in the wilderness. They went back to Zarahemla but they still didn't give up. [They wanted] to go back again. So finally he ends up, "It came to pass they also took others ... into the wilderness. And I, Amaleki, had a brother, who also went with them; and I have not since known concerning them."

434,435      Now this shows the planting of the tribes and the customs. They were moving all over like this. We're just following one line, a red line of history here. You see what was happening on the continent all over the place. His brother went out, and he had not heard of them since. Well, they could have settled. There were people wandering in all directions here. It's a very complex picture here, mixing with others. So now we come to the Words of Mormon, and please note the date of this. This was written 500 years after the other books we've been reading because he was summarizing later. He was looking back on the whole thing after the curtain had gone down. He's the epilogue, you see. Remember the formula from Job: "I alone am saved to tell thee." So the lone survivor is an important theme in literature and history—the one who survives and tells the history. There are some famous ones in literature, of course. "And now I, Mormon ... have witnessed almost all the destruction of my people the Nephites." So he comes at the end, and this is the theme. Is this going to spoil the ending, incidentally? We know how the Book of Mormon is going to end, now. Does this spoil it, if you know how it's going to turn out? Well, no. This is the theme of the Book of Mormon. They want us to keep it constantly in mind. This is a bleak theme, speaking of "fear and trembling," you see. Who's going to write our epitaph here? So from the first page to the last, we're reminded the people were destroyed, the people were destroyed, the people were destroyed. Why bother us with that story? Well, it bothers us. They insist on bothering us with that story.

435      Words of Mormon 1:1-5 "I witnessed almost all the



destruction of my people, the Nephites.... I deliver these records into the hands of my son; and it supposeth me that he will witness the entire destruction of my people [they were scattered and destroyed, as you know, but they're still alive—many of them went out and joined the Lamanites; great droves of them were doing it at that time] But may God grant that he may survive them, that he may write somewhat concerning them, and somewhat concerning Christ, that perhaps someday it may profit them.” You notice [this means] after the destruction. That’s like comparing Jerusalem. Jerusalem was destroyed from time to time, it says. That’s the same thing. The people were destroyed. Well, if they were all destroyed, how can it profit them someday? But it doesn’t mean that. There are survivors, as far as that goes. But **DESTRUO**, as I said, means to break down the structure of the society, that sort of thing. So they were all destroyed, and it [the record] is for them. Well, he searched among the records, and he had plenty of time. “I searched among the records which had been delivered to my hands, and I found these plates [so there must have been quite a pile of them], which contained this small account of the prophets, from Jacob down to King Benjamin, and also many of the words of Nephi [those are the books we’ve just had here; he gave them to us]. And the things which are upon these plates pleasing me, because of the prophecies of the coming of Christ; and my fathers knowing that many of them have been fulfilled ... down to this day [and there’s more to come—that’s why he is going to deliver this—there’s more to come after him; he’s not the last one].... Wherefore, I chose these things, to finish my record upon them, which remainder of my record I shall take from the plates of Nephi.”

436 Words of Mormon 1:7-9 Now why these plates? Verse 7: “And I do this for a wise purpose; for thus it whispereth me, according to the workings of the Spirit of the Lord which is in me [he has this very strong feeling that these records have a purpose and he has to save them], wherefore he worketh in me to do according to his will.” Notice he’s not talking about visitations of angels or revelations or things like that, but this is the intense feeling

a person can have. He says that it works in him. It is the Spirit of the Lord which is in him and whispers to him. He has a strong urge. There are many levels of revelation in the Book of Mormon; it's a very interesting thing. For example, Lehi says, "I have dreamed a dream; in other words, I have seen a vision." Well, where do you draw the line as long as it is inspiration and it's true? Verse 8: "And my prayer to God is concerning my brethren, that they may once again come to the knowledge of God [so his brethren are going to survive, and it's addressed to them primarily], yea, the redemption of Christ; that they may once again be a delightful people [there's nothing said about change of race or color or anything like that; they are so mixed up by now, but delightful is what he means—delighting the Lord]. And now I, Mormon, proceed to finish out my record, which I take from the plates of Nephi."

436 Words of Mormon 1:10,11 Amaleki is the last one we read; he is the last one just before the Words of Mormon. The book of Omni ends with Amaleki. Verse 10: "After Amaleki had delivered up these plates into the hands of king Benjamin [notice, he is repeating here], he took them and put them with the other plates [so the two records are now combined], which contained records which had been handed down by the kings.... And they were handed down from king Benjamin, from generation to generation until they have fallen into my hands [they had been handed down for more than five hundred years]... for there are great things written upon them, out of which my people and their brethren shall be judged at the great and last day."

436,437 Words of Mormon 1:13,14 Benjamin had some contention among his people. (Notice that he [Mormon] picks up with Benjamin; that's where it is going to start.) Here in these two verses [13 and 14], he confirms what [the book of] Omni told us. Amaleki said the same thing in verse 24 of Omni: King Benjamin gathered together his armies and stood against them with his sword. He drove out the Lamanites and brought peace to them. What about this sword of Laban always popping up? Remember, in ancient and medieval times nothing was more valuable than a good

sword, because nothing was rarer. The steel of a Damascus sword could cut through an anvil, so it is said. When you had a sword like that, it was extremely precious. You know the most famous sword of all, the sword in the stone, which was Excalibur. That sword was handed down. The person who had that sword would have more than human power. There are some famous swords. Saladin had one. I'm trying to think of some other famous swords, but you can see why a sword would be very valuable and why it would be among the national treasures. The sword of Laban was handed down among the national treasures.

437 Words of Mormon 1:14-15 "They did contend against the Lamanites until they had driven them out of all the lands of their inheritance." Notice that Nephites always fight on their own ground; they claim no other. He drove them out of the lands of the Nephites' inheritance. Then there came false Christs and all these false teachers. There were a lot of them going around. They were allowed to teach, as far as that goes. But they [were punished] not according to their beliefs or teachings, but according to their crimes. They committed them and were caught in their crimes. False teachers were punished according to their crimes. Remember, Satan was cast out of heaven not because he voted against the Great Plan that the Council passed on (we have many accounts of this in places like the ABBATON; but because when he lost he took to arms. He refused to accept the verdict. Immediately, he revolted with a third of the hosts of heaven, and they were cast out. It was not because he dissented and had a different idea, but because he resorted to violence and force to put it over.

437 Words of Mormon 1:16 And [in verse 16] then there were many dissensions. Here's your race problem again. Dissension means that the people left and went out to be by themselves or to join other groups. This happened with the Nehors on a big scale, and it was still going on. There were "many dissensions away unto the Lamanites." The Lamanites were getting almost a steady influx of Nephite blood, so there was this mixture going on all the time. This idea that anything you find in the Western Hemisphere is

either Nephite or Lamanite is utterly absurd. The Nephites and Lamanites were minorities by this time. As it told us before, they called them Lamanites and called them Nephites as political labels. That's what they were.

437 Words of Mormon 1:17,18 “For behold, King Benjamin was a holy man and he did reign over his people in righteousness; and there were many holy men in the land.” It was a sacral state, but they had to use “much sharpness,” the same as ever, to keep people in line. Using this “much sharpness” was the price of peace. Verse 18: “Wherefore, with the help of these, king Benjamin, by laboring with all the might of his body and the faculty of his whole soul, and also the prophets, did once more establish peace in the land.” Notice the “faculty of his whole soul” and the “might of his body.” He used all the strength he could. The faculty of his soul wasn't exerted on the Lamanites; this isn't a military action we are talking about. This is what it takes. Exerting his whole soul, in cooperation with the prophets, he established peace in the land.

437,438 Mosiah 1:1,2 Now we come to the marvelous book of Mosiah. I have been rushing to get to it because I wanted to get to it this semester. I'm very happy that we can, and here we go. Notice that it begins with the happy land. They've had a long period of prosperity now. “And now there was no more contention in all the land of Zarahemla.” The curtain rises on a very happy scene, and they are going to have a big national celebration to celebrate their victory, their success, their long years of peace. Their king was a great hero with them because of all the things he had done. “King Benjamin had continual peace all the remainder of his days.” There was a long peace here, as I said. This is a happy situation that we begin with. The subject of this first chapter is communication. This whole introductory passage is talking about plates and records. The second chapter is the one that takes up. I said that Benjamin was a great antiquarian. He was just the one to take the records because he was very much concerned with this. He called his three sons—Mosiah, Helorum, and Helaman—”and he caused that they should be taught in all the language of his fathers

[see this complexity], that thereby they might become men of understanding.” The language had changed, and they needed to use the original texts (we should take some hints from this) so they could understand the scriptures when they read them “concerning the prophecies which had been spoken by the mouths of their fathers.” They were speaking another language now.

Mosiah 1:3,4 They had many prophets, you notice. Verse 3: “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.” This is in spite of the fact that they had many prophets. Don't get the idea that because we have a prophet we don't have to pay much attention to the scriptures. There's this idea that we have a living prophet to answer all our questions and solve all our problems for us—nothing could be more absurd than that. Here he says, “Were it not for these plates ... we must have suffered in ignorance, even at this present time, not knowing the mysteries of God.” Well, don't prophets reveal mysteries of God? The Lord told Joseph Smith, if I've told you a thing once I won't tell you again; if it's in the scriptures, don't ask me about it. You look it up yourself; I'm not going to repeat these things. If we don't take advantage of the revelations we have, we are not going to have more. If the heavens have been silent, there is a good reason for it. Verse 4: “For it were not possible that our father, Lehi, could have remembered all these things ... 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.” We saw these engravings that Martin Harris had from the plates.

438 Mosiah 1:4 The bronze or brass plates were the record of the Hebrews that was kept by the Jews. Well, they were kept by the Jews since they left Egypt, too. And in 750 B.C. they introduced this very convenient Demotic script, which could be written in a tiny fraction of what it takes for Hebrew, which is very clumsy. Notice there has never been a cursive Hebrew. You always have to write each letter separate right to this day. They don't run letters together

speedily as they do in any normal cursive—that's crazy. For that reason, right at the beginning they could very well have adopted that Demotic script, whatever it was. But he [Lehi] could read these things and teach them to his children. So they had been handed down, and “thereby they could teach them to their children, and so fulfilling the commandments of God, even down to this present time.” This is 470 years later. Most ancient records are kept by priests also, and almost never in the vernacular. In the Middle Ages if you were keeping a record of anything it had to be in Latin. That was required, although Latin was not the language of any of the nations of Europe at that time. Spain, Italy, and France—they were all dialects of Latin, but they kept the records in classical, Ciceronian Latin. They all kept records. If you are going to read any chronicles, we have the Monumenta here from the Middle Ages. We have the Patrologia. We have great collections of medieval records here, and all in Latin. Unless they are from the East; then they had to be in Greek. In other places they had to be in Coptic, which was invented for the purpose. Coptic was invented for the purpose of keeping records. It's a very interesting thing. They use fourteen old Egyptian hieroglyphs, mix Greek letters with them, and get Coptic. So that's the way you do; you have a special technique of record keeping and a special language for the record keepers. They have to learn it for the sake of continuity because a language changes. Of course, there are exceptions. We have the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, which are very valuable—the Laud and the Parker Manuscripts, Anglo-Saxon writings that go way back. They are in Old English.

439 Words of Mormon 1:17 Question: Didn't the common people depend on the leaders to be taught the gospel? Answer: Yes, they depended very much on these prophets. You notice there were many holy men who always had to work on it. The people weren't so excited about it; they didn't come to meetings very often. As he said here, “And they did speak the word of God with power and with authority; and they did use much sharpness because of the stiffneckedness of the people” (Words of Mormon, verse 17). So the holy men always had to “crack down” on them.

There was that sort of thing.

439 Mosiah 1:6 “O my sons, I would that ye should remember that these sayings are true, and also that these records are true, And behold, also the plates of Nephi... and we can know of their surety because we have them before our eyes.” He testified to them.

439,440 Moses 1:38 Speaking of these records here, remember the Lord says, “There is no end to my works or my words.” As I’ve written down here, every creature wants to get in on everything it can. Before you can get in on a project, you must know about it. Without the records you are living in a closet, and we have a closet mentality. And without the records we have no memory; we have the scope of an insect. We can see only what is immediately in front of us. William James defines intelligence as “the ability to react to an absent stimulus.” If I can react to an absent stimulus (something that isn’t here), I must have some imagination. But a bug can only react if you touch it, if you are immediately in its presence. Of course, a lot of animals have instinct; they know absent stimuli, preparing for earthquakes, and things like that. But if I don’t know anything at all of the past, I have no memory and I have no identity. Your memory is your identity. A person who has lost his memory has lost his identity. It’s the same with a people; they do the same thing. We feel sorry for the insect; it doesn’t know what it is missing. But we are built to be high-powered information centers, every one of us. The data pours in, and we are battered by impressions from all sides—not just radioactive materials. Rays, and particles, and many forms of energy are trying to get our attention. So these impressions and this potential knowledge is pouring in on you all day. You can become immune to it. You can build up a great defense system against it—an immunization system. You can immunize yourself from knowledge of all sorts, and we are rather good at that because it can be very disturbing sometimes.

440 Mosiah 1:9,10 Well, Benjamin waxed old then, so he must have taught for many years. There has been a regular

priestly collegium going on here. He talks about these holy men and how they worked together, etc. Verse 9: “He waxed old, and he saw that he must very soon go the way of all the earth; therefore, he thought it expedient that he should confer the kingdom upon one of his sons [this is the way he went about it]. Therefore, he had Mosiah brought before him.” Years ago in the old priesthood manual, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, that has been reprinted many times, I had a breakdown of this coronation rite. In the Bible in the book of Kings, you read that there were many kings and how they got to be kings. We are told how they got to the throne and how they lost the throne. There’s a lot said about it. But not one instance in the Bible tells us how a coronation as performed— what they did at a coronation. Yet that is one thing on which we are best informed in all ancient records. In Egypt we know every step of a coronation, and in Babylon, and wherever you go, because it’s in the government records. The coronation is a great ritual. It’s a solemn rite, and it’s a historical event, too. There’s the great assembly. I wrote this here about the great assembly.

442 Mosiah 1:10 “Therefore, he had Mosiah brought before him; and these are the words which he spake unto him saying [he is ritualizing it, making it very formal]: My son, I would that ye should make a proclamation [Well, why don’t you make it? The thing is that the king can’t announce that the king is dead. The son has to announce that there is going to be a new crown] throughout all this land among all this people, or the people of Zarahemla, and the people of Mosiah.” Notice that they are still separate people. You are going to send out the HEROR. The proclamation is very important. Anyone who refuses to come will be banished from the kingdom for three years; that’s the universal rule. You had to come to Rome when you received the notice, and you had to come in person. If you didn’t come to acclaim the king at that time, you would be an outlaw. You would be banished from the kingdom. This is very important. It tells in the book of Zechariah, And all that do not come up to Jerusalem in the proper season to hail the king there, on them shall be no rain; they shall



be cut off [paraphrased from Zechariah 14:17]. You don't have any rights if you don't come as a true citizen, and you have to become registered on that day, for example, in Rome or Greece when they chose a king. You had to be on the list of the incisi, the incised. They had big lead tablets or plates swinging on sort of doors in the forum. The names of all the citizens were written on them, and you had to come and check your name to show that you were there—that you were an INCISUS, one whose name was incised. If you weren't one of the INCISI, you weren't a citizen; you had no rights whatever. It was very important for people to come and acclaim at the ACCLAMATIO. I wrote an article on the ACCLAMATIO, too. It was to acclaim the new king or ruler, and this is what they are going to have happen.

442,443      Mosiah 2:5,6 Well, he goes on here, but if you have all read the account in Mosiah of the coronation, let's just race through Nathan the Babylonian's story here. All the elders assemble, and they set the new king apart. Then they proclaim that all the people must come together and bring presents. Here in the Book of Mormon they all bring their first-fruits. The king can only be crowned at new year, the beginning of the new age. It's the Festival of the Booths. They brought their tents, and they all camped with their tents facing the temple. That's not in the Bible, but in the new Temple Scroll that's exactly what happens. There's a special arrangement made for all the tribes. Each tribe has its place, and a place is established for their booths. BOOTH is a very interesting word. It's a good old English word, but it's the same as the Semitic word BAYT, a house where you throw stuff together and live. And there's our word ABIDE, to live somewhere temporarily. You abide in a BOOTH. There was the BODTHSTETHER of Iceland, where the people would come to the great assembly to elect the king, and there was the LOGBERG, the mountain of the law. From the top of that the GODI would read the law to the people, just as Benjamin reads the law to the people here. The high priest was called the GODI. The people would all come and camp around there in booths, and the rings from those booths still remain. They had stones to hold them down. It tells us in the Bible they were as a shelter

from the sun and the rain because it was temporary. They were camping there. The law is “Thou shalt not celebrate the Passover within thy gates.” Everybody had to come as a pilgrim, and everybody had to bring a gift in all these places. So they came as pilgrims and lived in their booths. It tells us in the Temple Scroll that every booth faced the temple hill. They completely surrounded it and faced the temple, and they lived in their families separately, as we are told in Mosiah here. As the Talmud said, they must feast and sit in rings in their families with their back to each other [paraphrased]. There were certain rules. It tells us the same thing here, that they sat separated by families (Mosiah 2:5).

443 Mosiah 2:7 Note that Benjamin had a tower put up so he could speak from the top of it; he did the same thing here. There’s no mention of towers like that in the Bible, but here it is. It was ten-and-a-half feet high, four-and-a-half feet wide, and broad enough to have three seats. In the center is the big seat for the king, and either side are his two counselors—the head of the School of Sura on the right, and the head of the School of Pumbeditha on the left. (You always have to have the president and his two counselors.) The king is the one who sits on the central throne, the empty throne. It was covered with costly cloths and things. Underneath this tower was a choir of young men, chosen for their voices and for their nobility. They had to belong to illustrious families; it was a very great honor to belong to the choir. They played an important part. Benjamin said, “I’ll go down when the heavenly choirs sing.” The choir sang the “song of redeeming love” that Alma talks about later on.

443,444 Mosiah 2:9 Then they open with prayer in which they ask for revelation, that the Spirit of the Lord might be with them. Then there is the sabbath hymn. The people sing an antiphonal hymn—the people sing and the chorus replies. Then there is the universal acclamation; they all stand up and go along with this. It is an antiphonal chorus. Then they sing the Creation Hymn which is very important. They are celebrating the foundation of the world. Here they sing a song called “By the Spirit of All

Living Things.” The meeting is opened by the HAZZAN. Remember, he is the person who takes the place of the old king. The HAZZAN is a CANTOR today, the one who sings in the synagogue. But the HAZZAN is the PRAECENTOR who takes the place of the old king and acts as master of ceremonies. He is the principal person there, but the other king is the one who gives the great sermon, of course. Then they give the holiness shouts. The people repeat the prayer, the QIDDUSH, which is a prayer for the dead actually, so that all people are present on this occasion. Remember, this is a great feast of the ancestors throughout the world when they make this great assembly. The QIDDUSH is actually the hymn for the dead and has to do with work for the dead. But while the people say it in a low voice, the chorus under the tower gives the hallelujah shouts. Then all the people arise and utter the Eighteen Benedictions which have to do with the creation of the world. Some people think the Eighteen Benedictions were the oldest text there was. Then they are all seated and the king appears. It says the king has been kept in concealment until now. He mounts the tower and, of course, all the people arise then. The king sits down, but the people remain standing while the two counselors come in and sit down on either side. Then all the people sit down again. But there is also a PROSKYNESIS. They fall down in the presence of the king. We saw that before. When people are overwhelmed or want to appear overwhelmed, they go through the act of falling down on their faces. That happens here.

444 I've gone through it all with quite an elaborate bibliography of sources here. It's in lesson 23 of *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, the old priesthood manual. I didn't realize I had broken it down into such small sections. They really follow very closely along what should be done. As I said, we are sticking to the Jewish record here now. Then what happens? Over the king's head alone there is a magnificent baldachin cover, and the seats of the other two are separated. They are not right close to his. In the Temple Scroll living in the tents and the baldachin are important. Then the master of ceremonies, the HAZZAN, enters the tent in which the king is sitting and gives him a blessing

in a low voice that only he, the people on the stand, and the chorus underneath can hear. It's a confidential thing, and all the other people hear is the chorus shouting Amen at the end of certain sentences on certain occasions. So they know that big things are taking place. It's all hush, hush and in a low voice when the HAZZAN goes in. It's the old king handing over personally the rule to his son. It's done in a mystical sort of fashion, with great silence and reverence. He comes from the tent and gives his royal blessing, and the old king blesses the new king.

445 It's now the king's time to give a great sermon. King Benjamin's sermon is delivered on this occasion—the old king in this case. But the HAZZAN gives the first sermon, and the king gives the second. It's Benjamin who gives the sermon. You may think, "Why not Mosiah? He's the one who is going to be king?" They both give sermons here. He gives the sermon, and that's the first part of the ceremony. Notice, there are two orations in the Book of Mormon here. That's the first part, and the second part is inaugurated by the new king himself. He opens the proceedings [Nathan ha-Babli] says. He gives a sermon on the subject of HAPERUSH SHEL OTO HA-YOM, which is the proper sermon for the particular day. It's the New Year sermon which introduces the creation, the new year, the restoration of life, and all this sort of thing. This is the sermon he gives for the day, it says, "for that very day." Or he gives permission for one of his counselors to give the sermon; he can do that, too.

445 Mosiah 1:2 And it's very interesting that there was an interpreter there because they are not speaking the language of the people here. The whole thing is in Hebrew, and these people speak Aramaic. They have been living in Babylon a long time. They are speaking the eastern Aramaic dialect, so they don't understand the sermon. So again you see this business of the two languages being used. Benjamin had his sons learn the languages because they now read from the Book of the Law. The people can't understand it; there's an interpreter there all the time. Next the king himself personally interprets the Book of the Law.

That's exactly what Mosiah does, interpret the law to the people. For the rest of the Book of Mormon the law that Benjamin and Mosiah gave them is the basic law right to the end. That's the organic law of the Nephites, and it's based on the law of Moses. It's their reading and application of it.

447 You shouldn't find it too hard to understand what goes on here. It's the sermons that count because they are directed to us, and he lowers the beam. It's interesting that this is the great occasion of the national celebration. If ever there was a successful people, standing tall, [it is these people], and all he does is throw cold water on the whole thing. He just drenches them in it. He says, You fools; you don't see things as they are at all. Don't get any big ideas about yourselves. Look out!

## Lecture 28 Mosiah 1-2

**[Proclamation Call to a National Assembly]  
King Benjamin's Speech  
{Benjamin: a Different King of King}  
[God is the Real King]  
[Keep the Commands and You Will Prosper]  
[Benjamin Wants to Rid His  
Garments of Their Sins]  
[Importance of Complete Written  
Records by the Church]  
[An Angel Speaks to Benjamin]  
[Biblical Parallelism Described]  
[Theme of Fear and Trembling  
in Benjamin's Discourse]**

448,449 Mosiah 1:10 What we have today is a very good lesson on the subject [of fear and trembling], so let's get started here. Now we have that most marvelous book of Mosiah. We can't spend any more time talking about the setup of the meeting, the protocol etc., which is so thoroughly accurate. I was going to bring a book of as many as eight articles of mine on the subject of the great assembly, the national assembly, in ancient times. It's loaded with evidence of all kinds, but the time is far spent. But notice certain things. Every ancient people held their yearly assembly, they held it in the new year, and the king presided. When they had the new king, it was the New Age, and they brought their first-fruits and all the rest. This was not only in Israel, but in at least every other major ancient

civilization. Notice he brings them together; we are in the first chapter here. He has to send out the proclamation; that's the HEROR. When you get the proclamation, you must come or be banished from the kingdom for three [years]. Then you have to go on to give the people the name. It's very important on this occasion to have a new name because he says later on, "This day has he spiritually begotten you." This is the GENETHLIA, the NATALE, the day of birth. Not only nature is born anew, but all things are born anew. That's why sometimes it's held in the spring equinox. (I can talk faster than this, and I may have to because we have to cover a lot of ground. Be sure you get everything down. No, watch your Book of Mormon very closely here.) In Mosiah 1 he is going to give them a new name and a new identity. See, every time you get a new life or a new advancement, a new step or initiation, you get a new identity, a new persona. When a person is born he gets christened. He is not christened until he joins the church. This is the theory in the Christian world. With us it used to be always on the eighth day, circumcision, etc. You have a new name, and when you get married you get another new name. If you get any office, you also get another new name. Then at your funeral you get another identity, etc. They go through the same ritual every time. And, of course, when you reach maturity there's a very important thing—the rites of initiation that come with maturity. In the Christian churches it's when you are confirmed, around the age of fifteen. In all primitive tribes and [other societies] when a person becomes mature—reaches manhood or womanhood—there is that rite. Then they get a new name; they are identified with another group entirely. Boys are no longer with the women, etc. They now belong to a man's PHRATRY. These are the rites of puberty. So each time you get a new name, a new identity, a new appearance, new marks, and a new title or degree.

449,450      Mosiah 2:4 This is the new king putting out the proclamation because the old king is usually dead before this happens. The new king is the successor. Now we come to a great nation holding its national celebration. They are celebrating their brilliant victories and their long

peace. Thanks to King Benjamin there is a great upbeat time of looking back with pride and achievement. Oh, don't fool yourself; watch what happens here. They gather at the temple; we saw that. Remember, they always have a census when they come in because you must be one of the INCISI. You must register your name. This was in Israel, too. You must register your name when you go up to the temple. They didn't bother to do it because there were so many. They would take their time with it. They brought their firstlings; it was the new year all right. Notice in chapter 2, verse 4, what keeps a society great. It is having "just men to be their teachers, and also a just man to be their king, who had established peace in the land ... and filled with love towards God and all men." This is your great society, you might say, but you see nothing about power and gain, about the military might and wealth of the nation. Wealth is no measure of its greatness, and military might isn't either. If so, the Assyrians and Genghis Khan's society would be the greatest culture of all time. Just men, just peace, and love toward all men [are the important things].

450 Mosiah 2:5 So they came to the temple and camped around according to the old custom, as we know from the Temple Scroll now. It was discovered in the 1950s and first published in 1976. [They camped] according to their families—"every family being separate one from another," as they had to. They ate with their backs to each other, in fact. Their tents faced the door of the temple, and he had a tower erected. That's a novelty we didn't know about at all until we get Nathan the Babylonian.

450,451 Mosiah 2:9 Then he starts his speech to them. These are the words; they are going to quote his speech to us with the people all around the temple. He began to speak from the tower. The people couldn't all [hear] it; the words were written and sent forth. We actually have circulars of the king's speech that was circulated by the king of Persia in distant provinces of the empire. Copies of a speech from the time of Darius have been picked up. So if you couldn't attend the king's speech, he would have it copied and circulated in the empire, as we have it here. Verse



9: "And these are the words which he spake and caused to be written." And you notice how it begins: "Open your ears that ye may hear." This is a SILENTIWN. No matter what the culture was, they always used the Roman word—whether it was the Byzantine court and then it went into the Russian court when the Russians took over the Byzantine Empire. In East or West, everywhere they used this word SILENTIUM because everybody had to be absolutely silent and give ear. In Israel it's called the SHM, LISTEN. Notice: "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." It's a solemn and awesome occasion. There is going to be a dramatization here that will set forth the basic principles. They are going to be in contact with the other world. This is a very important thing.

451 Mosiah 2:10 First of all he tells them, Don't be afraid of me; I'm just a man [paraphrased]. This is a spooky occasion. Remember, when you leave this great celebration in Israel, according to the law of Moses, everyone must eat the last meal with his sandals on his feet, his staff in his hand, and wearing his robe. They are going to be ready for a quick getaway. Before dawn they must leave the site and leave no food there. They must have eaten everything, and no one must look back when they leave. This is very important. The Spirit is there and you are going to leave. It's a very holy and sacred occasion; something very powerful is happening there, which the Romans called MACTUS. He says, Don't be afraid of me. This is nothing spooky; I'm just a man [paraphrased]. This is important to know. Verse 10: "I have not commanded you to come up hither that ye should fear me, or that ye should think that I of myself am more than a mortal man."

451,452 Mosiah 2:11,12; D & C 101:77-79 I'm just a man like yourselves, he says. Notice in verse 11 that he has his authority from three sources: "I have been chosen by this people, and consecrated by my father." He has it in the patriarchal line; he has been consecrated by his father. But he has been chosen first of all. Notice that all the kings, including Nephi, had to be chosen by the people. He was

chosen by the people, and that's what the people come for—to acclaim the king. We have the psalms of David that describe various aspects of this situation. The climax of the meeting is the ACCLAMATIO when everyone acclaims. That's why you come up. All must acclaim in a single voice. We'll see they do it in a single voice, and you will see how that is possible. That is because of the HAZZAN, the PRAECENTOR. He waves a flag and says what they are to shout, and then they all shout it together. This is the way they did it everywhere, including Israel. It may seem funny to you that people reply in one voice—"we have seen; we understand; we accept"—using exactly the same formula. It's because they have been told what to say, and they are being led by a choral leader. They shout together that way, and it's very important to have him there. Sometimes the king himself would take that role, as in a Greek play. "I have been chosen by this people, and consecrated by my father, and was suffered by the hand of the Lord that I should be a ruler and a king over this people." That suffered is very good; it's the same word that is used with respect to the Constitution—"which I have suffered to be established by the hand of righteous men." That means to permit it, to go along with it. It doesn't mean to initiate, as we read in the Doctrine and Covenants 101, verse 77 and following, especially verse 79. And he mentions it in the next verse: "I say unto you that as I have been suffered to spend my days in your service, even up to this time." Not that I have been commanded, but I have been allowed; I have been given that privilege. I have been suffered to do it. It may not be God's plan, but he will allow men to do it their way, because it is for their own good.

452 Mosiah 2:11-14 No one can come empty handed into the presence of the king. And Nathan the Babylonian said, "Everyone brings as costly a gift as he can possibly afford." But Benjamin says, none of that. He mentions it and talks about it, but says, I'm not that kind of a king. This is an important thing. There has been an article come out recently in the STUDI E MATERIALI the Italian journal of ancient religion, a very good journal. The main theme of the king's speech when he speaks in Israel is to formally

deny that he is the king. The real king is God; he makes that clear. He says, "You've elected me your king, but the real king is God." It was the theme of the king's speech in Israel, and, sure enough, it's the theme of the king's speech right here in Mosiah's book. He says here: "I... have not sought gold nor silver nor any manner of riches of you [you are not supposed to bring up any of that for me at all; that's not what I'm after]; Neither have I suffered that ye should be confined in dungeons [he wouldn't put up with anything like that], nor that ye should make slaves one of another." Where does the king get his power? He is going to tell you where he gets his power. He hasn't suffered it. How does he stop it? Does he lock them up in jail? Does he make slaves of them if they do that? Does he put them in dungeons? No, he says they don't have dungeons; they don't make slaves. Well, how does he do it? Notice in verses 13 and 14 that he does it two ways: First, by teaching, and then by example. "Nor even have I suffered that ye should commit any manner of wickedness, and have taught you that ye should keep the commandments of the Lord, in all things which he hath commanded you [and I have set the example]. And even I, myself, have labored with mine own hands that I might serve you, and that ye should not be laden with taxes, and that there should nothing come upon you which was grievous to be borne." Notice again that to suffer is to tolerate, to condone. The countermeasure was teaching and example, and this is how it worked. Does this mean no taxes at all? Many people love this part of the Book of Mormon about not being laden with taxes. This means not grievous taxes, "grievous to be borne." As he says a little later on, "We pray the Lord not to suffer us to be tempted beyond what we can bear." Of course, that's what we talk about in the Lord's prayer, "beyond what we can bear." But Benjamin said, I have not permitted you to be "laden with taxes grievous to be borne."

453 Mosiah 2:15 Then he says, "I can answer a clear conscience before God this day." This is an important thing, too. To whom is the king answerable? He is not answerable to the people or anyone else. It's just as in the temple. He is answerable to no one but God—as if that wasn't enough.

But, of course, the doctrine of majesty in the ancient world is that the king is answerable to no one, with the divine right of kings.

454 To whom do you make your covenants, in the temple or anywhere else? With God and God alone. We don't swear oaths to each other, even when you get married. Remember, the covenant for both the man and the woman is with God directly and nobody else. As Heber C. Kimball said, "All the others are present only as witnesses." That's why you're not going to be punished if you break them. Nobody is going to send out a posse and run you down because you have broken your covenants or promises. No, that's between you and the Lord entirely. It's made that way in the first place, and he is the only one you will have to answer to. You don't have to answer to other people. They don't know your condition. I don't know yours, and you don't know mine.

454 Mosiah 2:16,17 Now, he goes on here. God is the employer and the paymaster here. Verse 16: "Because I said unto you that I had spent my days in your service, I do not desire to boast, for I have only been in the service of God." Again you see, I haven't been serving you—I have been serving God actually. If you ask him what he wants done, that's the way he wants you to serve him. He's the employer and the paymaster, but how does he want you to serve him? As Solomon said at the dedication of the temple, What kind of a house can we build for you? The heaven is your throne, and the earth is your footstool. What kind of a temple can we build you? [paraphrased]. Well, we can't at all, of course. It's for our benefit that the work is done, but God wants you to serve him. I heard a good one yesterday: "There are a lot of Latter-day Saints who are eager to serve God on an advisory basis." And that's as far as it goes. In verse 17 he tells them that applies to them, too. "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." If you want to serve God, this is how. This is how God wants us to serve him.

455 Mosiah 2:18-21 "Behold, ye have called me your

king; and if I, whom ye call your king, do labor to serve you, then ought not ye to labor to serve one another?" This is how I serve; I labor to serve you as your king, not to expand my power or my might. It can't be, "Me first. I want it all and I want it now." You labor to serve one another. He is rubbing it in here. "And behold also, if I, whom ye call your king, who has spent his days in your service, and yet has been in the service of God, do merit any thanks from you, O how you ought to thank your heavenly King! [He is the real king—this is the point. This is the theme of the king's address from the tower. We know this from other cases, too], I say unto you, my brethren, that if you should render all the thanks and praise which your whole soul has power to possess ... if ye should serve him who has created you from the beginning, and is preserving you from day to day, ... I say, if ye should serve him with all your whole souls [twenty-four hours a day] yet ye would be unprofitable servants." 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 his 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 ye 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.

455,456      Mosiah 2:22,23      "And behold, all that he requires of you is to keep his commandments; and he has promised you that if ye would keep [them] 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." Then he mentions three points here. Notice this thing is one of the constants. It isn't just the law of the promised land; it applies everywhere. Here he goes now: "And now, in the first place, he hath created you, and granted unto you your lives, for which ye are indebted unto him." You have no control over that whatever—this idea of life and death. Then to make somebody work, because

if he won't you threaten his life. He'll starve if he doesn't work on those terms, and they did. When Brigham Young told about his first mission, it was terrifying and horrifying what happened. He said that people were dropping dead in the streets. They couldn't find work because it had been a bad winter. Nobody would give them anything to eat, and they would actually drop dead in the streets in Liverpool, Manchester, and places like that. The poverty was simply terrible and nobody would lift a finger. At the same time the nobility and the upper classes were rolling in wealth. The wealth of the empire started pouring in then. He [Brigham Young] didn't think that was right. But God has created you and all that, and why should you deny anyone the right even to live unless he works on certain terms. If he is forced, he has no other choice than to take a minimum in order to keep body and soul together, which barely does it. You've got him where you want him, and you take advantage of his necessity to stay alive.

456 Mosiah 2:24 "And secondly, he doth require that ye should do as he hath commanded you." First, he has created you. You should be grateful to him; therefore, in view of that you should do anything he tells you to do because you are his creatures. And thirdly, if you do that he blesses you immediately. You don't have to wait around for sometime later on to see if it happens. This is a very interesting thing. You say, "I've waited and waited and nothing has happened. I've prayed." It's like the old woman who prayed that the hill would be removed from behind her house. It was a nuisance. She got up in the morning and it wasn't moved. She said, "Oh, I knew it wouldn't be moved anyway." That's the kind of faith [some people] have. But really, if you do it [keep the commandments], you immediately get results—no waiting. So much for being independent. "And ye are still indebted unto him, and are, and will be, forever and ever; therefore, of what have ye to boast?" Remember, everybody was happy and bursting with fun. They were feasting and all this sort of thing. Now he really starts pouring cold water on it. He's the "wet blanket" here.

456 Mosiah 2:25-26 “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.” Where is the hype here? Where is the national pride? Where is the standing tall? Why does he put them down this way? This is no way to celebrate. He tells us that he is being very realistic about this thing. In the next verse he says, don’t think that I am putting you down. “I, whom ye call your king, am no better than ye yourselves are; I am also of the dust. And ye behold that I am old, and am about to yield up this mortal frame to its mother earth. Therefore, as I said unto you that I had served you, walking with a clear conscience before God [you must serve one another], even so I at this time have caused that ye should assemble yourselves together, that I might be found blameless.” He had his stewardship, and that’s why he was doing this. It’s the same as Paul said in Corinthians. He said, I thank God that I baptized none of you because all Asia has turned against me [paraphrased]. His mission in Asia seemed to have been a failure. He said, I thank God I baptized none of you. I am clean. I’ve done my mission, I performed my duty, I did what I was called to do. He shook his garments and said, Now I am clear. The blood is on your garments now; it’s not on mine anymore [paraphrased].

456,457 Mosiah 2:27-30 “That I might be found blameless, and that your blood should not come upon me, when I shall stand to be judged of God of the things whereof he hath commanded me concerning you.” Notice that it is very personal. God has commanded me to do certain things concerning you, and I have done them. Now you have to do certain things because that is what I have been told to tell you. I want to “rid my garments of your blood, at this period of time when I am about to go down to my grave, that I might go down in peace, and my immortal spirit may join the choirs above in singing the praises of a just God.” Remember, there is a very well-trained choir of distinguished young men singing under the platform. It was covered over so nobody could see it. In some of the rites, the choir would hear it and cry “amen” when the whole thing was done in

whispers up on the stand there. They were there for the Creation Hymn; they were very important. Verse 29: “I have caused that ye should assemble yourselves together, that I might declare unto you that I can no longer be your king [we are to transmit the rule of the kingdom now; that’s the purpose of the meeting].... My son Mosiah is a king and a ruler over you.” Not until he is acclaimed; he has to receive the acclamation. The ACCLAMATIO is very important. If you fail to raise your voice and acclaim the king, you haven’t supported him. Then you are in a state of rebellion.

457 Mosiah 2:31-33 So Benjamin is going to hand it over to his son Mosiah. And he is following the commandments of his father. Notice that it is being handed down in the patriarchal order now. Verse 31: “As ye have kept my commandments, and also the commandments of my father, and have prospered, and have been kept from falling into the hands of your enemies, even so if ye shall keep the commandments of my son [Benjamin’s father was Mosiah, and then his son is another Mosiah], or the commandments of God which shall be delivered unto you by him [you listen to his commandments; I’m handing over the authority to him now], ye shall prosper in the land, and your enemies shall have no power over you.” Keep the commandments of God given to you by him. If you don’t do it no amount of armaments is going to save you, as we learn in 1 Nephi 2. Here is the real danger in verse 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.... 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, have transgressed the law of God contrary to his own knowledge.” That’s the important point. He did it quite deliberately and quite openly. This is what your “hell fire” is.

458 Mosiah 2:34 Then back to this theme again of your obligations. Don’t think you are independent. Verse 34: “Ye are eternally indebted to your heavenly Father, to render to him [not to anyone else. Do what he wants you



to do; that's all that's required of you, and he has told you what he wants you to do] all that you have and are; and also have been taught concerning the records." He thinks these records are very important—the obligation to keep conference reports, etc. You know the Church has always kept the best records in the world. Herbert Bolton at Berkeley was in charge of all the American history; he was the "big wheel" there. I remember when he stood in front of a collection of Church records in the Historian's Office in Salt Lake City. He was aghast and said, "These are the only perfect records in the world." Everything was in there—every meeting, everybody who attended the meetings, and everything else. You may think it's all useless. It probably is useless, but the record is complete. We insist on keeping a complete record. We are told occasionally by writers such as Nephi and Mosiah in the Book of Mormon, "I don't know exactly why [we are keeping it]." Nephi said, "Maybe it is to preserve the language of our fathers," but it didn't preserve the language. But we have to keep these records; we don't know what they will be useful for at some future day. It's a very interesting thing.

459 Mosiah 2:35-38 Notice he tells them to keep a record of "all that has been spoken by our fathers until now [no matter how repetitious it is, etc.—that's very important to keep the traditions]. And behold, also, they spake that which was commanded them of the Lord; therefore, they are just and true [here's your tradition again]. 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, 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." See, the Spirit of the Lord guides you. It won't promise you instant prosperity; it will guide you and give you a sense of the things you should be doing. If you don't, you are in a state of "open rebellion against God; therefore he listeth to obey the evil spirit.... Therefore if that man repenteth not, and remaineth and dieth an enemy to God, the demands of divine justice ..." Notice that he shifts this whole thing

to the larger scale. This is on a cosmic pattern and has to do with the other world. That's where atonement takes place. That's where we return to Heavenly Father and are redeemed, bought back again. See all that re business. You are redeemed, you are resurrected, you are raised up again, you return and go back. TESHUVAH means to return and YESHTVAH, sit down once you get there. We mentioned the reconciliation. It all has to do with going back to a prior condition that you lived in before you came here—it's very clear. As I said, the only alternative to that is a simplistic predestination which just stops everything dead cold. "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 [this is what hell is, of course], and doth fill his breast with guilt, and pain, and anguish, which is like an unquenchable fire, whose flame ascendeth up forever and ever."

459,460 Mosiah 2:39,40 In this life we have a very lively sense of other people's guilt, but we don't have a very lively sense of our own, do we? When you get there, you'll be the one that knows about it. They won't have to bring forth too many books to tell you what you have been up to; you will know everything. You will remember everything vividly, it says. See, you've missed your chance, no matter how many chances you have hereafter. For example, if you flunked out of school at an earlier time, you may be given other chances. That's fine, but that will always set you back. You'll always regret it and be disadvantaged by it. So "his final doom is to endure a never-ending torment." These are terms we must accept if we want eternity. But he'll have to face the never-ending torment of the fact that he had the great chance here, and he muffed it—he spoiled it himself, he willfully lost it. That will never cease to bother him. That doesn't mean he will always cook in the fire and things like that at all. Don't lose it here! This may be the greatest chance you ever had. Verse 40: "I pray that ye should awake to a remembrance of the awful situation of those that have fallen into transgression." How high the stakes are here, and it's an awful situation. I have to remind you of that, he says, because we are always falling into it.

460 Mosiah 2:41; Moses 5:11 “I would desire that ye should consider on the blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God.” He wants them to be blessed and happy. After all, that’s the whole thing. We are talking about fear and trembling, but that’s not the object of our being here. We should have joy here and now—there’s no reason why you shouldn’t. Remember what Eve said to Adam in the book of Moses [Moses 5:11]. Those who keep the commandments “are blessed in all things, both temporal and spiritual.” If you want prosperity, that’s what you do—you keep the commandments of God. We are capable of happiness. The word joy appears 167 times in the Book of Mormon. (With a computer you can check up on anything like that and have an authoritative statement. We have to quantify everything now, don’t we? The quantification of the obvious.) You will be blessed in all things, and what you are doing is “making for a state of never-ending happiness.” Isn’t that asking for a lot? If you have a chance of getting that, what a fool you would be to miss it. The punishment is not too severe. The punishment is in missing this: Being blessed and happy here in things temporal and spiritual, and then a state of never-ending happiness after this. See, the idea of Christmas is to give us a glimpse of what the world could be. In “A Christmas Carol,” Scrooge gets a look. But the point is that it should be Christmas every day. The purpose of the great assembly, the meeting of the Jews on Yom Kippur to celebrate these things, and the Festival of the Booths is to remind them (he’s going to bring out that theme of equality here) of the time when all men lived as they should—when the earth was a paradise and a Zion. That’s the way it should be. We rehearse it once a year just to show that it can be done. Just one day of the year we show that it can be done. Then it’s MACTUS and the bonds are let down. All your formalities, all your stiffness, all your class consciousness must be thrown aside now. This is a SATURNALIA. They said IA SATURNALIA, and then they were all equal, all brothers. At the feast everybody got enough to eat, etc. That’s what we try to do at Christmas; we allow the poor one good meal a [year] and feel very virtuous because of that. One day they get proper nourishment, but the rest of the time they can

take care of themselves. But it's supposed to rehearse the eternal order of things every day.

463 Mosiah 3:1-3; Luke 2:10 [Benjamin] said, "Behold, I have things to tell you concerning that which is to come." This is the assembly, this is your future, and it's the king's obligation to prophesy on that occasion. But in this case he is going to tell them what an angel told him. Verse 2: "And the things which I shall 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. 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." This "glad tidings of great joy" is very interesting. It's repeated in Alma the same way. Of course, that comes from Luke 2:10. This is the season for that. There were certain shepherds in the field watching their flocks, and the angel of God came and said, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy." This is an oriental form. In Greek it has been strained, and in English even more strained. But it's the MASDAR. When you want to make something extremely emphatic, the MASDAR is to repeat the verbal noun. For example, in Arabic it's not right to say, "He rejoiced greatly." You have to say, "He rejoiced a great rejoicing or a great gladness." So we have that form there, joy and gladness; or fear and trembling. You always intensify it. That's biblical parallelism. Professor Popper wrote his dissertation on that subject of biblical parallelism. You emphasize it by repeating the same thing in another word. There shall be joy and gladness, fear and trembling, light and truth—things like that. They are the same thing, and you put them here. This formula, "glad tidings of great joy," and other such combinations are used as intensives. As I said, it's a required form in the language the shepherds would have been speaking. It sounds funny in Greek is all. It's not lifted; I mean this is the proper form as it should be expressed. This is the way it is in the Bible. The angel uses this on more than one occasion. It's always an angel that says this, "Awake, glad tidings of great joy."

463 Mosiah 3:4-7 The angel scares the daylights out of

everyone he appears to because it is a culture shock. He comes from this other world, and it's more than they can take. The first thing he says is, "Don't be afraid." He even has to say that to Mary. And Zacharias was stuck dumb; he was absolutely paralyzed after his session with the angel. Nobody had seen an angel for for a hundred years, and it came as a shock. But here the angel came to him with the usual formula. He is not quoting the scripture here; he is just stating the formula. They are speaking the same language here that they spoke in Israel, I dare say. But this is the Christmas message here. Notice this. The birth of Christ is exactly what he is predicting here. Verse 4: "For the Lord hath heard thy prayers, and hath judged of thy righteousness, and hath sent me to declare unto thee that thou mayest rejoice; and that thou mayest declare unto thy people, that they may also be filled with joy. For behold, the time cometh, and is not far distant, that with power, the Lord Omnipotent... shall come down from heaven among the children of men [so this is a Christmas celebration here; this is very apposite to the time, isn't it?] 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 lo, he shall suffer temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death [and then there's one more thing to note here—why he suffers so much anguish]; for behold, blood cometh from every pore." As I said, that used to be considered one of the serious breaks in the Book of Mormon. [People said], "Ah, Joseph Smith really slipped up there." No, PORUS is an ancient Latin word that was used by the doctors. Galen and Hippocrates knew all about pores. They didn't know about circulation of the blood. The answer was, "Well, nobody knew about circulation of the blood until Harvey in the seventeenth century." But they did know that people could sweat, and even sweat blood, too. They used the word PORUS, the old Latin word for it.

463 Mosiah 3:7 Why did he suffer like this? Not because of the crown of thorns or the nails or the whipping, however bad that may have been. That had nothing to do with it.

Remember, mental anguish is far worse than any physical anguish. Notice: “So great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and abominations of his people.” That is what caused the suffering, of course. Read in 3 Nephi 19. We will have to take up here next time and finish his speech. You can see the theme of “fear and trembling” runs like a red thread through this discourse.

## Lecture 29 Mosiah 3-5

**King Benjamin's Speech**  
**[King Benjamin's Speech in Three Parts]**  
**[Part One: Celebration of Good Times]**  
**[Part Two: Don't let Prosperity Change You]**  
**[Part Three: Greed and**  
**Inequality Will Destroy You]**  
**[The Law of Moses Requires**  
**Also the Atonement of Christ]**  
**[Christ Will Come: They consider Him a Man]**  
**["For behold are we not all beggars"]**  
**[I would that ye should impart**  
**of your substance to the poor.]"**  
**[Celebrate a Universal Birthday]**

464 Here's a very interesting statistic for today with regard to our book of Mosiah when he [King Benjamin] talks about if a person puts up his petition and you refuse to give him something to eat. What happens to you? You have grave need of repentance when you say, "Well, I've earned mine, etc." Never in the Book of Mormon is there such a thing as the "worthy needy." If a person is in need, he is in need and that's that. Whether he's worthy or not has absolutely nothing to do with it.

465 We are on [Benjamin's] great speech, and the speech has three parts. Notice in the first part they are celebrating. He is telling them that the good times they have been having are just a prelude to great things to follow and to

eternal life when they can have joy and salvation forever if they do the right thing. The second part is saying don't let it go to your head. Notice how he cuts them down in that second part—you are nothing, you are the dust, you poor miserable creatures, etc. What a way to be talking to the people at a great national celebration. Then the third part is devoted entirely to economics—what do you mean if it goes to your heads? Then you will get this idea of inequality resulting in greed. He says it will destroy you here and it will damn you forever.

466 Mosiah 3;9,13; John 1:5 “And lo he cometh unto his own.” Now, this is how it happens. He cometh unto his own, and he tells us, for example, in verse 13 who his own are. “And the Lord hath sent his holy prophets among all the children of men [his own will carry on the work for him when he isn't there. He comes to his own with that purpose that salvation, through them, might come to the children of men who have faith on his name. They will carry abroad the name and the doctrine. They will perpetuate and spread the name because, of course, he is not there anymore. You have his name to call upon. He comes to his chosen people, and he trusts them to carry on the name to the rest of the human race—Alma 7 is marvelous on that—”that salvation might come unto the children of men even through faith on his name.” But he will be turned down cold. Remember the beginning of John: “And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not” (John 1:5). He came to his own and his own received him not. They wouldn't receive him, but there's that very important addition—just a few did. But to as many as did receive him “to them he gave power to become the sons of God.” What a prize! It is worth it going through all that. But he is going to be refused by the world and by his own people, as we all know from the New Testament, of course. Verse 9: “They shall consider him a man, and say that he hath a devil, and shall scourge him, and shall crucify him.” But his blood atones for the sins of those, who aren't guilty and have never heard the gospel. They won't be damned forever because that has been taken care of. “But wo, wo unto him who knoweth that he rebelleth against God! [That's a different story entirely,



but the door is open to him, too.] For salvation cometh to none except it be through repentance and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ.” That’s why he keeps hammering away at repentance here.

466,467      Mosiah 3:13 Here are his own: “And the Lord God hath sent his holy prophets among all the children of men, to declare these to every kindred, nation, and tongue [believe that and this is the first step; this is what they must do in verse 13 here] that thereby whosoever should believe that Christ should come, the same might receive remission of their sins, and rejoice with exceeding great joy, even as though he had already come among them.” Don’t worry what dispensation you live in. You are going to have the same trials and you are going to have just the same privileges that any other dispensation has. The strongest test in the Book of Mormon as to whether people will have faith on the mission of Jesus Christ is what? Well, he hadn’t come yet. There were people like Sherem and Korihor and the rest who said, “He hasn’t come yet. We don’t believe there is such a thing. We are supposed to look forward to something we haven’t seen. He won’t even come here.” Then after he had come, what happened? Well, in the 1940s and since then in the theology of all the Christian churches— led by such people as Rudolf Bultmann, the great Lutheran pastor, and Albert Schweitzer—the big thing was to demythologize and de-eschatologize Jesus. Anything that is supernatural to his story, the story about his being the Son of God, that’s a myth, so you demythologize it. You move that out of the New Testament, and then you have the real story of Jesus, the good teacher, the kind man. That was it; that’s as far as you have.

457      So, he is just as hard to accept after his coming, though he did come and we have the record, a very good record, especially John’s record. Remember, John is the only New Testament figure mentioned in the Book of Mormon. They take the record and they demythologize it; they take the whole message out. But the hardest time of all was when he was actually there. That was the hardest time to believe him. They wouldn’t believe him then because

they could see he was just a man. They said, Abraham we know and Moses we know. He is our prophet. But who is this guy? [paraphrased]. And they wouldn't accept him at all. It is an equal trial for any dispensation. If he hasn't come yet, are you going to believe? If he has already gone long ago, two thousand years ago, who can believe that old mythology? That's a test, too. When he was actually there, that was the hardest of all. They said, "Look, you can see he's a man; that's all there is to it." So he was crucified and the rest.

467 Mosiah 3:14 "Yet the Lord God saw that his people were a stiffnecked people [he knew that they would refuse him] and he appointed unto them a law, even the law of Moses." That was for their weakness. It catered to their weakness, of course—as much of the law as they could take. But they didn't understand "that the law of Moses availeth nothing except it were through the atonement of his blood." It has to be completed; you have to have the original. They thought that just by keeping the law they would be saved.

467 Now he talks a lot about the little children. Why the emphasis on little children? Because the little children are the only segment of society that offer no resistance to the message. They qualify and they offer no resistance because they are not guilt-ridden. Because they don't feel guilty, they are not afraid to accept. As little children they are naive, etc. But the reason we shy off and don't want to go for all of this is that we have a subconscious burden of guilt. We have been doing wrong things and are not up to it. That's why whenever an angel appears everybody is scared stiff, and the angel must say, "Don't be afraid; I have a good message." It's that culture shock. We don't want to be exposed to another world—to what we might be, etc. It's too much to take. It's terrifying, utterly terrifying. You would sooner go crazy, and people do, rather than that.

468 Mosiah 3:16-18 "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.... There is no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men [can you think of any other way?" We follow this pattern because it was the pattern that was laid down in the eternities in the Council in Heaven], only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent. For behold he judgeth, and his judgment is just [men are not],... but men drink damnation to their own souls." Don't try to do it yourself; it's like do-it-yourself brain surgery, or something like that, trying to save yourself. The reason is this. We might atone for our sins in this life in the things we do. We might make up for them, etc. But we are talking about eternal life and going on forever. There is nothing you can do to equip yourself for that—to qualify yourself for that by removing all your sins, etc. We are going to talk about men being carnal, sensual and devilish. We have to get along here, anyway.

It [salvation] is only "through the atoning blood of Christ, the Lord God Omnipotent. For the natural man [here it is] is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, [you shy off, you won't have anything to do with it]... unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit." The thing is this. See, you have blown it now. There is only one thing you can do—put yourself entirely into my [the Savior's] hands, and it will all be taken care of. But you have to do something. By putting yourselves into my hands, the Lord says, that doesn't mean you just lie down and don't do anything, which is by grace you are saved. We have heard that a million times—NUR GNADE, only grace. There is nothing you can do about it; you are reborn and that is all there is to it, etc. No, it's as if you had taken off in a small plane at the airport. You have never flown in your life. You turn on the key and you are suddenly in the air. What do you do? The tower says, "All right, put yourself in my hands. Do exactly as I tell you, and I can get you there. But don't try to do anything on your own or fix it yourself. Do as I tell you to do."

469 Mosiah 3:19,20 So that's the enticing—the Holy

Spirit wants to help you. He is enticing and doing everything he can to bring you into his orbit. He wants you to cooperate and do something for yourself, and he will tell you what to do. But you have to put off the natural man. As I said, you have to be able to put yourself entirely into his hands (don't try to do the thing yourself) and become as a child. Why the emphasis on children? As I said, children will accept the gospel. They will accept the plan and obey and will offer no resistance. Verse 20: And the gospel "shall spread throughout every nation, kindred, tongue, and people." Again, the universality of the Book of Mormon. When all have had the chance, "And behold, when that time cometh, none shall be found blameless before God, except it be little children, [the others can save themselves] only through repentance and faith on the name of [Jesus Christ] the Lord God Omnipotent." Why the name? Because he is all we have. The account of him is the story—the name that we refer to. You have no identity without your name. You have to know who you are talking about, you see. If you say, "Let's worship So-and-So," I would say, "Well, give me his name. I don't know who to worship unless you tell me who I am worshipping."

469 Mosiah 3:24,25 "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." That's good, according to his works. It's not whether you believe or not, but what you do, or your intentions. People were burned at the stake for believing the wrong things, not for anything they did that was bad, but for believing—that was the standard thing. And it's [man is] in the singular, you notice, every man according to his works. You won't be judged with the society. You are not judged by your associates or anything like that, but what you do is what you will be judged by no matter what society you are in. Solzhenitsyn wrote the great book *The Gulag Archipelago*. We used to read it, but we don't read it anymore. It's too big and too hard to read, I suppose. But the point is this. In this prison, the worse possible prison where nobody had any freedom at all, everybody was just as free as air because they could do and

think what they wanted to, regardless. Nobody could stop you from doing that. The idea is that you will be judged by your works and your words, as he is going to tell us later on. But then what will happen? As I said, if you see the angel, what do you do? You “shrink from the presence of the Lord into a state of misery [anything is better than that; you draw back deliberately into a state of misery, which is safer] and endless torment, from whence they can no more return; therefore, they have drunk damnation to their own souls.”

470 Mosiah 4:1,2 Now, the fourth chapter. This is the reaction of his people, the PROSKYNESIS. They all fall to earth. In [the account of] Nathan the Babylonian they do. It's to show that you are overwhelmed. Of course, the Moslems still do that five times a day. You fall down right flat on your face, and that's PROSKYNESIS. They fell to earth, and they viewed themselves— not as fiends in flames and burning coals and things like that. Verse 2: “And they viewed themselves in their own carnal state, even less than the dust of the earth [now he cuts them down—boy, is he going to work on that].

470,471 Mosiah 4:2 “And they all cried out with one voice, saying: O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ [notice, atonement is mentioned quite a number of times in this chapter] that we may receive forgiveness of our sins,... for we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who created heaven and earth, and all things; who shall come down among the children of men.... And the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they were filled with joy [it was a joyful celebration, a great time, you see; they could all hardly stand it, they were so joyful here] ... because of the exceeding faith which they had in Jesus Christ who should come.” This is a marvelously happy event, you see. He is ready to bring us back into the great eternal order of things. But how is he to do it? You see, this is what they are talking about here. Even if we could make up for our sins here, it is that other life that they are thinking of. Now they have had a glimpse of it, they are filled with joy. They are filled with the spirit. These times come because of

exceeding faith. We think of the dedication of the Kirtland Temple. That's the sort of thing that happened when the marvelous manifestations were received and everybody had revelation, or the day of Pentecost, those days. Under normal conditions they would be normal, but the earth is a bad place.

471 Mosiah 4:5,6 Then King Benjamin replies to them. Notice, it's a conversation. It's an antiphonal between the king and the people. The singing is always antiphonal, but we can't go into that. It's divided into groups, one group answering the other as they discuss this. Verse 5: "For behold, if the knowledge of the goodness of God at this time has awakened you [see, they are just full of this knowledge of goodness] to a sense of your nothingness, and your worthless and fallen state." Now here, when they are in the height of their glory, he starts reminding them of their worthlessness and their nothingness in their worthless and fallen state. I don't think that would offend them at all. If you were in the presence of celestial glory, you would certainly feel that way and you wouldn't feel at all insulted. They don't feel like crawling under rocks though. They feel pretty good about it. He says, You have come to a knowledge of the goodness of God; you see how good he can be now. This is the grace of God. And then he says, This is the atonement prepared from the foundation of the earth, going back to the premortal existence when they discussed the creation [paraphrased]. This is a biblical expression, too—"the atonement prepared from the foundation of the world"—although Christians ignore that. What was going on then if they prepared a plan at that early time? Verse 6: "... that thereby salvation might come to him that he should come and put his trust in the Lord, and should be diligent in keeping his commandments, and continue in the faith even unto the end of his life." The plan was prepared from the foundation of the world. You come here, you have faith, you put your trust in him, and then you do something—keeping his commandments. It is faith that keeps you on the track here. We go along with these things.

471,472 Mosiah 4:8-10 "And this is the means whereby

salvation cometh. And there is none other salvation save this which hath been spoken of." This is the only way. Why this peculiar way? As I said, can you think of any other? After all, our condition is desperate. We have to trust him, put our trust in the Lord. Trust him and you will be safe; then you will do something and feel better about it. He says there are no other conditions given to you. These are what they are in verse 9: "Believe in God, . . . believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend." Now this justifies you in believing in God. St. Augustine is baffled at the beginning of the Confessions. Why should I believe in God? If I believe in God, I am not playing fair. I am cheating because I believe in him already, and I haven't seen him or anything like that. I have to let him make the first move [paraphrased]. So he argues around and around about that. "You have made us in such a way that our hearts are restless until we have been joined to you somehow." Well, he is right there, but what do we do about it? The point is this. "Believe that man doth not comprehend all." There are all sorts of things you don't know, so it's quite possible that God can exist. That's among other things. "Believe in God, . . . believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend." Of course, that's the greatest stumbling block of science, as Karl Popper says. Then the next step: "And again believe that ye must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you; and now, if you believe all these things see that ye do them." Notice that the verse ends that way. First you believe in him. Then you repent and humble yourselves before God, realizing that you are nothing, "and now, if you believe all these things see that ye do them." It all comes down to action here. That's the first premise, to become aware of your nothingness and your fallen state.

472,473 Mosiah 4:11,12 "And again I say unto you as I have said before [this marvelous verse 11 reviews the things you must keep in mind; he says he is going to give them a reminder; he is hammering it home, you see] that if ye have come to the knowledge of the glory of God, or if ye

have known of his goodness and have tasted of his love.” He catches them at this high point in this euphoria. This is the time to get to work on them without offending them and get through to them. Their minds are open and they realize that anything is possible now] and have received a remission of your sins, which causeth such exceedingly great joy in your souls [notice, he keeps repeating joy in this chapter] even so I would that you should remember [along with your joy], and always retain in remembrance [always keep this in mind] the greatness of God, and your own nothingness [if you put the two together, you have nothing to worry about because you won’t be disturbed by your own personal ambitions and disappointments or anything like that; nothing will bother you that way if you realize your own nothingness], and his goodness and long-suffering towards you, unworthy creatures [he is certainly flattering the people here!], and humble yourselves even in the depths of humility, calling on the name of the Lord daily [this is what you are supposed to do now after this], and standing steadfastly in the faith of that which is to come [which you have just received]. Behold, I say unto you [now here is the guarantee— it’s worth it; it’s a darn good investment, he says, in verse 12] that if ye do this ye shall always rejoice.” So, if you want to be happy, this is the way you do it. I certainly believe that.

473,474      Mosiah 4:12-15 He shows he is cutting them down. But you will always rejoice, and I think that’s a fair exchange. I am perfectly willing to laugh at myself and realize what I am because it is a fair exchange. And now he gets into the economic part which is very important. This is very interesting here. If you have proper sense of balance and sense of humor (verse 12), then “ye shall grow in the knowledge of the glory of him that created you, or in the knowledge of that which is just and true.” Then you will have a true knowledge, a true value of things. Notice just and true. You will have the correct values, as we would say today. And in the knowledge of him, that’s a real at-one-ment. And then in the next verse, the reward of that socially: “And ye will not have a mind to injure one another, but to live peaceably, and to render to every man according



to that which is his due.” If you realize that you are nothing and that the Lord will take care of everything—everything will be solved if you obey and do what he wants you to do—then you won’t have any intention to injure one another. There won’t be any rivalry, and you will find plenty of this in the Book of Mormon. Envy, jealousy, fights, murders, the desire for power and asserting your ego and the like all come from the same thing. Then you will have no mind to injure anyone. You will live peaceably and render to every man according to that which is due. That would make dull fare on prime time, wouldn’t it? Verse 14: “And ye will not suffer your children that they go hungry, or naked [40,000 children die of hunger and hunger-related diseases every day; something is wrong here; that’s something to be afraid of]; neither will ye suffer that they transgress the laws of God, and fight and quarrel one with another [as kids do], and serve the devil, who is the master of sin, or who is the evil spirit which hath been spoken of by our fathers [that other one]... But ye will teach them to walk in the ways of truth and soberness; ye will teach them to love one another, and to serve one another.”

484 Mosiah 4:16-20 This is another piece of news. It was on the NEC news last night. This year, so far, 160 people have died on the sidewalks of San Francisco. Can you believe that? They starved on the sidewalks of San Francisco. What is going on here? What a society when it comes to that. So he says here: “And also, ye yourselves will succor those that stand in need of your succor; ye will administer your substance unto him that standeth in need [he doesn’t say to the worthy needy or unto him that deserves it; it’s not a case of deserving, as he says here]; and ye will not suffer that the beggar putteth up his petition to you in vain, and turn him out to perish. Perhaps thou shalt say: The man has brought upon himself his misery [I got mine and he didn’t work, he is a lazy bum—that is the excuse we all make, of course]; therefore I will stay my hand, and I will not give unto him of my food or impart unto him of my substance [I work for mine] that he may not suffer, for his punishments are just—[he is not one of the deserving poor, but even if this is true] But I say unto you, O man, whosoever doeth

this the same hath great cause to repent; and except he repenteth of that which he hath done he perisheth forever, and hath no interest in the kingdom of God [in which the law of consecration is mandatory].” You have no choice but to keep it. We have accepted and promised to keep it, too. Verse 19: “For behold, are we not all beggars?” This stings a lot of people; they don’t like it at all. They try to give it an allegorical or symbolic interpretation—spiritually beggars, etc. I have heard people doing that, but of course, he says “of your substance.” I am talking about goods and substance and going hungry and that sort of thing. I am not talking about what you call spiritual things. “Behold, are we not all beggars? Do we not all depend on the same Being, even God, for all the substance which we have.” Notice, not just for our spiritual fare, but substance—food and raiment. He says, I am talking about economics; I am talking about food supply (food and raiment) and gold and silver and the luxuries you have, too [paraphrased].

474,475      Mosiah 4:21      “And now, if God, who has created you, on whom you are dependent for your lives and for all that ye have and are.” He mentioned that before, remember; if you worked 24 hours a day just for the Lord you would still be an unprofitable servant. You can’t produce anything, and that’s made so very clear today more than anything because the great money makers are not producing anything. They are [behind] the takeovers. They destroy companies and take them over, by a manipulation of the computer rather than the tape anymore. By manipulation they become hundred-millionaires overnight. You know the deals, the takeovers and the junk bonds, the parachutes and all that sort of stuff. We will see what King [Benjamin] does just to drive home his point. He goes out and works in the field, and he does it quite seriously. Kings do that, you see. They were on the level here of Indian culture, actually. This is the way they keep things going and have a stable society. It has a good deal to say in this National Geographic about the society that is stable and the expense of a society that has to go out and wreck anything if it is not growing at least four percent a year. But you can’t go on doing that forever. There is only a limited base on which

we can operate.

475,476 Mosiah 4:22,23 “And if ye judge the man who putteth up his petition to you for your substance that he perish not and condemn him.” You judge him, you say he is not worthy. Have you worked? Do you deserve this? He puts up his petition, you see. He is desperate; he has no choice. You read Brigham Young’s account of his first mission in England in the 1850s. It was horrifying. It was a bad year, and in cities like Manchester and Leeds people literally were dropping dead in the streets everywhere. And England was never richer than at that time. The rich were just rolling in the fatness of the land, and these people were actually dropping dead. You can see why that got through to Brigham Young and why he became such an ardent champion for the United Order, etc. But you don’t judge a man. You don’t hesitate and say, “I don’t know whether I should or not,” and condemn him. That’s what you do. You say he hasn’t worked as hard as you have. Maybe he has and maybe he hasn’t. We have the interesting philosophy that you are either making money or you are doing nothing. That’s the choice you have. You can either work for a profit—either prepare to make money or make money—and if you are not doing that, you are doing nothing. You can be considered idle in that case. That’s why we have reinterpreted “the idler shall not eat the bread of laborer.” Of course, for all these thousands of years it just simply meant that the idle rich shall not eat the bread of the laboring poor, which has been the rule down through the ages. We turn it right around today—I worked for mine, so you won’t eat my bread. Well, we won’t go into that. Stick to Mosiah. Don’t look at me; I didn’t say it. He says here, “... and condemn him, how much more just will be your condemnation for withholding your substance, which doth not belong to you but to God [what he asks you to do with it is this, he says; it belongs to Him] ... and yet ye put up no petition, nor repent of the thing which thou has done. I say unto you, wo be unto that man, for his substance shall perish with him [and, of course, you can’t take it with you]; and now, I say these things unto those who are rich as pertaining to the things of this world.” Frankly, he says,

this is an economics discourse I am giving you here.

476 Mosiah 4:24,25 “And again, I say unto the poor, ye who have not and yet have sufficient, [can keep body and soul together] ... I mean all you who deny the beggar, because ye have not; I would that ye say in your hearts that: I give not because I have not, but if I had I would give.” Salt Lake City is a great place, the crossroads of the West, for panhandlers and for tramps going through—and for getting turned down. They will tell you it’s the hardest town in the country as far as that goes. Every tramp knows that if you want a handout you don’t go to a rich house; that’s the last thing you do. You will get thrown downstairs or thrown out the back porch. You go to people who are poor and they will give you something. That is the best chance you have. It’s the same way with contributions, etc. It has to be sincere. Verse 25: “And if ye say this in your hearts ye remain guiltless.” Of course, if you are rich you can’t possibly say it in your heart. You must be very poor indeed. Even the poorest is going to share; you are going to see that’s the way.. Mother never turned them down (we never should) because she learned this from her father when they lived on the plains up in Alberta. They went out to Raymond and ranched out there. Whether it was an Indian or anyone else, their father (like Brigham Young) just hammered it into them, “Never, never, never turn anybody away.” Many have been visited by angels unawares. They may be testing you, as far as that goes. So that has always been the policy never to turn anybody away.

477 Mosiah 4:26,27 Here is the rule, and this is a very important rule “From each according to his means, to each according to his needs.” That is the same slogan as we have here, but the next verse tells us how that can go wrong. Verse 26: “I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath [if you have an awful lot of reserve laid away, a couple of hundred million in the bank or something like that, you haven’t given according to that which you have, I am sure. If you have anything left at all in fact], such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the

sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants.” Their wants need to be supplied and that’s all there is to it. But this is what goes wrong. This is where we break down in the next verse. You may say, “That’s a fine theory, but I won’t have to do that.” It has to be administered in the proper way, and, as I said, that’s where the breakdown has been. Human beings haven’t had these principles of the gospel or haven’t had this vision of the eternities to inspire them and keep them on the track as the early Saints had. It says: “And see that all these things are done in wisdom and in order [that’s the trouble—it leads to disorder and squabbling. Inevitably that happens when you try, in any kind of economic order, and it’s pretty bad]; for it is not requisite that man should run faster than he has strength [that is the usual weakness—getting ahead of the program, trying to do it all overnight. You call it revolution—a sudden, quick change—trying to run faster than you have strength. You have to build up to these things, but you have to keep at it, and you have to use wisdom and order]. And again, it is expedient that you should be diligent [keep at it], that thereby he might win the prize; therefore, all things must be done in order.”

478 Mosiah 4:28 Let’s remember the importance of these words PROPERTY and PRIVATE. PROPRIUM and PRIVATUS both mean set aside to the individual.” The basic meaning of PROPRIUM is “to separate.” The root is PARARE, “to set apart.” It belongs to you and is unique to you—it is PRIVATUS. It can’t be related to anybody else in the human race or the state. And PROPRIUM means MINE. It’s mine proper and nobody else’s. It is very clear in the Jewish Law. Then remember, he [King Benjamin] is going by the Law of Moses where every seven years all debts are cancelled and every servant must be freed—anyone who is in bondage. Every contract is dissolved.

478 If you borrow something from a neighbor, i.e., tools and etc., you should return it. Actually, every year we have to replenish our tools in the garage because people borrow them and never return them—the ladders, spades, rakes, and everything else. Those are personal tools you have, and

also your books, your notebooks, your writing utensils, your house and your children.

479,480 Mosiah 4:29 “And finally, I cannot tell you all things whereby ye may commit sin.” I could make a long list of all the ways you can sin. It’s like the probabilists of the sixteenth century. Molina was the famous Spanish probabilist and Jesuit who compiled that great list of sins and how much one sin weighs against another, using a decimal point. [Benjamin] says, “I cannot number them. But this much I can tell you [this is what he has been getting at. This is his big chance to get through to them. This is his farewell address], that if you do not watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds [these are the three things, remember; these are the three things you produce: thoughts, words, and deeds] and observe the commandments of God, and continue in the faith of what ye have heard concerning the coming of our Lord, even unto the end of your lives, ye must perish. And now, O man, remember, and perish not.” So we are at risk here. It’s very serious. This test is very important.

480 Mosiah 5:2-5 Then the king says, Will you accept that? They are going to make a covenant now. This is very important. It is the time of year that they make covenants. He desires to know if they believe. Verse 2: “And they all cried out [again, here is the HAZZAN, the PRAECENTOR] with one voice saying [notice, it’s in verse]: Yea, we believe all the words which thou has spoken unto us; and also, we know of their surety and truth because of the Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent, which has wrought a mighty change in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually. And we, ourselves, also, through the infinite goodness of God, and the manifestations of his Spirit, have great views of that which is to come.” He started out by saying open your ears and pay attention to a view of the mysteries of God. This is what he has been talking about. They say they “have great views.” They see marvelous prospects there. “And we are willing to enter into a covenant with our God to do his will.” They are going to do it now. Remember, at the new year all contracts were made.

In England, for example, the King held a festival, which is a yearly festival and had to take place at the solstice, at Christmas time. At that time all contracts were made—only at Christmas time. They couldn't be made at any other time; I mean a contract with a servant. If you couldn't catch hold of him for a year and a day, then he was free because the contract only lasted for a year. It had to be renewed every year when you came to the great assembly of the king and to the year rite. They are called by various names, but that was the time that contracts were made. The rule was that after a year and a day it became invalid and had to be renewed at the end of the year. That's what they do. "And we are willing to enter into a covenant with our God to do his will, and to be obedient to his commandments in all things."

480,481      Mosiah 5:7 "And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall [he is going to give them a new name and, of course, you always get that—a new name, a new identity, a new year, a new life, a new beginning. It's a refreshing of things; that's what he is talking about] ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you." Well, what is Christmas? It's the NATALIS, it's the GENETHLIA, it's the birthday. That's what it is called in French, Spanish, German and everything else. It's the great birthday. The natalis is the birthday of the human race and of the king. In Egypt everybody dated his own birthday from the year of the king. They dated their own lives from the king's birthday. They would say, "I am twenty years old as of the king's last coronation." That's the way they would do it. So the king's birthday was everybody's birthday. That was the renewal of the year. It's because you are born [again]—notice, "this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and daughters." Notice he says, "And this day [which is the new year of the Hebrews, the Rosh ha-Shanah or "the head of the year." That is almost a literal translation of the Egyptian word, which means "the time of the pre-existence, the beginning, the re-inauguration of the whole thing."

Here it is, the same thing as what the Jews call it. It's the ROSH HA-SHANAH. That's the beginning of the year, the beginning of creation, the beginning of everything. They are renewing their whole life, they have been begotten, and] ye are born of him and have become his sons and daughters. And under this head [moreover] ye are made free." It's the universal birthday and they celebrate it. As soon as this is announced, everybody yells io saturnalia. That means "all servants are free now— everybody is equal." In Israel it was literally so. It was the Hallelujah. It was the Jubilee Year. They celebrate the jubilee when no servant is a servant anymore. No one is subject to anybody anymore. Nobody is in debt to anybody. That's the way it was in the original. That's the way the Lord wants it to be, so they are rehearsing this just as at Christmas we pretend to live in a jolly time. It shows we are capable of living under such conditions, but we can't last more than that. You know what we have done to Christmas commercial-wise.

481,482      Mosiah 5:8 "There is no other name given whereby salvation cometh; therefore, I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives." Then he does the next thing. (I see the time is up now.) He is invited into the tent, etc. And then he talks about the right hand and the left hand of God. That's an important part of the celebration. Verse 12: "I say unto you, I would that ye should remember to retain the name written always in your hearts." Then in the next chapter he takes the census. Remember at the first he said they were so numerous that they didn't number them. But now they have entered a covenant, they have committed themselves by name, so he had the names taken of everybody who was there. Their names were all taken down, and they were enlisted as it was in Rome— the list of the INCISI, the INCISED list. You weren't a member of the kingdom unless your name was on the list. So you had to be registered in the books—the books that were open from the foundation of the world. Remember, when the world was founded, the books were opened. They always preached that. The Book of Life was one of those books, and there were many other books.



The Book of Life, as the formula goes in the New Testament, which was open at the foundation of the world, containing the names of all those who would come down to this earth in the various dispensations. That's what the Book of Life was as understood by the Jews and the Christians in the early days. So all this falls into the pattern of reality, of the real social organization. And there's the fact that it bears this amazing stamp of authenticity—that everything takes place here exactly according to the pattern of the ancient year assembly and the like. I can't go any further with it now, this being the last class. It's enough to make us take it very seriously, isn't it?

## **Lecture 30 Mosiah 6:**

**[Great Assembly Common in Ancient World]  
[600 BC Pivotal Year – Result Migrations]  
[Geopolitics: Sea Power vs. Land Mass]  
[Book of Mormon Begins  
and ends with Destruction]  
[Racial Mix of People in Book of Mormon]  
[Macro or Micro Criticism of the Book of Mormon]  
[New Year Book of Life Covenants and Contracts]**

1 We got up to chapter six of Mosiah.. That's the best place to begin a new year because it begins the new year with them. Remember, this is the great assembly that is held at the new year to launch not only a new age but a new constitution. This is the time when the constitution is confirmed. At the beginning of the meeting they didn't take a census (remember, David was rebuked for taking a census; a census is part of it), but after the meeting was over the names were taken of everyone who had registered and signed the covenant; they made the list of INCISI. Fortunately, it just happened to correspond perfectly with the names of everybody who was there because everybody signed up. That was ideal, the way it should be. They began a new regime, and the organic constitution of the nation is that of Mosiah. Of course, his father Benjamin established it, and his grandfather, Mosiah, established it, too. This is observed right up until the end. They were bound by that which was based entirely upon the law of Moses. It comes up time and again here.

1,2 King Benjamin has just finished his farewell address. We can retrace our steps to Jerusalem and fill in here—you know what happened. Mosiah was the son of Benjamin, who was the son of Mosiah, who came to Zarahemla by command. When he came there the people made him king. That's a thing not without precedent; you will see that. Where did he come from? He came from Nephi's community. What was Nephi's community? As we learned in Omni, after the main body had landed there was so much tension among them that Nephi couldn't stand it. Right from the beginning, there had been this terrible tension in the family [caused by] hatred and jealousy. It was up and down, up and down—typical of Semitic people of the Near East. They were typical Palestinians actually. They were mixed blood; we have seen this from the genealogy of Lehi, who belonged to Manasseh, and other things. The tension got so great that Nephi decided to leave, just as they had left Jerusalem, with anyone who wanted to follow him. A big crowd left and created the settlement of Nephi. We get the small books from the various descendants. That went on to the time of Amaleki; in his day there was another breakoff. There were these breakoffs all the time. That is the Rechabite process; we've referred to that before. In chapter 35 of Jeremiah it tells about them. If you want to live righteously when the city gets bad, what do you do? You emigrate.. We won't go into the story of Jonadab and Rechab right now; you can read about that in chapter 35 of Jeremiah. But they left; they were always breaking off.

2 As you know, Lehi left Jerusalem because he was told to go. When they landed here they had their colony. Then when things got very bad, Nephi was commanded to leave them. He went out and that's when they built the temple. Then Nephi's people went bad. Following Jacob there were Enos, Jarom, Omni, Amaron and the rest. Finally, you get to Amaleki and Mosiah. In their time [the people] have become bad. This was the process, and it was necessary to leave again. We are told that Mosiah himself was commanded to leave (Omni 12). He went out to form a new colony and came to Zarahemla where they made him king. He left in the time of Amaleki, who was the son of

Abinadom, the son of Chemish, the son of Amaron, the son of Omni. The people had departed from keeping the covenants, and that has happened again and again. As we mentioned, that community was founded when Lehi led a group away. I have been going backwards to Jerusalem. Well, that was an awfully long journey to make, coming all the way from Jerusalem to the west coast of South America. Quite a journey. Recently, a lot of studies have been made of south sea navigation showing their uncanny skill at traveling many thousands of miles across the open sea. They had secrets of navigation—currents, air masses, stars, and all the rest of it.

2 It just happened that 600 B.C. was the great time in the world of colonization and exploration. If you wanted a colony, you had to explore. Well, why would that be a great time of colonization? Because things were very bad in the old cities—corruption everywhere. It only takes a few bad years to start things moving again. Back in Jerusalem we read that Lehi was in trouble and Jeremiah was in trouble because they objected to the corruption of the people in the city—above all, their greed. At the same time Solon the Great of Athens, a contemporary of Lehi, was writing on the very same subject, showing the very same conditions. He migrated, too, but he didn't take people with him. He gave them a constitution, and then he left and wandered for seven years. I would say he could have been a very good friend of Lehi. They not only thought alike, but they did business in the same area at Sidon. They were both importers, exporters, and merchants.

2,3 We are beginning with the sixth chapter of Mosiah where the great assembly ends. It's the farewell address of King Benjamin and the inauguration of his son whom he crowns, as you will see here. They carry on with a new order which doesn't last very long because Mosiah is succeeded by judges. But right now Mosiah is the great one. His father was Benjamin and his father was Mosiah who came and settled in Zarahemla. This takes place in Zarahemla, which is not a Nephite city. It's not Nephites and Lamanites at all. They're Mulekites, a much greater population than

either one. Where did they come from? They also came from Jerusalem just eleven years after Lehi came from Jerusalem. We might ask, "What were these people doing running around like this?" Well, the year 600 B.C. is called "the pivotal year." That's a term that Karl Jaspers, a German philosopher, has given it. But many other people talk about it also. H. G. Wells calls it that, too. It's the pivotal period because the whole world turned on a pivot, and you get a new age. It was a perfect time for the Book of Mormon to begin—a new culture history, a new setting, a new world. All the old sacral kingships collapsed all at once. What would do that? Well, of course, the weather and migration. If you read the Greek lyric poets from the seventh century, just before this—like Mimnermus and Callinus, etc.—they tell about the invasion of the Sumerians. They wrote poems about how the Sumerians came and swept into Asia Minor, wiped everything out, and settled down there. Some of them from the north became Goths, our ancestors. Way back in that early time, Lehi's time, they were invading and pushing in. Why? Because the steppes had dried out, and they were forced to move.

3        The most important place in the world at that time was Palestine, as it always has been. That's where people have always copped out. One wave after another has been spewed out of Palestine because of the political tensions. Political tensions are caused by revolutions, etc., which are caused by migrations, which are caused by weather changes. That's geopolitics. We won't go into that except that Palestine is very important, you see. It's very important in the Book of Mormon here because in the Jaredites you have the other condition. The Jaredites went north into the Valley of Nimrod, which is up by the Caspian Sea. They took the land route across Central Asia. Lehi took the water route. The essence of geopolitics is Haushofer, but the originator of it was Halford Mackinder, a Scotch geographer in the nineteenth century. This is what set Hitler going. That's why he had to take Russia, the Ukrainian bread basket, etc. That came from Haushofer and was called geopolitics. It's very simple. The thing is that world history has always been rivalry between the great land power and the great sea

power. The great land power was Asiatic at this time. It was the Austro-Prussian agreement, the Axis, what he calls the heartland. The heartland is that area of Asia and Europe which is covered by snow in the wintertime. It takes the form of a shield. It is not all nomadic, but it is marginal. In a bad year they have to move, and they move in all directions. For this reason people have to defend themselves. For that reason you had the Great Wall of China and the Khyber. Here you have the wall of the Asiatics, the Amu, the Great White Wall of the Egyptians, etc. Clear across Europe you have the limes built by the Romans, way up to Hadrian's Wall up in Scotland. They built physical walls to keep these people out. Those walls lasted for hundreds of years, and the pressure was on them all the time. The most important place in the world is the cockpit where they all fight. We were talking about World War II, where the sea power was Britain, and the land power was the Central Powers. According to Haushofer and to MacKinder, the sea power always wins. It can shut off the other one from markets and everything else. The last world war was the very same sort of thing, sea power versus land power. The thing that brought on [World War I] was the Kaiser building up a huge fleet because he has to be the sea power.

5 Things were bad in the ancient world, and the sacral kingship fell everywhere. Solon established the Greek democracy; he was the inventor of democracy. He gave them a constitution with the proviso that they couldn't change it without his signature. When they agreed to that, he left town for ten years so they would have to live with it. That's the basis of Athenian democracy from which all democracies come. Other cities followed the example. It's always been a struggle. In 600 B.C. everybody was asking, "Who's in charge around here?" Anybody who could grab the power. That wasn't good enough, and it led to some terrible things. This is the settling down after the great migrations. There were great migrations earlier. Then there was the settling down and the rivalry between the great houses and the great families. That's the story of Greek tragedy which is archaic. It goes back to the myths, etc. when the same thing was happening.

5,6 D&C 1:1,2, 35 But the Book of Mormon is entirely in the milieu here. The theme of the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants is “the anatomy of destruction.” Remember, the Book of Mormon starts out with how that great city of Jerusalem was about to be destroyed, and the Book of Mormon ends with complete destruction. And it all is a warning to us. The opening words of the Doctrine and Covenants are the same way. “Hearken, O ye people of my church, saith the voice of him who dwells on high.... The voice of the Lord is unto all men, and there is none to escape; and there is no eye that shall not, neither ear that shall not hear, neither heart that shall not be penetrated... . The day speedily cometh; the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand, when peace shall be taken from the earth, and the devil shall have power over his own dominion” (D&C 1:1,2, 35). So we are moving toward some great destruction. These books are given as warnings on the eve of great destruction. But this has happened all through the Bible. As you know, that was what the prophets did; they warned of the destruction of Jerusalem, which was destroyed from time to time. As I said, it had been destroyed earlier. It had been destroyed by the Assyrians in 720 B.C. and by Nebuchadnezzar earlier than 600 B.C. Josiah broke his agreement with [Necho]. That brought [Necho] back, and Josiah was killed in the battle of Megiddo. So it was a very long journey.

6 Now Zarahemla was not a Nephite city. The racial and ethnic picture in the Book of Mormon is very complicated. We get the simplistic idea that any time we find any ruin or anything in this country it must be either Nephite or Lamanite. That’s absolutely silly. You get a very complex picture, as we’ve seen before, and it’s going to get more complex as we go along. Zarahemla was a Mulekite city, and you know who the Mulekites were. It means “the king’s people.” We are told in the Bible that there was only one survivor from Zedekiah’s family, and he got away. All his sons were put to death before the eyes of the king, and he was blinded. Then he was taken to Babylon. That was the king who was ruling in the time of Lehi.

6 Eleven years after them [Lehi's group], a larger group came. They saw that the city was going to fall and took off. How did they ever make it? I think people were doing it all the time. It was a great thing, but it could be done. They called themselves the Mulekites, the Mulekiah, which means "the king people," because we are told in the Book of Mormon that the youngest son of the king went with them. Their pride and joy was that they were the king's people. The word malek is king', but the word mulek [mulaik] means "dear little king." It's a caritative and it's a diminutive. The Mulekites were the people who had the little king with them; they were rather proud of that. When they came over, he was a child about ten or eleven. He may have been older. We saw some stories about him connected with the Lachish Letters. It was all quite plausible, their getting over here. But they were a bigger group, and Zarahemla was a big city. Zarahemla or Darahemla is a very good Oriental name. It means red city. You find it in other places. There's a very important trading center right in the middle of the Sahara called Zarahemla (Dar) al-Hamra.

8 We have two kinds of criticism in the Book of Mormon. When you criticize any ancient record, there are two ways of criticizing. You use macro-criticism or micro-criticism. That's something new; I just discovered it. You can see what macro-criticism is. When you read the Book of Mormon, you say, "Is this really true?" Now we are talking about evidence here, but this is not the most important thing, of course. The evidence confirms the teachings, but the teachings wouldn't need any evidence at all to hit you in the solar plexus because they are true. We find that out soon enough. But when you read this, you ask, "Is this the way things really were? Was it that kind of a world? Is that the way the world was at that time? Were the people agricultural and nomadic or urban? What was the setting? It sticks out all over here. Is it a jungle setting? And the geography—they move a great distance, but how great?" I would never waste five minutes on Book of Mormon geography until we get some definite points of reference. Well, you have Zarahemla, but we don't know where Zarahemla was, as far as that goes. So don't worry



about that; it's all relative anyway. But in macro-criticism there are great things to go by. There are some big things.

8,9 Then the micro-criticism is hundreds of details that get smaller and smaller. As we read more and more, we notice all sorts of little things. It's their triviality that makes them so important. They are trivial clues, you see. They are the things that nobody ever would have bothered to think of, or dream up, or look up, or know this was the way things were done at that time. In the Book of Mormon these things are sowed around with a lavish hand— things that only an observer could know, like the tokens of recognition in the new comedy which with the Christians became the recognition literature. The family is separated, like they are in *The Comedy of Errors* or *Twelfth Night*, and how do they recognize each other? By a token, by a ring, or something a baby was buried with. A dress or something like that is the token, or the chest in which the baby was found. Or there are certain signs and tokens by which people recognize each other. Well, that's the way it is with the Book of Mormon. Very often we come on these hints that could only come from a member of the family, you might say—the tokens of recognition you find in the recognition drama.

9 Mosiah 4:11,12; 5:15 Notice the last verse of the preceding chapter, verse 15. It ends on a very upbeat affair. This is an interesting thing about this meeting. This was at the end of the very brilliant reign of Benjamin, who has made them victorious over their enemies and assured prosperity in the land. Things were going wonderfully. They are at the peak of their power, glory, and influence. It must have been a splendid affair, and all Benjamin does during his whole speech is to throw cold water on their pride, etc. Don't get any ideas that you are anybody at all. He really cuts them down to size again and again. "I would that ye should remember, and always retain in remembrance, the greatness of God, and your own nothingness.... I say unto you that if ye do this ye shall always rejoice," he says (Mosiah 4:11-12). We are less than the dust. We are nothing and have no right to claim anything at all. He goes on and on; that's the whole theme. Then when he gets to the end of

his speech, it's upbeat in Mosiah 5:15: "Always abounding in good works, that Christ, the Lord God Omnipotent, may seal you his, that you may be brought to heaven, that ye may have everlasting salvation and eternal life, through [notice] the wisdom, and power, and justice, and mercy of him who created all things in heaven and in earth, who is God above all."

10,11 Now after that King Benjamin thought it was expedient to take the names of the people. See, he didn't have a census at first. Remember, David offended the Lord by doing that. But it's a very important part of this meeting. Remember, this took place at the new year, we are told, because they all brought their first-fruits. And it was the establishment of the new government because the new king was taking over. The date was set by the old king. He said, I'll make you king on this particular date; you send out the announcement. It's very interesting that he has his son make the announcement. Why should that be? Because according to the normal order, the meeting wouldn't be held until the old king was dead. The son always announced the meeting and brought the people together because his father wasn't there anymore. If he had done that before, he would be guilty of treason. He would be guilty of plotting against his father, to prematurely put him off the throne or something. So they always waited until the old king was out of the way and then his son would summon the people. Benjamin instructs his son that he is to bring the people together, to take charge of the meeting, etc. We saw what kind of meeting it was, including the speech from the tower and all the rest. That's the old Jewish practice, which is not found in the Bible but is found in some other sources we saw last semester.

11 [King Benjamin] had to take the names of all those who had entered the covenant. He didn't force them to sign and take the names. What about their free rights, etc.? Those who signed the covenant were willing. They had already put their names on a covenant. So their names were taken and put on the list which is the Book of Life, which is opened at the new year. It is a register of all the people who have

a right to live in the kingdom and pay taxes during that year. That's what the Book of Life is. Remember, we call the Bible "the Book of Life that is opened at the beginning of the world." It was the Babylonian and Egyptian custom and everywhere else. In Rome it is especially interesting; it's the book, the INCISI. At the new year, they told fortunes and used divination to discover what the fortunes of the new year were going to be. Everyone was assigned an appointment. It was the only time you could make contracts in most ancient societies. For example, in England if you wanted to hire a servant you had to do it at the great assembly, which goes way back. They have discovered in the last two or three years that those old stone circles, like Stonehenge and Avebury, should be dated differently. They have put them back two thousand years earlier. They go way back, and it's very interesting that Silbury Hill, which is up there by Avebury, has the same dimensions exactly as the Great Pyramid and is now given the date 2750 B.C., which is the date of the Great Pyramid. It looks just like it. It's a marvelous structure, the highest artificial mound in Europe. It's up there in England by Marlborough.

11 They put them on the list of the INCISI, the incised list. In Rome they had big wooden pillars. Like we have these swinging leaves with advertising on them, etc., they had these lead plates that would swing around. They used lead because it is easy to inscribe. They inscribed the name of every citizen, and every citizen had to come. We are told that at the end of the book of Zechariah, the next to the last book of the [Old Testament], that if any do not come up to Jerusalem at the new year to hail the new king, upon them shall be no rain and they will receive no blessings. You had to come, and in Rome they would come clear from Sicily and from Gaul so they could be present at the meeting.

11,12 Mosiah 6:2 Everyone who signed agreed to keep the covenants. "You are this day reborn." Remember, he gave them a new name. It was their birthday, it was the beginning of a new age. Everything began anew on that day. Everything was renewed. He had them all registered and took their names down, so they were all set for the

new age now. Verse 2: “There was not one soul, except it were little children, but who had entered into the covenant and had taken upon them the name of Christ.” Then all the people were registered, so now they could vote. Notice, he did this before he anointed or crowned his son because these people had to be registered voters in order to give the ACCLAMATIO. That’s the acclamation of the king. If you don’t raise your voice in acclamation of the king, then you are considered an outlaw, and you are banished from the kingdom for three years. This is the rule that you find almost everywhere, so that’s what we have here. “There was not one soul, except it were little children, but who had entered into the covenant” and had their names taken, and then they could approve the king because they were now full-fledged citizens.

12 Mosiah 6:3 “And again, it came to pass that when king Benjamin had made an end of all these things, and had consecrated his son Mosiah [and it’s a sacral government] to be a ruler and a king over his people, and had given him all the charges concerning the kingdom [now he can take it over], and also had appointed priests to teach the people ...” You notice it is as in the law of Moses. They had kings of Israel and of Judah, but the priests taught the people in the temple and in the synagogue. The king was a teacher, too, but in the temple and the synagogue the priests had their teachings to perform. It was Solomon Zeitlin who showed that synagogues did not first develop after the fall of the temple to take its place. They were just plain meeting houses, and they had them all along right from the first, “to stir them up in remembrance of the oath which they had made.” They had taken a covenant and an oath, so he is to stir them up. You notice, this is the ENIAUTOS. They don’t repeat the ceremony. You only receive an endowment. You only take the oath once, but you remember it after. That’s why in the sacrament they always “remember him that they may keep his commandments which he has given them, and always have his spirit to be with them.” They renew the covenants, not by going through them again, but by a different ordinance. It renews the covenants we made of remembrance. “This do in remembrance of me,” as he

said in the sacrament in the New Testament.

12,13 The king “appointed priests to teach the people, that thereby they might hear and know the commandments of God, and to stir them up in remembrance of the oath which they had made” to renew the terms from time to time. Every year the oath was renewed. That’s why the people had to come and renew it. They didn’t say you only take it once because you take it for life. You take it forever, and you are never going to break it. That’s the idea, but we weaken and sometimes we have to renew them. And it’s as a witness. When we take the sacrament, it is as a witness that we remember. That’s what it’s for; you make the covenant once. That difference is interesting, whereas the Catholic mass claims to be the actual repetition of the event—that it actually is the sacrifice in a mystic way. With us, it is just recalling to memory.

13 Then “he dismissed the multitude, and they returned, every one, according to their families, to their own houses.” Another very interesting touch. The great assembly in the Mosaic law and throughout the ancient world is by families. Everybody had to come as a pilgrim and be dismissed to his home after that. “Thou shalt not celebrate the Passover within thy gates which the Lord thy God giveth thee.” Everyone had to come to this event as a pilgrim. They sat by family groups in circles, every family with its back to every other, every family by itself. We are told this not only in the New Testament and the Old Testament but in the Talmud, too. In the last meeting when they take the meal, everyone must eat a piece of the meat at least as big as an olive, and they must eat it with a staff in their hand, their shoes on their feet, and their cloaks ready to go. Then they must leave when they are finished and not look back because it is a sacred place. It’s mactus. This is the holy place where [people] meet commonly with the ancestors, gods, and everything else. I’m talking about an order beginning the Hierocentric rites on which I have written a good deal. There’s a lot of stuff on this. If the place is MACTUS it’s the place open to the other world. This is very ancient.

14 Mosiah 6:4 “And Mosiah began to reign in his father’s stead. . . . And king Benjamin lived three years and he died.” Later on we are going to find what he did. He kept the books because he was a great antiquarian. We learned that from the early part. Remember, he made his sons learn Egyptian, as little as they liked it because it was a painful job. “King Mosiah did walk in the ways of the Lord, and did observe his judgments and his statutes, and did keep his commandments in all things whatsoever he commanded him.” Now here’s a good old Dead Sea Scrolls formula: The judgments, the statutes, and the commandments. They are the big three; they always go together here. In the Serekh Scroll, for example, the one is never mentioned without the other. It’s always the judgments, and the statutes, and the commandments. The king is the judge, after all. Remember, King Solomon was the judge. The [judgments] are the laws that are laid down, and the commandments are those which have come from God. The statutes are written down by men, discussed in the council, and decided on. So we have the judgments, the statutes, and the commandments.

14 Mosiah 6:7 “And king Mosiah did cause his people that they should till the earth.” Now this is a tremendous clue. We talked about micro-criticism and macro-criticism. A good example of micro-criticism would be wisdom, power, justice, and mercy. Is it just a coincidence? How would he know those four Platonic virtues which in the time of Lehi were of such great importance? Now we come to this one. This is a macro which gives us a big picture of a way of life. These people were already living the standard way of the Indians. In that big volume by Driver and Massey, they have collected all the evidence available on the Indians at the time of Columbus, everything that was known about them. By far more than half of the United States, the whole eastern half which was bigger than the western half, was under cultivation. They were farmers; they weren’t nomads at all. There was hunting, just as in the jungle life in Central America and the milpas down in the Maya country, down in Chiapas. They lived in the jungle, yet they farmed. It was a method of farming. But they all farmed here; this is the point. “And he also, himself, did till the earth, that thereby

he might not become burdensome to his people [he was an egalitarian, and he didn't do this just for show], that he might do according to that which his father had done in all things." So it was their custom; they were a completely agrarian society.

## Lecture 31 Mosiah 7

### [Emphasis on Economy]

16 The Book of Mormon tells us things we don't like to be told. If it told us only what we wanted to hear, of course, we wouldn't need it. But that's the only part of the scriptures we are willing to accept. Well, here we go. Notice the last verse of chapter 6 before we get to chapter 7. What a strange economy this is. King Mosiah was king of Zarahemla, and he was a Nephite not a Zarahemlite. "And king Mosiah did cause his people that they should till the earth [I would say that was an agrarian society, wouldn't you?]. And he also, himself, did till the earth [the king goes out and plows], that thereby he might not become burdensome to his people, that he might do according to that which his father had done in all things." His father had done the same thing; he is keeping the rule his father laid down in all things. As we said last time, here you have the organic constitution of the land. The constitution of Benjamin and Mosiah remains right to the end, and the great rival to it, of course, is that of the Nehors. But here he did as his father had done in all things, including cultivating the earth. He wanted to be like him in that, too.

16,17 Mosiah 6:7 "And there was no contention among all his people for the space of three years." That's as long as Benjamin was alive. Benjamin lived for three years [after Mosiah became king]. So what is going on here? What a strange economy this is in which everybody lives by the sweat of his brow. This was Adam's economy, too. He didn't



live in the stock market; he lived by the sweat of his brow. But should the king be doing that sort of thing? Well, why not. That was Brigham Young's ideal—everybody would spend two or three hours in the field a day. That would be plenty if we all worked. "Then we would have time to do the things for which we are here, namely improving our minds," he said. That's what we should be doing. But this was Adam's economy—both in the garden, where he was told to dress and keep the garden, and out of the garden, where he was condemned to toil and sweat all the days of his life. By the sweat of his brow he would earn his living. Are there such societies? Well, yes. Anciently, the king always cultivated with everybody else.

19 Alma 1:32 This is the situation [personal greed to make money], so what do we get? Well, is this a Book of Mormon lesson? Yes, it is. We just look slightly ahead here to Alma. There's a lot of this, but this is the nearest example. In Alma 1:32 you see the type of character this develops. They "did indulge themselves in sorceries [that's a shortcut], and in idolatry or idleness, and in babblings, and in envyings and strife [highly competitive—envy, strife, babblings, spreading the gossip around; you can injure a person that way]; wearing costly apparel [you must dress for success; what are they doing?]; being lifted up in the pride of their own eyes [as it said, the MBA's are arrogant, ill-mannered, brash, impatient, and condescending; that's pride of their own hearts]; persecuting, lying, thieving, robbing, committing whoredoms [that's on the side, but it's de rigueur. It's what you always get in the TV prime—time], and murdering, and all manner of wickedness."

20 This is what the Book of Mormon is telling us about. Why all this emphasis on economy, etc.? It was never so in my day. We thought this was fantastic, long ago and far away. It was considered romantic. The missionaries always pushed the Book of Mormon as a romantic history and story of the Indians—that's all. We never saw any connections at all in this stuff, but you see what it is now. Therefore, we be to the generation that understands the Book of Mormon. So this is what we reach today—the point

when the fruit is ripe. Is the cup full yet? Remember, the Lord said that he would let it go on until the end, until the fruit is ripe. Then there's no point to letting it go on any longer; it will just rot after that. Or if the cup is full, it can't be diluted or cleansed because it is full. You just have to empty. Then what will happen? "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be at the Second Coming." They bought and sold, they married and gave in marriage, they ate and drank. Everything was normal; it was business as usual. Then in a single day, it hit them. The flood came. Not that there wasn't preparation and warning before it—the prophets were yelling their heads off. But it will be this way, and this is what the Book of Mormon has to tell us.

20 So now we start out our story with chapter seven. This can be [confusing] if you try to trace these people around because later on in the account of Zenos there is a flashback. The whole story of King Noah, etc., all takes place long before this takes place. So it is not put in chronological order here. The person who wrote this had to be very careful. They were juggling plates and records, and the chance of getting things mixed up and using the wrong names, dates, and places, etc., is very great here. You have to sweat to unravel it, but Joseph Smith never missed a point. It was quite a performance!

20 King Mosiah sent some of his Mulekite subjects looking for what? They were looking for a colony that had gone out two generations earlier, not just before. That's why they didn't know where it was. Everybody was dead from that generation, and after they were out of sight who knew the direction they took? They [Mosiah's group] got lost and couldn't find this lost colony. They thought it would be a great thing because they remembered its being sent out. This idea of lost colonies is a common thing

21 Mosiah 7:2,4 Anyway, it says they couldn't find [the colony]. Let's see what it says about it. Verse 2: "King Mosiah granted that sixteen of their strong men might go up to the land of Lehi-Nephi." They kept teasing him about it. This is tradition, and, of course, it's romantic and exciting.

Remember the great treasure hunting in Joseph Smith's time. He was accused of being a treasure hunter because he dug for somebody who was a treasure hunter. Well, anyway these people wanted to go "up to the land of Lehi-Nephi, to inquire concerning their brethren." That land of Lehi-Nephi wasn't the place from which Mosiah had set forth, the land that Nephi went to because that migration was 460 years earlier. That had nothing to do with this; that was something else. This is called the city of Lehi-Nephi here. Their leader was Ammon. He was a "strong and mighty man, and a descendant of Zarahemla. So this was a Mulekite crowd that went. They didn't know the course to take because it had been just about a hundred years before that this had happened. Verse 4: "And now, they knew not the course, they should travel in the wilderness to go up to the land of Lehi-Nephi; therefore, they wandered many days in the wilderness.

21,22 Mosiah 7:5 Anyway, they went to look for this place, and they couldn't find it. They wandered all over the place for forty days, but they did find something. Notice the type of land they came to. Verse 5: "They came to a hill which is north of the land of Shilom, and there they pitched their tents." It was pretty flat country, if the hill was a landmark, which it was we learn later on. "And Ammon took three of his brethren [with very interesting names], and their names were Amaleki, Helem, and Hem."

22 Mosiah 7:7 So we have these Mulekites going out looking for their brethren and lost and unable to find them. They "parked" near a hill, and he chose three of them to go down into town and meet the king. They met the king of the people, and they meant to meet him. They wanted to fall into his hands. They didn't know it would be so unfavorably, but they had to take the risk. It shows that the king was offended here by what happened, because he said, how did you have the nerve when I was out scouting to come right up to my city? He could see them, and he took them in. They were captured on the spot. Of course, they were clever and wouldn't have been taken otherwise. But see how it goes here. Verse 7: "And behold, they met the king of the people

who were in the land of Nephi, and in the land of Shilom; and they were surrounded by the king's guard, and were taken, and were bound, and were committed to prison." Were they being very tactless and careless? No, he meant to see the king. That's what he wanted to do. He had to get an introduction some way, as he tells us later on. After they were in prison two days, they were taken before the king. "They stood before the king, and were permitted, or rather commanded, that they should answer the questions which he should ask them."

23 Mosiah 7:9 "And he said unto them: Behold, I am Limhi, the son of Noah, who was the son of Zeniff, who came up out of the land of Zarahemla." Now here is another of those tricks, one of those micro—critical points. See, he is the third generation. He is Limhi, his father was Noah, and his grandfather was Zeniff.;

23,24 Unfortunately, they had moved right smack into Lamanite territory. The Lamanites had expanded at this time. Remember, they had all been here hundreds of years. There were only eleven years between their two migrations, and this was 460 years later. He "was made a king by the voice of the people." Well, that was the Mulekite king, and that was the way the people had made Mosiah their king, even though he was a stranger. Well, kings were very often chosen, like George I and William I. He forced them to make him king, but there were others that were actually chosen. They came in and took over because people wanted them to be king.

24 Mosiah 7:10,12 "And now, I desire to know the cause whereby ye were so bold as to come near the walls of the city, when I, myself, was with my guards without the gate?" We were outside the gate on patrol, and you had the nerve to come near the walls. He wanted to get picked up at the point. The king didn't see that at the time; it looked like pure insolence. They could have avoided him. Was it at night? If it wasn't night, they were even more bold because they were quickly captured. It took no skill at all in that case. Verse 12: "And now, when Ammon saw that he was

permitted to speak, he went forth and bowed himself before the king [that's exactly what he wanted].... For I am assured that if ye had known me ye would [you would have been glad to see me]. ... For I am Ammon [that good old name], and am a descendant of Zarahemla [a good old Mulekite name], and have come up out of the land of Zarahemla to inquire concerning our brethren, whom Zeniff [ah,ha, the king's grandfather] brought up out of that land." That was Limhi's grandfather, you see. "And now, it came to pass that after Limhi had heard the words of Ammon, he was exceedingly glad [cousin, how are you feeling?], and said: Now, I know of a surety that my brethren who were in the land of Zarahemla are yet alive [again, if Zarahemla had been a mighty city at the time they left it, he wouldn't be worrying whether they would survive or not; it was a very small affair, hanging on probably by the skin of their teeth]. And now, I will rejoice; and on the morrow I will cause that my people shall rejoice also."

25,26 Mosiah 7:15,16 He [Limhi] was exceedingly glad. Verse 15: "For behold, we are in bondage to the Lamanites." See, they walked into a Lamanite trap. The Lamanite king welcomed them in with open arms and sold them the land. He settled them down in this beautiful acreage, and immediately they were paying for it through the nose all the rest of their days. It happens, you see, "for it is better that we be slaves to the Nephites than to pay tribute to the king of the Lamanites." See, they knew that these people were sent out by a King Mosiah and they represented the Nephites. Mosiah brought quite a crowd with him, too. Though Zarahemla was a Miilekite city, it had a Nephite government. They recognized the superiority of the Nephites. This is a very common thing when you have two civilizations come together. The superior one takes over, and sometimes it's just understood. There were the Norman French and the [Angles] and Saxons in England. Verse 16: "And now, king Limhi commanded his guards that they should no more bind Ammon nor his brethren, but caused that they should go to the hill and bring their brethren into the city." You see what kind of country it was because they had been there waiting and wondering what happened to the four men who

disappeared. “They had suffered hunger and thirst and fatigue.” They were looking around for something to eat and for water; they were thirsty. It was a lush jungle with plenty of fruits growing. It may have been pretty far north—like the territory in central Mexico or something like that. The whole scene reminds us very much of a Pueblo Indian society. They have real settlements, permanent cities. “King Limhi sent a proclamation among all his people, that thereby they might gather themselves together to the temple to hear the words which he should speak unto them.” The king is the chief. They use the words interchangeably; it doesn’t make any difference here. And, of course, the temple is the center of everything. That’s the kiva, and it’s a real temple. The temples of the Hopis are built like the temples of South America. They have stairways going up on either side. The best ones are in Hotevilla. Everything takes place there [in the temple]. It would really quite surprise you if you go sometime. There is the first spring festival on March 15 which is all at night by moonlight. It exactly follows the Egyptian rites of the same time. The Havawuhti comes out, and the men march on either side of her. They have the whips and all the rest of it. It’s amazing the way these things go. They are a highly developed civilization.

26 Mosiah 7:18 So they gathered themselves together. The king gave them a speech and told them what was happening here. “O ye, my people, lift up your heads and be comforted [our brethren are still existing].... Lift up your heads, and rejoice, and put your trust in God, in that God who was the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob [they are going to celebrate and dance]; and also, that God who brought the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt, and caused that they should walk through the Red Sea on dry ground.” They knew these traditions if only because King Benjamin, who was a Nephite, had a long reign and taught the people. He was a great antiquarian and forced his sons to learn Egyptian. They would know that anyway as people living east of Jordan. “It is because of our iniquities and abominations that he has brought us into bondage [that’s the old story]. And ye all are witnesses this day, that Zeniff, who was made king over this people, he being overzealous

[he is going to tell us his story a little later on; it was his greed here] to inherit the land of his fathers, therefore being deceived by the cunning and craftiness of king Laman, who having entered into a treaty with king Zeniff [he sized it up; they made a treaty and he signed on the bottom line], and having yielded up into his hands the possessions of a part of the land." He gave him part of the land called the land of Lehi-Nephi. Notice that they were city states, the land or the city of Lehi-Nephi. Every city or village had its surroundings. That was the city state of antiquity until the time of Lehi, when they broke up and became more like empires. One overtook the other. It's exactly in the time of Lehi that we find all this expansiveness, all this colonizing and exploring. This is the tradition here. "And all this he did, for the sole purpose of bringing this people into bondage." He had a clever plan. Just like the sharecroppers, they got half of it and then were stuck for the rest of their lives—a treaty and a trick.

27 Mosiah 7:24,26 So they [the people of King Limhi] had to pay him [the Lamanite king] one half of their corn and one half of all they had. Verse 24: "... how many of our brethren have been slain, and their blood has been spilt in vain, and all because of iniquity." They rebelled against them and tried to get free, but it didn't work. Because of their iniquity the Lord was going to keep them in bondage. "There arose contentions among them, even so much that they did shed blood among themselves." They started shedding blood among themselves, and this is the old story. This is the story of the Indians also. After it is peaceful, they all start fighting each other. They have tribal wars and contentions among themselves and shed blood. "And a prophet of the Lord have they slain ... because he said unto them that Christ was the God, the Father of all things [well, why would he do a thing like that?] and said that God should come down among the children of men, and take upon him flesh and blood." When Jesus said that, they stoned him, too. Was that enough provocation? Oh yes, it was enough provocation. You've got to watch yourself, you see.

27 A person who shows the slightest sign of dissension or disagreement is in real trouble [in certain types of societies]. Well, [if a] prophet went around yelling about things, [he would be put] out of the way. People are being punished for it [that kind of behavior]. Verse 30: “And again, he saith: If my people shall sow filthiness they shall reap the chaff thereof in the whirlwind; and the effect thereof is poison.” That’s pollution, this filthiness. It’s an Old Testament expression, “and they shall reap the east wind.”

28 Mosiah 8 “And he caused that Ammon should stand up before the multitude, and rehearse unto them all that had happened unto their brethren.” He told the story of how they went up out of the land, and they both compared records and compared their stories of what had been going on since. And he told them the last words of King Benjamin, which were very important “so that they might understand all the words which he spake.” So he gave them the laws that Benjamin laid down. Of course, his father, Mosiah, was a great lawgiver, too. As I said, these [laws] became the basic teachings, the “standard work” for these people. Then King Limhi dismissed the multitude that everyone should go to his home. Notice, it is by families, and they all went to their homes. That’s an interesting thing, too. Although societies like the Hopis are very communal and share everything they have—so they will all [survive] they have to—they are very family conscious. They divide into the seven clans. They have clans and groups and belong to clubs which are secret and have their own signs, symbols, etc. Then you have the whole group, and there are very strong feelings among separate tribes and nations there. Read the next chapter and see what happens. Then it gets into the record of Zeniff which is a flashback. Zeniff takes us way back to the time of King Noah. Zeniff was his father, and he was a terrible man. Noah was one of the worst characters in the Book of Mormon, and Zeniff was a great man. So that goes to show you never know.



## Lecture 32 Mosiah 8-10

### **Ammon and Limhi; [A Seer is Defined] The Record of Zeniff**

29 We are on chapter 8 of Mosiah, and it is absolutely staggering what's in here. I've been missing everything all these years. We can't stop for everything, but nevertheless it's jammed in here. Remember that Ammon has come to King Limhi and has been invited to speak to the king. He's in the palace now, and it follows strictly the proper palace procedure as you get it in all the epics, etc. Limhi makes an end of speaking. He tells his story, and then he invites the guest to speak and tell his story. This is a thing that is common in epics, of course.

29,30 Limhi told his story and then Ammon told his story. He stood up before the multitude and delivered a formal discourse. He gave his report by invitation, and remember, he clued them in on the last words of Benjamin and what had been going on in the old hometown. After he had done this, the king dismissed them all. Everybody had been there, and they all went home. Notice, it was small stuff here, but they used exactly the same vocabulary in exactly the same sense with small groups that they did with big groups. I've been thinking about the Hopis, and it's so very true, everything they say here. I make reference to the Hopis because their migrations, their cities, their wars, etc., are so much like this.

30 Mosiah 8:5-8 It happens now that Limhi's people had kept a record of a minor migration. These people were always migrating—always meeting, joining, separating, fighting, etc. This was the story, and they kept records of it, too. I'll mention the four Hopi stones later because I'm one of the very few who have ever seen the real one, the big one. They showed it to me on two occasions. Verse 5: "He caused that the plates which contained the record of his people from the time that they left the land of Zarahemla [Hopi stone number four is a very careful record of the migrations up from the 'great red city of the south.' They think it may have been Palenque, but the red city is Zarahemla], should be brought before Ammon, that he might read them." So he read the record, too. As soon as he read the record, the king said, By the way, do you know anything about how to interpret languages? [paraphrased]. The king told him the story about how they got these twenty-four plates that he wanted Ammon to read. Where was this land of many waters? [verse 8].

30 Mosiah 8:7 In verse 7 King Limhi said they were desperate for relief. "And the king said unto him: Being grieved for the afflictions of my people, I caused that forty and three of my people should take a journey into the wilderness"—let's go back and see if we can get some help from the old country. They were going back to find Zarahemla, but they had been gone for three generations now. Would they be able to find it? He looked to Zarahemla, the mother city, for aid, which colonies always do. Then he said to Ammon, By the way, can you read these things? [paraphrased]. Incidentally, the interesting thing about these people who have kept their records and their legends, etc., is that you can check them because they left their marks everywhere. That's what these glyphs are. The tribes have their particular marks, and they cover vast distances. They don't think anything of crossing the country. During the forties and fifties all our Navajo and Hopi students were very primitive and poor. They would walk home and think nothing of walking back to northeast Arizona and New Mexico. They would walk home for vacation and then walk back again. They could get rides, too, but they thought

nothing of walking. These people really cover distances, so don't worry about Book of Mormon geography. I'm not going to worry about that or even talk about it because there are endless points of argument.

31 Well, forty-three people (that's the size of a company or a troop) took a journey to find the land of Zarahemla. Instead of that, they found where the Jaredites had been, among many waters with the ruins of buildings and the twenty-four plates of pure gold. He asked Ammon if he could translate them. Now we come to the mystery of language. What did he mean by "translate" them? Translate them in general. Some people can; they actually have that gift. Canst thou translate? What do you mean? Which languages? Translate how far? Well, there are people who can do that.

31,32 Mosiah 8:13 They want to know the cause of their [the Jaredites'] destruction. What can this tell us about destruction? Notice, there is always that theme in the Book of Mormon. How do people get destroyed, etc.? Then Ammon explains this business about seers. Verse 13: "I can assuredly tell thee, O king, of a man that can translate the records ... of ancient date; and it is a gift from God [we know a man back home, Mosiah, who has this gift from God, and he can interpret]. And the things are called interpreters [well, the gift is the urim and thummim], and no man can look in them except he be commanded, lest he should look for that he ought not and he should perish [very dangerous, lots of power]. And whosoever is commanded to look in them, the same is called seer. And behold, the king of the people who are in the land of Zarahemla is the man ... who has this high gift from God."

32 Mosiah 8 16-18 "And Ammon said that a seer is a revelator and a prophet also; and a gift which is greater can no man have.... A seer can know of things which are past [and present, and future], and also of things which are to come." As Homer said, ". . . of things that are, things that shall be, and things that were." That's the gift of the seer; he knows all these things. Notice [in verse 17] that this

knowledge is a great blessing: “Hidden things shall come to light, and things which are not known shall be made known by them, and also things shall be made known by them which otherwise could not be known.” This knowledge is by revelation and it comes through faith. Verse 18 is a marvelous verse; it really packs a punch.

33,34 Mosiah 8:18,19 “Thus God has provided a means that man, through faith, might work mighty miracles; therefore he becometh a great benefit to his fellow beings.” It’s all through faith, and it actually is something that couldn’t be done without faith, which is miraculous. And they [seers] are very beneficial to the human race. That’s a powerful statement. God wants us to ask, and he wants us to know. “And now, when Ammon had made an end of speaking these words the king rejoiced exceedingly, and gave thanks to God, saying: Doubtless a great mystery is contained within these plates, and these interpreters were doubtless prepared for the purpose of unfolding all such mysteries to the children of men. O how marvelous are the works of the Lord.” But are we interested? This is how people react to that. Now this is a remarkable thing. Occasionally, we have breakthroughs in the Book of Mormon of what is known as the “wisdom literature.” Recently, it’s the big thing. More articles and studies are written today about this than anything else in Egyptian and Hebrew, showing that Egyptian and Hebrew wisdom literature are the same. The Hebrew and Egyptian wisdom literature are very close.

34,35 Mosiah 8:21 “Yea, they are as a wild flock which fleeth from the shepherd, and scattereth, and are driven, and are devoured by the beasts of the forest.” Well, here is a parable, but what is “the beast of the forest” in this particular case? There are monsters out. Aristotle [described] it very well at the beginning of the *Metaphysics*. He said, Why do we study these things? Because we know darn well that if we don’t we are in real trouble. What you don’t know can scare you [paraphrased]. There are monsters out there. In prehistoric times there were monsters, and they live on in fairy tales, etc. in the gnomes and the trolls. Tolkien capitalizes on it. We have the ancient folk tales, etc. [According to Aristotle]

seeking for knowledge is like flight from ignorance because you're scared of it. It's like ignorance pushes in on you on all sides and is suffocating. Like an airbag or a fog, you have to keep pushing it out all the time because you are in danger if you don't. So this knowledge is very important for survival. If you don't pay attention to things, it may be the end of you. This has happened again and again, and, of course, today we are not paying attention to a lot of things. As it says here, they don't seek wisdom even when she should rule them, and the beasts of the forest are waiting for them there. They flee from the shepherd who could give them good advice and take care of them, but they run away. They know best themselves and they destroy themselves by this AGNOSIA, ignorance.

35 Mosiah 9 In the next chapter we have a flashback. Notice that it has a title: "The Record of Zeniff— An account of his people, from the time they left the land of Zarahemla..." In Omni [28] we read about how they went out and left Zarahemla. [Limhi] is the third generation after they left Zarahemla. They [Zeniff's group] were trying to go back to the land of Lehi-Nephi; now they are in this position. [Limhi] is the son of Noah, they are living in an enclave. Limhi told how they had been completely surrounded by Lamanites. The enclave is very interesting, and we will get to that here. We also learn that Zarahemla was bilingual because he says, "I, Zeniff, having been taught in all the language of the Nephites." Notice how he starts out with a formal introduction, which is required. We have hundreds of Egyptian autobiographies. The most popular form of writing in Egypt is autobiography, believe it or not. This is a formal beginning: "I, Zeniff, having been taught in all the language of the Nephites." That's [very much] like what Nephi says in the beginning: "I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the learning of my father." Notice that the Nephites had their own language; they kept their dialect. The Zoramites still have theirs in Zarahemla.

35,36 Mosiah 9:1 [Zeniff] was taught in the language of his father, and he knew where they had come from. Now,

this is the flashback. He knew the old Nephite country which had been taken over by the Lamanites. Remember, when Mosiah and his group went out of Lehi-Nephi, the Lamanites took over. They left it to them and went out and joined the people in Zarahemla. Then Mosiah became their king. But Zeniff knew about the territory of the Lamanites that they had taken over from the Lehi-Nephites, and they wanted to occupy it again. That's exactly what they wanted to do, as we find out. This is one of the very few cases where the Nephites were aggressors—Zoramites actually. "And having been sent as a spy among the Lamanites that I might spy out their forces, that our army might come upon them and destroy them." So he was sent as a spy to spy out the land. After Mosiah's departure, others were absorbed into the Lamanite people, and they [his group] reinforced the people of Zarahemla. Now the descendants of Mosiah want the land back again; they are expanding.

36 Zeniff is not a Rambo or a John Wayne. Note that it's wise to adopt the enemy's good things. After all, what did we adopt from the Indians? Corn, potatoes, tobacco, chocolate, cotton, all sorts of nice things. Of course, we had cotton in the Old World. In armies and in war you always adopt what the enemy has. That's why armies get to be very much alike. You can't afford to let him have the advantage of a weapon or anything at all that will give him an advantage for any length of time. You immediately have to copy it. That's the best thing to do; you steal it and copy it. That's why spying is so important before anything breaks out to find out what they've got that we don't have because that will give them an edge. In a very short time armies come to look exactly like each other.

36,37 Mosiah 9:2 So Zeniff sees that they have some good things. Why waste it? Let's make a treaty with them and see if we can make some arrangements, he says [paraphrased]. But we see that the leader was Rambo, and he wanted Zeniff to be executed for treason. Zeniff wanted to give aid and comfort to the enemy, which is a definition of treason. This is rough and tough, so they had a wild melee. The breaking up of these groups is a very common thing, of

course. They fight, the leaders fight, and they break up. It's a long, tragic story among the Indians, but elsewhere, too. This wild melee wrecked them. It failed completely, and they had to return crestfallen to Zarahemla.

37 Mosiah 9:2,3; Mosiah 7:21 There was this bloody melee. "Father fought against father, and brother against brother, until the greater number of our army was destroyed in the wilderness [quite a group]; and we returned, those of us that were spared, to the land of Zarahemla. As I said, they returned crestfallen. But Zeniff was still over-zealous. He was gung-ho and not to be discouraged by that.. This third verse is a nice psychological touch. Zeniff himself wasn't so idealistic as he was greedy. "And yet, I being over-zealous to inherit the land of our fathers, collected as many as were desirous to go up to possess the land." So he started again and organized another company to be run by himself. He soon ran into trouble because it was impulsive; they weren't properly prepared. And they were slow to remember the Lord. They were not up to it. They didn't have the necessary preparation here. In Mosiah 7:21 we find, "And ye all are witnesses this day that Zeniff, who was made king over this people, he being over-zealous to inherit the land of his fathers." He just couldn't wait, you see. We don't have heroes and villains here. We just have human beings, typical men. He wasn't as bad as the other leader, but he was bad enough because actually you can see that it was a fight between Zeniff and the other guy. The other guy wanted to eliminate him as his rival, but he immediately took over. He was a direct descendant of Zarahemla and the [father] of King Noah.

37,38 So he wanted to make the takeover on the cheap here, and it didn't work. Like all prospectors and settlers, setups didn't stop him. He organized his own migration and soon ran into trouble, impulsive and ill prepared like the first handcart company.

38 Mosiah 9:5-12 Like Arctic explorers, they [Zeniff's group] reached the camp marking their last advance. They got back to the old camp—a sad sight to see only bloody

remnants there. It marked their last advance and the defeat. They were in country familiar to Zeniff. It was near a city where Ammon was to arrive later, incidentally. He had no trouble in seeing the king and making a deal. (Remember, Ammon had trouble later on.) So he met the king and made a deal. Zeniff should have been suspicious, but, as he says, he was blinded by a promising real estate deal. He was overeager, so he could be taken in, you see. They say that Utah is a fraud capital; that's only because people are eager to get a lot of money in a hurry. Verse 6: "And I went in unto the king, and he covenanted with me that I might possess the land of Lehi-Nephi [which is what he wanted], and the land of Shilom. And he also commanded that his people should depart out of the land, and I and my people went into the land that we might possess it." Now, that's a funny thing; that should have made him very suspicious. (That was a common procedure in ancient times to move out and make way for other people to occupy. A classic example of that is in Caesar's Gallic Wars. The Gallic tribes were doing this all the time; they were a big outfit.) Here is an explanation of the king's behavior in verse 8. Why did they do it? Because the land was run down and needed a lot of rebuilding and repair. The Nephites were industrious, and the Lamanites were not industrious. If you look at verse 12, you see that his own people "were a lazy and an idolatrous people." They didn't want to work, and they had allowed the land to get run down. Verse 8: "And we began to build buildings, and to repair the walls of the city." They had to rebuild and repair things. No wonder the king was eager to let them go in and take it over and fix things up. Then he would just close in on them. See, they were an enclave, completely surrounded by Lamanites.

38 Mosiah 9:11 Then they began to till the soil. Now here's an interesting touch. King Laman knew what he was doing. Notice that it was the Nephite custom to work in the fields—King Mosiah and King Benjamin did. The Nephites were agricultural right down to the ground, so to speak. He [King Laman] knew he could trust them if he gave them the land. They would make it flourish, and then he could take it over. Verse 11: "Therefore it came to pass, that



after we had dwelt in the land for the space of twelve years [things were really flourishing then] that king Laman began to grow uneasy, lest by any means my people should wax strong in the land." You can see why—they were becoming prosperous, and this is what happened. This was the pattern they followed in ancient times—getting people to work for you. Well, that's what we have here. So in verse 11 the Nephites began to get too prosperous.

39 Mosiah 9:12 Verse 12 is the classic confrontation between nomad hunters and farmers. Both of them work hard, but they work hard at their own thing. The nomads have a rough time; they wander seeking the grass, etc., but they take cities and farmers. They take serfs and slaves and put them to work and exchange them with each other as gifts. The farming goes on, but it is their serfs that do it. It was the PATRES and the PLEBS in Rome where the same thing happened. They [the Lamanites] wanted this sort of an order. They desired to bring the Nephites into bondage for that very reason, so they would work for them. They had the upper hand and would hold the Nephites in bondage. That's the feudal system with the lord and his power. Norman laws against the Saxons made it a capital crime for any Saxon to own a weapon—to own a bow as a matter of fact. The punishment was terrible

40,41 Mosiah 9:14 In verse 14 they [the Lamanites] launch a surprise attack, the real blitzkrieg. It was a raid; all ancient wars are raids. They just go in to get stuff. The fresh invaders find everything up for grabs, an exhilarating victory. This [in Zeniff's society] was a surprise attack, and the fresh invaders came in, numerous hosts all at once. They attacked in force and didn't mess around. They didn't filter in or anything like that this time. It was a real blitzkrieg that hit them all at once. It caught them in the fields and with their flocks. They ran to the high places. That's where they would go. If people were in the fields, they ran to the castle. That's what they did. They fled to the castle, to the city, to the redoubt, the ALTIMOENIA ROMA. They called on [Zeniff] for protection, and there were weapons awaiting them there because Zeniff had arms ready for them. He

had foresight here, and he would have more later.

41 Mosiah 9:17 Now this is the Lord's plan in operation in verse 17. Remember, the Lord told Nephi in 1 Nephi 2:24, I'll always have the Lamanites breathing down your neck to stir you up to remembrance. They will have no power over you as long as you behave yourselves, but if you don't then this is what will happen [paraphrased]. And it did stir them up to remembrance. "We were awakened to a remembrance of the deliverance of our fathers." That's what the purpose of this was, and it did stir them up to remembrance, as we read in verse 17. So the plan was in operation. What had happened? A major Lamanite horde had been brought to a halt. The commentary on the population is very interesting—3043 against 279 dead. If ten percent of them were killed, that would mean there were only 30,000 male Lamanites that the king was able to put into battle. It may have been three percent, which is considered the minimum. At the very most, the male Lamanite population would have been 300,000, but it was probably 30,000 or even 15,000. They lost, but since they retreated, they could have saved themselves. There are all sorts of calculations here that you can use.

41,42 Mosiah 10:1-3 Now in the next chapter the subject is the quest for coexistence. The first verse is very interesting. It was necessary to make a reassessment of the situation after what had happened. They were geared for peace, and it lasted twenty-two years, but they had to be wary all the time of the Lamanite administration. They couldn't trust them anymore, not after that sneak attack, as it tells us here. "We again began to possess the land in peace. And I caused that there should be weapons of war made of every kind [they were preparing], ... that the Lamanites might not come upon us again unawares and destroy us." They kept a guard all the time; the Lamanites were no longer to be trusted. They lost but look out, they're dangerous! Notice in verse 3: "We did inherit the land of our fathers [that's what they came for] for many years, yea, for the space of twenty and two years." Again the question comes up, what do they mean by many? If it said many years without twenty-two,

how would you know? Well, fifty years, a hundred years, two hundred years [you wouldn't]. But it says twenty-two years.

42 Mosiah 10:5,6 Then we get the normal, typical Indian culture carrying on—farming with characteristically Indian division of labor. Notice that the men do specific things, and the women spin.. Verse 5: “And I did cause that the women should spin, and toil, and work, and work all manner of fine linen, yea, and cloth of every kind,” while the men did the tilling of the ground. “Thus we did have continual peace [the culture carried on] in the land for the space of twenty and two years.” Then Laman died and there was a new administration. His son was “gung-ho,” and the people were eager to go [to battle]. After all, that was supposed to be their living, so he had no difficulty in stirring up his people. “And he began to stir his people up in rebellion against my people; therefore they began to prepare for war, and to come up to battle against my people.”

42 Mosiah 10:6 Question: When it says, “stir up the people in rebellion,” the word rebellion sounds like the Nephites might have gained some kind of power.

Answer: Yes, after twenty-two years they resented the success of the [Nephites]. They had no power over them, and it tells us why. Remember their traditions were that they had been offended and that the Lamanites were the true masters, and that Nephi was in a state of rebellion. It tells us a little later on that they always taught their children that the Nephites were rebels and they had rebelled against the true authority that should be theirs [the Lamanites]. So it was always preached to them as rebellion. That's a good point to bring out. These subtle things hit us all the time in the Book of Mormon.

42 Mosiah 10:12 Laman died, and, given the nature of the society, they were “chomping at the bit.” As we see in verse 12, they were adapted to living by exploitation. A young man took over who was eager to get going. It was an easy matter to stir up his people with the Nephites and

Lamanites bordering on each other on all sides. He stirred up his people here to get them to make certain claims. But Zeniff had sent out spies. So this sort of thing goes on. That the Book of Mormon [story] should still be going on and still be relevant, and with the same people that we thought had disappeared into nothing, is strange.

## Lecture 33 Mosiah 10-11

**War and Defenses**  
**[The Lord Calls Upon One Man]**  
**[A Testimony is Our Best Defense]**  
**Lamanite Case Against the Nephites]**  
**[King Noah Supported by the People]**  
**[Abinadi in Disguise]**

44 Mosiah 10:8 We are on Mosiah 10:8, and things begin to happen that have a familiar ring. They try again here. Zeniff sent out his spies, and [the Lamanite king] is watchful and doesn't miss a thing. This attack doesn't go so well, but notice the situation and how they do it. He [Zeniff] has his spies watching because he has been burned once. Verse 8: "They came up upon the north of the land of Shilom, with their numerous hosts, men armed with bows, and with arrows, and with swords, and with cimeters, and with stones, and with slings; and they had their heads shaved that they were naked; and they were girded with a leathern girdle about their loins." You notice the standard equipment here—the leather clothing and the wild hairdo. They are like a motorcycle gang, aren't they? They had the equipment and their heads shaved, and they were naked except for the leather garments they had on. They were trying to inspire terror, of course, and this is a very important thing.

44,45 Dressing up is an essential part of soldiering. In any other line it would be considered overdoing it, but you have

to distinguish rank and superiority. The dressing up and all this nonsense is just a necessary part of the uniform, as we read from Clausewitz. The purpose of the military, of course, is to break the enemy's will, not to destroy them. The Lamanites don't want to destroy the Nephites; they want the Nephites to work for them. That's the whole thing—they want to enslave them. There's no point to destroying them. That's exactly what Clausewitz teaches the Generalstab. This was the textbook for World War I. The important thing is to break the enemy's will. When he does what you want, that's all you want—the war is won then. There's no point to body count at all. It's utter absurdity and makes no sense, as the great Clausewitz said. His book is the standard work on war, as you know, *Kriege* by Clausewitz. You want to discourage [the enemy] and make him lose heart, so you make yourself look as terrible as you can when you approach. That will break his spirit sometimes if you look very awful, and they thought it would work. This is part of it. The posture of dominance requires this high profile and distinct superiority. You have to be able to distinguish rank at a distance, of course, in armies. That's why you have the banners and the trumpets. The banners are to distinguish particular units, etc. They all go back to the Steppes of Asia. We won't go into that, but you get more of it in the book of Ether. We'll get to that. As I said, their objective was to put the Nephites to work and not to destroy them. Intimidation is the quickest and easiest way of dominance, so you try that and see if will work. You look terrible, you sound terrible, you threaten, and all this sort of thing. So that's what these people are doing, and they do it all through the Book of Mormon. And it works, [especially] if the people are wicked, feel guilty, and that sort of thing.

45 Mosiah 10:9 So it's all out here, the worst possible case, as we see in verse 9. There's extreme danger for the Nephites, and it requires full mobilization of every bit of manpower they can possibly get. The women and children are taken off and hidden in the wilderness, which follows a pattern, too—hiding them in the wilderness, taking them out of sight, etc. They [the Nephites] were mobilized and

organized according to the pattern of Israel, as we read in the Milhamah Scroll, the Battle Scroll. By age is the easiest, the most obvious, and the most natural and workable way—people of the same age groups working together. So that's what he did; “and I did place them in their ranks, every man according to his age.” So they went up to battle against the Lamanites, and they went up “in the strength of the Lord.” ‘

45,46 D & C 1:17,35 Then we have this interesting thing. The odds are with the Lamanites “as to the strength of men.” Now this is an important thing—peace through strength, as to the strength of men. Of course, we have a marvelous discourse on that, and I'm very tempted to go into it. In the very first chapter, the opening of the Doctrine and Covenants, it deals with this problem very, very much to the point, right down the line. First of all we have an exposition of the situation in verse 17, and things are bad. “Wherefore, I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth ...” He knows what it is, and in verse 35 he says what it is: “... the hour is not yet, but is nigh at hand, when peace shall be taken from the earth, and the devil shall have power over his own dominion” (D&C 1:35). Knowing this, the Lord has taken certain steps, and notice what perfectly rational steps they are. What do we do about it? First of all, he called upon one man, as he always does. “Wherefore, I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments” (D&C 1:17).

46 Just one man in this case, as it has always been. Noah was the only man, Abraham was the only man, Moses was the only man, and the prophets. The knowledge is handed down. It is shared by all of them, as we read in Moroni 7:32. We won't go into that now. He lets others in on the information, too; notice D&C 1:18. “And also gave commandments to others, that they should proclaim these things unto the world [let's spread the news around and get this going]; and all this that it might be fulfilled, which

was written by the prophets.” The ones he summons for this work are not the ambitious or the powerful ones; he mentions weakness repeatedly. He only takes them on when they are weak. “The weak things of the world shall come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones, that man should not counsel his fellow man, neither trust in the arm of flesh” (D&C 1:19).

46 Moses 1:10 Do you tell everybody what to do and back it up with force, which is exactly what everybody is doing today? He says this should not happen; the Lord has what our best defense should be. What about [Moses] in the first chapter of the first book of Moses? Weak and helpless, he said, “Now, for this cause I know that man is nothing, which thing I never had supposed.” It took him hours to get his strength again. He was as weak as a baby, lying as if he were dead on the earth there. As he finally began to stir, that’s when the devil struck. Satan chose that time to attack when [Moses] was at his weakest. It was the same thing with Enoch. “I am but a lad and the people hate me.” He was slow of speech and had no qualifications whatever when the Lord chose him. Moses was also slow of speech, and Aaron had to be chosen to do his speaking for him. And it goes on down with the prophets. “I’m not the prophet nor the son of a prophet.” Of course, Jesus was “despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” A more lowly beginning than a manger could not be imagined. And then Joseph Smith’s story was the same way. He [the Lord] begins with the weak ones because they are the ones who will listen.

46,47 D & C 1:20,21 Everyone must have his own testimony [verse 20], and the first point is faith [verse 21] which is our best defense. It’s very interesting how President Kimball brought this out here. He said, “Few men have ever knowingly and deliberately chosen to reject God and his blessings. Rather, we learn from the scriptures that because the exercise of faith has always appeared to be more difficult than relying on things more immediately at hand [making yourself look terrible, etc.], carnal man has tended to transfer his trust in God to material things. [we’ll



be the strongest, have the most nukes, etc.]. Therefore, in all ages when men have fallen under the power of Satan and lost the faith, they have put in its place a hope in the 'arm of flesh. He is quoting here from the Doctrine and Covenants. This is what has happened here. He goes on here and tells us about ourselves, "Enoch, too, was a man of great faith who would not be distracted from his duties by the enemy: 'And so great was the faith of Enoch, that he led the people of God, and their enemies came to battle against them' [they were on the defensive].... What are we to fear when the Lord is with us? Can we not take the Lord at his word and exercise a particle of faith in him? Our assignment is affirmative: to forsake the things of the world as ends in themselves; to leave off idolatry and press forward in faith; to carry the gospel to our enemies, that they might no longer be our enemies." That was the mission of Ammon in the Book of Mormon. We'll get to him; he was a great man.

47 D & C 1:21 So faith is the next thing that is required in D&C 1:21. Then we enter into the covenant "that the fulness of my gospel might be proclaimed by the weak and the simple unto the ends of the world, and before kings and rulers." And in the next verse it talks about weakness: "Behold, I am God and have spoken it; these commandments are of me, and were given unto my servants in their weakness." You have to qualify by being weak. Where is your "peace through strength" and that sort of thing? Then he [the Lord] explains how he can make us much stronger. The only safe defense you have is this, and it's the perfect defense. It includes three things we find in Moses 7:32. He gave Adam all three things to defend him, and they are these things that follow next.

47 D & C 1:26-28 Imagine yourself wired to receive messages. Well, you're safe then because he can tell you the three things the Lord says he is going to do. First, he says he will give you knowledge. In the Garden of Eden he gave Adam knowledge. That's a good thing to have—knowledge of what's going on. But even if we know what's going on, what do we do about it then? [Second] You have

to have instructions, advice. That's what you asked for. The Lord gave knowledge and instruction, and then when they went wrong, [Third] he gave them correction. That's what it says here. Verse 26: "And inasmuch as they sought wisdom they might be instructed [about what to do—first they received knowledge]... And inasmuch as they were humble [there's your weakness again] they might be made strong, and blessed from on high, and receive knowledge from time to time."

48 D & C 1:25 With that you receive instruction. But even in obeying the instructions you make mistakes; you always blunder or go the wrong way. "And inasmuch as they erred it might be made known." He tells you when you are making mistakes. So you have information, you have advice, and you have correction—and you have it from one who knows everything. If you follow that, you are perfectly safe. He [the Lord] says he has given them everything here, and this is how he helps the Nephites out. He says, if they are weak I'll give them knowledge.

48 D & C 1:30 Finally, in verse 30 of the Doctrine and Covenants he tells us that it is specifically the Church through which we receive this information. That's where we get the message conveyed. Through the Church we receive the knowledge and the instruction and the correction to act together and know what we are doing, you see. So we have to cooperate; that's what the Church is there for—to get these things going together.

48,49 Mosiah 10:12-17 Very interestingly, from verse 12 to verse 17 he gives a very fair, honest, and unbiased presentation of the Lamanite case. The Lamanites had a case, too. They had a reason. They felt offended and threatened. They saw the Nephite power building up, and King Laman started to get worried when he saw the Nephites getting too strong. That's why they began to make trouble for them. Then he stirred up his people to make trouble so they would do something about it. Here [in verse 12] it says, "They were a wild, and ferocious, and a blood-thirsty people." But they firmly believed "that they

were driven out of the land of Jerusalem because of the iniquities of their fathers, and that they were wronged in the wilderness by their brethren.” They blamed Nephi for everything. That [explains] the terrible pressure that Nephi was under at the end of 1 Nephi—his discouragement and absolute desperation. He was pressed all the time and held responsible for everything. They said Nephi was to blame for it all, and they firmly believed that because they were taught that by their fathers and would teach it to their children. And the basic thing is defense. Clausewitz also said, “All wars are defensive. You are always just defending; you never attack.” That’s the first rule.

49 Mosiah 10:13 That’s what they did here, and it’s very important. That’s necessary for morale and justification and everything else. Of course, they could understand this, and they had been wronged. Verse 13: “And again, ... they were wronged while in the land of their first inheritance, after they had crossed the sea [you notice then that the author puts in parentheses the real explanation of what it was], and all this because that Nephi was more faithful in keeping the commandments of the Lord [that’s what their real ‘beef was about]—therefore he was favored of the Lord, for the Lord heard his prayers and answered them, and he took the lead of their journey in the wilderness [this is what they resented]. And his brethren were wroth with him because they understood not the dealings of the Lord; they were also wroth with him [poor Nephi] upon the waters [they tied him up] because they hardened their hearts against the Lord. And again, they were wroth with him when they had arrived in the promised land, because they said that he had taken the ruling of the people out of their hands; and they sought to kill him.” They felt they were robbed; the objection was that the Nephites had betrayed them. They were the real ones in charge, and the Nephites had taken away their birthright, their right to rule. This [feeling] was built up.

49,50 Mosiah 10:16 : “And again, they were wroth with him because he departed into the wilderness as the Lord had commanded him [Remember, he broke off and left

them; they said he shouldn't have done that. That was betrayal; that was treason. You see how these things get started], and took the records which were engraven on the plates of brass, for they said that he robbed them." They said he robbed them of their inheritance. They had no interest in those plates. What did they care about the plates until he took them? "And thus they have taught their children that they should hate them [They built this in, so really, if you were a Lamanite, you would have a good case. You could argue and pound the table and make your case very clear that Nephi was the younger son and had no right to those things he took. The other brethren went along, etc. You would build up a big argument], and that they should murder them, and that they should rob and plunder them [to get their birthright back], and do all they could to destroy them; therefore they have an eternal hatred towards the children of Nephi."

51 D & C 1:17 Notice that the Lamanites did all they could to destroy [the Nephites]; that was the solution. They didn't just leave them alone; they tried to destroy them in this eternal hatred. They tried to destabilize, undermine them, strike them wherever they could, and keep constant pressure on them. We have the Book of Mormon, [to warn us]. I should have mentioned this in connection with D&C 1:17. "Wherefore, I the Lord, knowing the calamity which should come upon the inhabitants of the earth, called upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., and spake unto him from heaven, and gave him commandments." And gave him the Book of Mormon. This is a special handbook for these particular dismal times.

51 Mosiah 10:18-20 King Laman set his trap and bided his time all those years. Notice, "For this very cause has king Laman, by his cunning, and lying craftiness, and his fair promises, deceived me, that I have brought this my people up into this land, that they may destroy them; yea, and we have suffered these many years in the land." All these years this has smoldered. So Zeniff roused them up and stimulated them to go to battle. If you must fight, you do as he did. Verse 20: "And it came to pass that we did

drive them again out of our land; and we slew them with a great slaughter. . . We returned again to our own land, and my people again began to tend their flocks, and to till their ground.” It was right back to square one again, which is an interesting thing. All wars in the Book of Mormon take place on Nephite territory, except the last one. We are told in Mormon 4:4, “And it was because the armies of the Nephites went up unto the Lamanites that they began to be smitten; for were it not for that, the Lamanites could have had no power over them.” As soon as they did that, he knew “the jig was up.” In the next verse he says, Don’t worry about the wicked neighbors you have. “But behold, the judgments of God will overtake the wicked; and it is by the wicked that the wicked are punished.” If you feel you must punish them, you’ll get right into it yourself. “It is by the wicked that the wicked are punished.” [Mormon 4:5] The Lord repeatedly says in the Book of Mormon, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay.” At the end it is climactic, but it is already [going on] at this time.

51,52 Mosiah 11:1,2 Then in the next chapter we see that Zeniff is not a man of very good judgment. You notice that he has done foolish things. In Mosiah 9:2-3 he got into trouble with the leader of the crew. He wanted to make peace, but he wasn’t too tactful about it. He was partly responsible for the breaking up of that group. Then soon after he insisted on leading another expedition which was poorly equipped, and they suffered from hunger and thirst. They had a terrible time because they weren’t properly prepared. Then he gave the kingdom to a son who was [a poor ruler]. It shows at best that he doesn’t have good judgment because the son was a rotter. But this is the most interesting thing. His judgment wasn’t the best, but we overlook the fact that the wicked Noah was an extremely popular king. He was the most popular king in the Book of Mormon. We say, “He was wicked; terrible Noah.” We look at pictures drawn by Arnold Friberg, and we say, “Ooh what a fiend he was!” But he wasn’t that way at all. He was very popular, as I said. Notice, when it says, “Do that which was abominable in the sight of the Lord,” that’s a euphemism. That’s when you use one word to cover another word, particularly a displeasing

word. A good example of that is the EMERODS in the Bible. Hemorrhoids are not nice, so they used a totally different word for it. Where it is used here, abominable means kinky sex and whoredoms in the plural, all kinds of depravities. This is the idea. What's more, we read that the people went along with it; they joined him in it. "And he did cause his people to commit sin, and do that which was abominable in the sight of the Lord." It wasn't just in his court that they were doing it; he set an example that was followed. "Yea, and they did commit whoredoms and all manner of wickedness." That covers a lot. Oh, yes, for EMERODS they used the word APAR which just means dust. It was a complete coverup; you'd never guess what it meant from that. But this is the same thing, and it covered a lot of vices, you can be sure.

52 Mosiah 11:3-6 "And he laid a tax of one fifth part of all they possessed." Now that was a perfectly normal tax, twenty percent, in all ancient societies—Babylonian, Egyptian, everywhere. It was not oppressive; you could still prosper with it. But, of course, [the problem] was what it was used for—the waste it was put to. The next verse tells us that; he did it all to support himself. It was a whole new ball game, a new culture. Talk about a new administration\ It says, "thus he had changed the affairs of the kingdom." He completely changed the whole thing. He put in new personnel all the way—his wives and his concubines and his priests and their wives and concubines. Remember, it was a sacral state, a priest state. He was the priest king. They were the priestly governors, and they were the highest court of law. He changed the whole personnel. He made a clean sweep and put down all the priests that had been consecrated by his father. He removed all the priests that were in there and consecrated new ones to suit his own fancy, "such as were lifted up in the pride of their hearts." They were proud and were going to take over and really do things—and note the kinds of things they were going to do!

53 .Mosiah 11:6,7 Notice, "thus did the people labor exceedingly to support iniquity." Now the fact that they worked hard doesn't sanctify their wealth or the uses of

it. Remember, Jacob said, you have worked hard, and by your industry you have acquired great wealth. But it's vile; you shouldn't have it. The fact that you have worked for the stuff doesn't mean that it is sanctified at all. Here the people were all for the program. He was a very popular king and put on a great show. "Thus did the people labor exceedingly to support iniquity. Yea, and they also became idolatrous, because they were deceived by the vain and flattering words of the king and priests [he told them what they wanted to hear; they joined in it and were won over by the official rhetoric, the flattering which the public loves to hear] for they did speak flattering things unto them."

53 Mosiah 11:15,9 They joined with Noah in his excesses, too. We read in verse 15: "He became a wine-bibber, and also his people." They joined him in all these things. And, of course, elegant and spacious buildings are the things we're proud of; they are the things that make the civilization. They're very showy and magnificent with all the work in the metal, etc. The Book of Mormon complains of it all the way through—the costly apparel. It's not beautiful necessarily, but it's costly. That's the main thing about it. Verse 9: "And he also built him a spacious palace, and a throne in the midst thereof." He got great public support on that too because they were proud of that and proud of their king. But the palace and the throne are legitimate appurtenances of civilization—architecture, building, the temple, of course. Anciently they put it all on in the temple. This was the big thing.

54 Mosiah 11:9,11 "And he also built him a spacious palace, and a throne in the midst thereof, all of which was of fine wood and was ornamented with gold and silver and with precious things. And he also caused that his workmen should work all manner of fine work within the walls of the temple, of fine wood, and of copper, and of brass." He was pouring it on because that's the way it was.. Verse 11: "And the seats which were set apart for the high priests, which were above all the other seats, he did ornament with pure gold; and he caused a breastwork to be built before them, that they might rest their bodies and their arms upon while

they should speak lying and vain words to his people.” It was magnificent and impressive. They would sit there in their majesty and speak to the people. You know what they would speak to them. This brings up a very interesting parallel, but we’ll go on.

56 Mosiah 11:13-15 “And it came to pass that he caused many buildings to be built in the land Shilom; and he caused a great tower to be built on the hill north of the land Shilom [you can be sure that was a great square tower, a great defensive tower] . . . and thus he did do with the riches which he obtained by the taxation of his people. . . . He placed his heart upon his riches, and he spent his time in riotous living with his wives and his concubines; and so did also his priests spend their time with harlots.” They had a high old time here. Then he planted vineyards, and this is an important thing, too. “. . . he planted vineyards round about in the land; and he built wine-presses, and made wine in abundance; and therefore he became a wine-bibber, and also his people.” See, he brought them along with him. Wine is native to America, as you know. You know where Vinland is? Martha’s Vineyard, etc.? In the year 986 Bjorni Haraldsson was a merchant who, along with Eric the Red, sailed along the coast of Labrador and New England. They came down as far as Massachusetts, reported grapes around there, and went back. Then exactly in the year 1000, which is easy to remember, his son, Leif Ericsson, visited the coast and came back with a lot of grapes. Then another merchant followed in 1002, just two years after that. He took 160 people with him in three ships, and they lived there. Then there was the usual thing, the big fight. They had the big squabble, broke up, and went back again. But the land was rich in grapes here. Who else do we have? That’s about it. Well, the Skraelings, the Eskimos. They did away with them; the colony disappeared after a while. The point is that they called it Vinland and they were good grapes, which are native to America. But they could have been planted by other people. A very important thing they are finding today is that the whole geographical face of the earth now is the result of man’s work to a far greater degree than we ever supposed, including even things like the



Sahara Desert, vast as it is. It's the result of our monkeying around.

56,57 Mosiah 11:16 Against this rich and apparently strong kingdom, the Lamanites adopt a policy of terrorism—infiltration, but it's terrorism. It's not banditry which is just stealing. Bandits and pirates can be good-natured and even be friendly. These people are animated by hatred and by a policy. They are real terrorists, in other words. They think they are idealists, as it tells us here. Verse 16: "And it came to pass that the Lamanites began to come in upon his people, upon small numbers, and to slay them in their fields, and while they were tending their flocks." Then it says in the next verse: "Thus the Lamanites began to destroy them, and to exercise their hatred upon them." See, they were motivated to exercise their hatred; they were real terrorists. Remember they had the case that they were just freedom fighters for their particular cause, etc. This is terrorism, not just banditry. They didn't just come in to rob them. "The Lamanites came upon them and killed them, and drove many of their flocks out of the land; thus the Lamanites began to destroy them, and to exercise their hatred upon them." This is a very bad thing, this terrorism.

57 Mosiah 11:18,19 Then the Lamanites became bolder. They infiltrated en masse, and the army gave them an unexpected setback. Verse 18: "King Noah sent his armies against them, and they were driven back [they got overconfident; they had been getting away with this] or they drove them back for a time; therefore they returned rejoicing in their spoil." With that easy victory, surprised and elated by their performance, they suddenly found themselves standing tall. They were very much pleased with the game. That was fun, and they began to enjoy it. The author deplores the situation; he holds the administration responsible. "And now, because of this great victory they were lifted up in the pride of their hearts [Well, why not? What is wrong with victory? They were enjoying the shedding of blood and having the upper hand; it tells us that here, you see]... Thus they did boast, and did delight in blood, and the shedding of the blood of their brethren." The Lamanites

are their brethren, and they shouldn't do that, even with the bad Lamanites. Moroni never refers to the Lamanites as anything but their brethren. They shouldn't have done that. "They were lifted up in the pride of their hearts; they did boast in their own strength, saying that their fifty could stand against thousands of the Lamanites; and thus they did boast, and did delight in blood, and the shedding of the blood of their brethren, and this because of the wickedness of their king and priests." Would he be responsible for that?

57,58 Now we get the story of Abinadi, which has a most striking parallel. You talk about recurrent scenarios; there's nothing more striking than this story of Abinadi and the story we have of the Teacher of Righteousness in the Dead Sea Scrolls. His story is Abinadi's story at the same time. This happened about the second century B.C. the same way. We find it in the Damascus Fragment, the Manual of Discipline, the Habakkuk Scroll, and the Thanksgiving Hymns from Qumran. So both of them are well documented, and they both go through the same routine, like this idea in Mosiah, "that they might rest their bodies ... while they should speak lying and vain words to his people," etc. The 1Q8 says, "But they did lead my people astray, speaking smooth things, practitioners of vain rhetoric. Lying speakers and vain seers [they are called]. In their insolence they would sit in judgment ... and from the mouths of lying prophets led astray the people." See, they were just like these people.

58 Mosiah 11:19 Then Mosiah says, "They did boast, and did delight in blood, and the shedding of the blood of their brethren, and this because of the wickedness of their king and priests." And the Damascus Fragment says, "And they took the offensive against the life of the righteous and all who walked uprightly, and they hated in their hearts and pursued them with the sword, and rejoiced in controversy."

58 Mosiah 11:26 "When Abinadi had spoken these words unto them they were wroth with him, and sought to take away his life; but the Lord delivered him out of their hands." In the Hodayot Scroll, They sought to take away

my life and shed my blood, but our God has helped the weak and the suffering out of the hand of the one who is stronger than he.”

58 In Mosiah 11:28 the king says, “I command you to bring Abinadi hither, that I may slay him, for he has said these things that he might stir up my people to anger one with another, and to raise contentions among my people; therefore, I will slay him.” In the 1Q8 the prophet says, “I became a man of controversy ISH RIB, a troublemaker, to the preachers of error.” And Joseph Smith says, “I was destined to prove a disturber and annoyer of Satan’s kingdom.”

58 Mosiah 12:1 “And it came to pass that after the space of two years that Abinadi came among them in disguise, that they knew him not, and began to prophesy among them.” Then here he says, “For they drove him out of my land and like a bird from my nest, and all my friends and relatives they turned against me.”

59 Mosiah 11:23-26 “And it shall come to pass that except this people repent and turn unto the Lord their God, they shall be brought into bondage ... and I will suffer them that they be smitten by their enemies.” The Lord will allow all this to happen; there comes a time of no return when even prayer won’t do. “And except they repent in sackcloth and ashes, and cry mightily to the Lord their God, I will not hear their prayers, neither will I deliver them out of their afflictions.” Once the shooting starts, that’s that. It’s too late then, and they’ve got to remember that. The people didn’t like that and were very much upset by it. “When Abinadi had spoken these words unto them they were wroth with him, and sought to take away his life.” Noah was in a rage and said, by what authority does this upstart speak? Abinadi is called a troublemaker and a subversive for stirring up the people to contentions—just making trouble. The more corrupt a government is the more zealous it is for law and order; it has to make a show of that.

59 Mosiah 11:29 They failed to see Abinadi’s point completely. Verse 29: “Now the eyes of the people were

blinded.” They didn’t see the point of the real evil, and they were determined to root out the protestor, to condemn and fire the whistle blower. He was the one who was guilty [according to them]. The people were blinded, “therefore they hardened their hearts against the words of Abinadi, and they sought from that time forward to take him.”

59,60 Mosiah 12:1 He enters among them in disguise, and he appears among them saying, “Thus has the Lord commanded me, saying—Abinadi, go and prophesy unto this my people, for they have hardened their hearts against my words.” Well, that’s some disguise if he says “Abinadi.” No, that’s not it. He says that he was only able to enter into the town that way. They would have stopped him long before at the gates. He was in their midst when he cast off the disguise, as it says here. “And it came to pass that after the space of two years that Abinadi came among them in disguise, that they knew him not, and began to prophesy among them.”

60 Well, you see the same thing in the Old Testament and in the New Testament when Jesus went in disguise to the Passover so they didn’t know him. In John 11:54 the Lord is disguised, and the prophets went about in disguise. Saul was in disguise when he visited the Witch of Endor, etc. Disguising is very common; Isaiah is an example. They go and hide themselves. Elijah hid and was fed by ravens. They hide and disguise themselves and circulate among the people. They are also hid by the people in their houses. That’s the normal career with the prophets. He tells how he went and lived among the fishing people, then went out into the desert for a while, and then came back. To get into the town he was disguised. But when he was in there, he cast off his disguise and preached to them as Abinadi. It hit them like a bolt of lightning and there was more trouble. (You find in John 11:54 where the Lord is disguised.) So Abinadi came back and began to prophesy and really got things stirred up.

60 We will start next time with Abinadi’s sermon. Incidentally, these chapters 12-16 are one of the most

important doctrinal parts of the Book of Mormon. Chapters 15 and 16 are probably the hardest chapters in the Book of Mormon. Abinadi turned out to be a tremendous teacher, and he was a nobody. Then we get to Samuel the Lamanite, who was even more offensive.

# Lecture 34 Mosiah 12-14

## **Abinadi's Message [Abinadi's Literary Style] [Law of Moses] [Nephite Character Determined Their Fate]**

61 We are on chapter 12 of Mosiah where he [Abinadi] comes among them. He gains entrance in disguise, and once in the midst of them, he throws off the disguise. That is a common device of the prophets, and angels do it. We are told that men have often entertained angels unawares. And the Lord himself was not recognized. It's a way to get an audience.

61 Mosiah 12:2 We have a very interesting thing here. This is an important element that we need to mention here right now. Verse 2: "And the Lord said unto me: Stretch forth thy hand and prophesy, saying [this is what's going to happen; this is the picture]: Thus saith the Lord, it shall come to pass that this generation, because of their iniquities, shall be brought into bondage; they shall be smitten on the cheek; yea, and shall be driven by men, and shall be slain; and the vultures of the air, and the dogs, yea, and the wild beasts, shall devour their flesh." This is resumed when somebody reports to the king later on, in verses 11 and 12, the things that will happen.

61,62 Mosiah 12:4 "I will smite this my people with sore afflictions, yea, with famine and with pestilence; and I will cause that they shall howl all the day long. Yea, and I

will cause that they shall have burdens lashed upon their backs; and they shall be driven before like a dumb ass." Why? They make such gorgeous things and make them as hideous as they can. It's an interesting psychological study, isn't it?

62 Mosiah 12:8 Then we come to the east wind and the insects and the pestilence, which follows the war. And verse 8 tells us, "Except they repent I will utterly destroy them from off the face of the earth; yet they shall leave a record behind them, and I will preserve them for other nations which shall possess the land; yea, even this will I do that I may discover the abominations of this people to other nations." Well, why worry about the abominations? Why go out of your way to show how abominable they were? Why keep the record just to show that these people were destructive and wicked and this is what happened to them? This seems to be a very negative approach to history, doesn't it? Well, this is for a definite reason and purpose. We should know that today.

63 Mosiah 12:3,11 This time Abinadi expected to be caught, of course. He threw off the disguise and said who he was. He wanted an audience with the king, and he got it. They took him to the king. Then they accused him of this prophecy. Now this is a very interesting study in textual criticism because this is what he said. Verse 3: "The life of king Noah shall be valued even as a garment in a hot furnace; for he shall know that I am the Lord . . . [verse 11] And again, he saith that thou shalt be as a stalk, even as a dry stalk of the field, which is run over by the beasts and trodden under foot. And again, he saith thou shalt be as the blossoms of a thistle, which, when it is fully ripe, if the wind bloweth, it is driven forth upon the face of the land."

64 Mosiah 12:3 Abinadi is the most interesting character from the point of view of literature of any writer in the Book of Mormon because he is very subtle and clever. In his long speech here he uses puns, and a bitter humor comes through. And he knows the scriptures and sticks to them. He chides these people for not knowing the scriptures, for

their ignorance. They claim to know them and he says, you're ignorant; you don't know anything about them. "The life of king Noah shall be valued even as a garment in a hot furnace." And [the king's] servants report to him, "And he also prophesieth evil concerning thy life, and saith that thy life shall be as a garment in a furnace of fire. . . . And again, he saith that thou shalt be as blossoms of thistle, which . . . the wind bloweth."

65 Mosiah 12:13 "And now, O king, what great evil hast thou done, or what great sins have thy people committed, that we should be condemned of God or judged of this man. And now, O king, behold, we are guiltless, and thou, O king, hast not sinned; therefore, this man has lied concerning you, and he has prophesied in vain [How do we know we are righteous? Because we have prospered, they said]. And behold, we are strong, we shall not come into bondage, or be taken captive by our enemies; yea, and thou hast prospered in the land, and thou shalt also prosper." They are talking about the king. They are pretty nice, and this is an important thing. The message here is we are good because we are strong and prosperous.

65 A special concern of the prophets, and especially in the Book of Mormon, is the self-image. This is a big thing in the Book of Mormon, as you know. The more corrupt and wicked people are, the more they insist on their respectable, proper, decent, upright self-image. After all, who dresses flawlessly in the height of style? But this is a necessary fiction if they are to meet the charges and put the prophets in the wrong.

67 Mosiah 12:15 "And behold, we are strong, we shall not come into bondage, or be taken captive by our enemies." This was a very religious, sacral society governed by priests. Like in Thebes, they were priest kings. Then King Noah caused that the priests should gather to consult. The king summoning his wise men together to consult about things is a standard theme in ancient literature, of course. Not only [the priests of Pharaoh trying] to baffle Moses or the priests of Baal trying to baffle Elijah, but especially in the



life of Abraham, as a child or a grown man. Every time Abraham threatened the king, the king immediately called his wise men, and then there was a contest between them. Moses' staff [turned into a serpent and] ate the other seven serpents. And actually from the Old Kingdom there is in the Pyramid Texts mention of that—the staff serpent that eats the seven other serpents. It's a very old story.

67,68 Mosiah 12:17 So we have this competition between the [prophets] and the king with his official wise men. He calls his counselors or wise men. This is a theme in the scriptures; we get it all through the prophets. We get it in Revelation where they call together the wisest people they have, and all their wisdom comes to nothing. They put their heads together and have no counsel at all; they are absolutely paralyzed. We reach that stage. Just by adding more men to the committee, you're not going to make it any smarter. You might add up their total IQ and get a good hundred [laughter], but that won't do it. Verse 17: "And he commanded that the priests should gather themselves together that he might hold a council with them what he should do with him."

68 Mosiah 12:18 The king is worried. He is a very interesting character. He's a playboy and has made himself very popular. He's not entirely bad. He had a good father, but his father showed bad judgment in making him king, etc. But he has his problems, and he is going to have more of them, too. Verse 18: "And it came to pass they said unto the king: Bring him hither that we may question him; and the king commanded that he should be brought before them." They are going to question him, so here we have a DISPUTATIO. It's like Luther in Worms, where they brought all the councils together to face him. There are lots of these.

68 Mosiah 12:19 Notice the one question they ask him. Verse 19: "And they began to question him, that they might cross him, that thereby they might have wherewith to accuse him; but he answered them boldly, and withstood all their questions, yea, to their astonishment; for he did withstand them in all their questions, and did confound

them in all their words.”

68 Mosiah 12:25 : “And now Abinadi said unto them: Are you priests, and pretend to teach this people, and to understand the spirit of prophesying, and yet desire to know of me what these things mean? . . . For if ye understand these things ye have not taught them; therefore, ye have perverted the ways of the Lord.”

69 Mosiah 12:27-29 In verse 27 Abinadi says, “Ye have not applied your hearts to understanding.” They hadn’t really made an effort to understand; we will see that in a minute. Verse 28: “And they said: We teach the law of Moses. And again he said unto them: If ye teach the law of Moses why do ye not keep it? Why do ye set your hearts upon riches? [see, he hits that first] Why do ye commit whoredoms and spend your strength with harlots?”

69 Mosiah 12:33 He goes on in verse 33: “I know if ye keep the commandments of God ye shall be saved; yea, if ye keep the commandments which the Lord delivered unto Moses in the mount of Sinai... Have ye done all this? I say unto you, Nay, ye have not.”

69 Mosiah 13:27 Abinadi said, “I say unto you that it is expedient that you should keep the law of Moses as yet; but I say unto you that the time shall come when it shall no more be expedient to keep the law of Moses.”

70 Mosiah 13:30,31 Abinadi goes on: “Therefore there was a law given them, yea, a law of performances and of ordinances.” You have to go through the forms as a drill, keeping yourself on the road. It’s a discipline. However well you might understand it, it prepares you for serious things. They were to observe this “strictly from day to day,” but they didn’t pay attention to that. “But behold, I say unto you, that all these things were types of things to come. [They did not understand the law] and this because of the hardness of their hearts.”

70 Mosiah 13:33 “For behold, did not Moses prophesy unto them concerning the coming of the Messiah, and that God should redeem his people? Yea, and even all the prophets who have prophesied ever since the world began—have they not spoken more or less concerning these things?” It has all been about the Messiah, he says.

71 Mosiah 12:20 “And it came to pass that one of them said unto him: What meaneth the words which are written, and which have been taught by our fathers, saying: How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings; that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good; that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth . . . Break forth into joy; sing together ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem.” What he is asking is this: If you are a true prophet, why don't you bring us this good news. Why don't you teach us to rejoice; that's what prophets teach. This is the kind of message you should deliver—good tidings that publisheth good and salvation, that bring joy and comfort to the people. Why aren't you bringing comfort and joy if you are a real prophet? That was a logical thing to ask because they believed that we should enjoy ourselves and teach people what they want to hear. If you were a prophet like this, you would bring us good news.

71 Mosiah 12:24 ; 15:31 “The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.” Well, that's a cheerful promise. Notice that it was the corrupt priests of Noah who were quoting these comforting words. They knew the scriptures, too, but they used them to back themselves up. We reinterpret things today very comfortably for ourselves, also.

71,72 Mosiah 12:25-28 “And now Abinadi said unto them: Are you priests, and pretend to teach this people, and to understand the spirit of prophesying, and yet desire to know of me what these things mean? I say unto you, wo be unto you for perverting the ways of the Lord! [they were

twisting the words, as Abraham said] For if ye understand these things ye have not taught them; therefore, ye have perverted the ways of the Lord. Ye have not applied your hearts to understanding [it's a lawyer's interest you have, how you can manipulate and interpret the words; you haven't applied your hearts to understanding this at all]; therefore, ye have not been wise [what are you teaching this people?] ... And they said: We teach the law of Moses [they insist that's it, and then again:]. If ye teach the law of Moses why do ye not keep it? Why do ye set your hearts upon riches? Why do ye commit whoredoms and spend your strength with harlots, yea, and cause this people to commit sin, that the Lord has cause to send me to prophesy against this people, yea, even a great evil against this people? ... ye know that I speak the truth [that's why you feel bad] . .. And what know ye concerning the law of Moses? Doth salvation come by the law of Moses?"

72 That's the old law, the law of forms and observances. Salvation is Atonement—the center and climax of all the laws in the Day of Atonement, when we become one with everything. Atonement is the “universal field” that brings everything in. John 13-17 deals with that— how the Father and the son are one, the Apostles will be one with them, they to whom they preach will be one “even as we are one.” We will all be one. We will all be joined together hereafter in the world to come, when the world is as it should be. There will be the Great At-one-ment, the bringing together. This we don't have here, but the law of Moses prepares us for that.

72 Mosiah 12:33; 13:27 “I know if ye keep the commandments of God ye shall be saved.” The law of Moses will lead you on the way. Then he gives the Ten Commandments, but notice the thing he plays up here is that there shall not be any images. He talks about that here. Notice verses 12 and 13 in the next chapter. What about the graven images? Why bow down to them and serve them? Because see what was happening—there was a strong tendency at this time in the religion to go to idols. Idols became the big thing with these people, along with

this lush, overdone sort of art, etc. The images, idols, and the visible display became a big thing. So he emphasized idols first of all because that was the way the religion was going, and that's the way it went all the way. The first thing about the idols is that you should not bow down to them. Then he recited the Ten Commandments, and he said "And have ye taught this people that they should do all these things? I say unto you, Nay, ye have not. In Mosiah 13:27 he says, "I say unto you that it is expedient that ye should keep the law of Moses as yet; but I say unto you, that the time shall come when it shall no more be expedient to keep the law of Moses." But it was certainly not now; that's what he talks about here.

72,73 If this were an Old Testament class, we'd go through Deuteronomy especially, but also Leviticus and Exodus. The law of Moses is far more humane, broad-minded, and just than the law we live by today in this country. It's amazing how humane and generous and kind it is. Yet we talk about the old, savage, tribal law of an "eye for an eye." etc. What a lot of nonsense! As Abinadi says, we don't really study; we don't want to find out what it really says.

73 Mosiah 13:28 "And moreover, I say unto you, that salvation doth not come by the law alone [this is the point here]; and were it not for the atonement [That's the key; salvation isn't the law, it's the atonement, the arrangement that the Lord Jesus Christ made by which we are all going to be brought together again and become one with the Father. Without that] they must unavoidably perish, notwithstanding the law of Moses." The law of Moses doesn't take care of the law of entropy. The Book of Mormon tells us very clearly that the Atonement does.

73 Mosiah 13:29,30 Then he talks about their being a stiff necked people. Even with a very strict law "they were a stiff necked people, quick to do iniquity," so the law was adapted to them. Is this the best the Lord could do with the chosen people? Nobody seems to be willing to accept it, and that's true. No one has accepted it; no one keeps the law of Moses today. Are we ready for the higher law? He gave them

the law of Moses, which they did not keep. Why do we have lawyers? Why do we need the Word of Wisdom? It shouldn't even exist [for us] because we shouldn't be able to break it. That's a lower law which is preparatory. But you have to keep it; you're not going to be saved without keeping the Word of Wisdom. So you say, "See, saved by the Word of Wisdom." Nobody said anything like that. Remember, the introduction in Doctrine and Covenants 89 says, "Given for a principle with promise, adapted to the capacity of the weak and the weakest of all saints, who are or can be called saints." This is a step you have to go through before you can expect the other things. So keep these preparatory laws like that. You do certain things and carry out certain instructions, which they were to "observe strictly." Is there virtue in that? Yes, there is. But in nothing else than that? No, as the prophet said, that just prepares you; then you go on. Verse 30 states it beautifully: "Therefore there was a law given them, yea, a law of performances and of ordinances, a law which they were to observe strictly from day to day, to keep them in remembrance of God and their duty towards him."

73,74 That's why we have the sacrament; it's in remembrance. It's about the only set ritual we have outside of the temple, isn't it? The same words always have to be repeated, and repeated in exactly the same way. The bread and water have to be passed the same way, etc. We have a rite there, and we say it is in remembrance, to keep our minds on track, to keep ourselves concentrated on that. It's an act of duty and obedience. "Why do you do this?" the [angel asked Adam]. "I know not save the Lord commanded me." Then [the angel] told him why, but first he requires that you do it—the law of sacrifice.

74 Mosiah 13:31,32 "But behold, I say unto you, that all these things were types of things to come [they are similitude's]. And now, did they understand the law?" They didn't understand the law in the Old Testament, and they didn't understand it in the New Testament, as the Lord makes very clear. They don't understand it in the Book of Mormon. We don't understand it in the Pearl of Great

Price; we pay practically no attention to it. And we don't understand it in the Doctrine and Covenants. We slide over these things. He says here, "Nay, they did not all understand the law; and this because of the hardness of their hearts; for they understood not that there could not any man be saved except it were through the redemption of God." As Mosiah said, Always keep in remembrance your own nothingness and the greatness and goodness of God; then you can always manage to be happy [paraphrased] [Mosiah 4:11]. But that's the thing you have to do.

74 Mosiah 13:33 "Did not Moses prophesy unto them concerning the coming of the Messiah, and that God should redeem his people? Yea, and even all the prophets who have prophesied ever since the world began—have they not spoken more or less concerning these things?" (This is an important verse in the Book of Mormon.) Well, they could ask, Where does Moses speak of these things? Where do the prophets tell us about the Messiah? The Jews still ask that. They say, "We don't see any Messiah there." Well, in the next chapter he proceeds to recite chapter 53 of Isaiah, which is the source of much of Handel's Messiah. That's the very thing he was talking about; this describes the coming of the Lord. This says that he shall come forth in the form of a man and go forth in mighty power—that "God himself shall come down among the children of men.... Yea, and have they not said also that he should bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, and that he, himself, should be oppressed and afflicted."

74 Mosiah 12:23,24 Well, all that is in the Old Testament, but, as I said, you don't have to see it there. The Jews don't see it there at all. In Mosiah 12:21-24, he talks about the same thing. Verse 24: "The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God? [verse 23]: Break forth into joy; sing together ye waste places of Jerusalem ..." This was a passage that they themselves quoted, which prophesies the coming of the Messiah.

75 Then he quoted these wonderful words from Isaiah

53. Most people find this impossible to believe, so naturally it starts out, “Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?” As I said, most people find it impossible to believe; they say that John and all the rest can’t possibly have meant this literally. It’s out of the question—this is in a spiritual sense. They forget that if Christ had spoken spiritually, he never would have had any trouble with the scribes, Pharisees, or anybody else because spiritual was the thing in that day. Everybody had gone hermetic, you see. A spiritual Father? Fine, no objection whatever. Spiritual sacrifice? Fine, no objection whatever. It was because it was real that they were sorely offended; they couldn’t take that. So [Abinadi] talked about it.

75 We all know these immortal lines: “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief . . . Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.... He was wounded for our transgressions [this is the Atonement—the price that was paid to bring about an atonement, the reconciliation]... . All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way [Section 1 of the Doctrine and Covenants says, ‘Every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, ... whose substance is that of an idol, which waxeth old and shall perish in Babylon, even Babylon the great, which shall fall].... He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter [that’s the sacrifice].. . . For the transgressions of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked [as low as you can get], and with the rich in his death; because he had done no evil, neither was any deceit in his mouth. ... When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities . . . and he bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.”

75,76 Mosiah 13:1 This is too good to miss, talking about the sharpness of Abinadi. The character of the man stands



out very sharply. Let's go back to the text in chapter 13: "And now when the king had heard these words, he said unto his priests: Away with this fellow, ... for he is mad." That's the great solution. That's the Stalinist solution—a nice way to handle your enemy. You don't have to be responsible for him. You don't have to give any answer or explain if a person is mad. This is an alien mentality; there's nothing in common between you. There's no fault or sin or anything like that; you can do what you want and just put him out of the way. By calling him mad, the king won't have the pain of putting a prophet to death. Just treat him like he's mad and lock him up. He [the king] won't be under any responsibility to believe him or anything like that, so that takes care of it. The "alien mentality argument" exonerates both opponents and solves your problem.

76 Moses 6:38 They used [the alien mentality argument] for Enoch (Abinadi is an Enoch character), John the Baptist, and Elijah. They are wild men [people said]. "There's a strange thing in the land; a wild man has come among us." He scared them; it was a culture shock. If they went his way, it would be an awful jolt. They had to assume that he was mad because they were frightened. That's a beautiful expression in the Book of Moses, "There's a strange thing in the land; a wild man has come among us." Let's go up in the mountains and see this strange guy and listen to what he has to say, his ravings, etc. They treated John the Baptist the same way. Remember, he was "the mad mullah of the desert." He dressed in camel skin and lived on wild locusts and honey. The people flocked out to see him, etc. Josephus said an interesting thing about him. When people asked him who [John the Baptist] was, Josephus didn't know his name. He knew all about him, but he didn't know his name was John because he never told anybody his name was John. He said he was Enoch, a very interesting thing, and they took him for Enoch Redivivus, "the returned Enoch." And, of course, Enoch is going to return with Elijah, another one who was treated the same way. So this Abinadi character, the wild man prophet, is a masterful invention of Joseph Smith, if you want to put it that way. That Joseph Smith could do almost anything!

76 Mosiah 13:3,4 Abinadi said, You are angry with me because I tell you the truth [paraphrased]. “Touch me not... for I have not delivered the message which the Lord sent me to deliver; neither have I told you that which ye requested that I should tell.” He said, You asked for a message; don’t throw me away now. You know darn well I’m not mad [paraphrased]. Then his face shone. He was something special, and they were overawed. They “durst not lay their hands on him, for the Spirit of the Lord was upon him; and his face shone with exceeding luster, even as Moses’ did while in the mount of Sinai, while speaking with the Lord.” And Joseph’s in Liberty Jail. We have an Enoch figure, something very special here. “Yea, and I perceive that it cuts you to your hearts [see, they were overwhelmed] because I tell you the truth concerning your iniquities. Yea, and my words fill you with wonder and amazement, and with anger.” The establishment had drifted so far.

76,77 Mosiah 13:10 Here is another very interesting statement in verse 10: “But this much I tell you, what you do with me, after this, shall be as a type and a shadow of things which are to come.” The choice is up to you, he says; you will do according to your nature. The Arabs say “a man will do according his nature.” Or, as the immortal Heraclitus said, “A man’s character is his fate.” What you will do is determined by what you are. Of course, that’s the tragedy—not what happens to you, not what becomes of you, but what you become. It’s finished, as far as that goes; the Book of Mormon makes that wonderfully clear. Long before the Nephites were exterminated, they had ceased to be a civilized people. They were finished because of their character; they couldn’t do anything but lose. So he said, I tell you what you do with me shall be a type and shadow of what will happen to you. You will do according to your nature and suffer accordingly [paraphrased]. Your character prescribes the role you play and all its consequences.

77 Mosiah 13:11 Here is some of his bitter humor in verse 11. They are the great scholars who have been asking him questions about the scriptures. “And now I read unto you the remainder of the commandments of God, for I

perceive that they are not written in your hearts.” I have to read them to you now because they are not written in your hearts. Oh, you have studied all your lives, and you are great students of what? Iniquity—you have studied and taught iniquity all your lives. He commends their study and their knowledge, but he is going to read a simple thing to them because they don’t understand it. It is not written in their hearts. Then he says, “I perceive that ye have studied and taught iniquity the most part of your lives.” They are great students, but students of iniquity. He gets some dirty digs in here.

77 Mosiah 13:12 Then he refers to the graven image again because, as I said, graven images were getting to be the thing—to bow down and worship them. Then he goes through the Ten Commandments. Well, the time is up now; we’ll have to resume later with all these things.

## Lecture 35 Mosiah 15-16

**The Fullness of the Gospel**  
**[God Himself Shall Come Down]**  
**[Importance of the Son]**  
**[Breaking Through the Bands of Death]**  
**[First and Second Resurrection]**  
**Human Nature**

78     2 Nephi 9:7 We are told that the Book of Mormon contains the fullness of the everlasting gospel. That has often been challenged. Does it have everything in it? Well, what is the gospel? What is a fullness of the gospel? The gospel, of course, is the good news. In Old English that's either GODSPEL or GOODSPEL. EVANGELIUM is another word that's used. It means the good message. What is the good message? The good message is that all is not lost—because aside from the gospel, all is lost. Nobody else has anything to offer. You hear a lot of impressive talk today, and you see documentaries on the religions of the Far East. They are ancient and impressive, but not as ancient and impressive as the Western ones. The whole philosophy they have to offer you is, “If you don't expect anything, you won't be disappointed because you definitely aren't going anywhere.” It's true—we're not going anywhere. That's the point: without the gospel, you are helpless; 2 Nephi 9:7 will tell you what our situation actually is. He doesn't mince matters here; it's the law of entropy that's at work here. “Wherefore, it must needs be an infinite atonement—save it should be an infinite atonement this corruption could not

put on incorruption.” We are doomed and fixed.

78,79 2 Nephi 9:7 The gospel is the only alternate plan that was ever offered. You have legends and myths, but the Hades—hereafter of the Greeks, Germans, etc., is a very, very bleak situation. But this is different. “Wherefore, the first judgment which came upon man must needs have remained to an endless duration [this is our natural state]. And if so, this flesh must have laid down to rot and to crumble to its mother earth, to rise no more.” We would be absolutely finished. But we have the gospel, so we don’t have to take that.

79 That’s what these two chapters [Mosiah 15 and 16] are about. They are perhaps the hardest chapters in the Book of Mormon. They are the most important and the most condensed because here we are going to find the fullness of the gospel message that we need to be saved. They read like a lot of theological verbiage, but they aren’t. Actually these chapters have a precision which is disturbing. It’s the precision, the accuracy, the literalness that are disturbing. They are not theological jargon at all. If we take these things seriously, we are really in for it. You’ve got to make a decision here. If it’s all or nothing, if it’s that important, you just can’t fool around with it. By seriously, I mean viewing the whole discourse as factual. We are alarmed by being committed to this all the way, you see.

79 And yet if these things are not real, there is nothing. They are mere words. The earliest Christian apologist was not Justin Martyr; it was Aristides. He was arguing with a learned pagan who said, “Well, of course, we understand resurrection and things like that. They are to be taken allegorically, spiritually, and abstractly.” “Oh, no, there you have it all wrong. That’s the whole difference,” Aristides said. “If these things are not real, they are nothing. It has to be the real thing or it’s nothing. You can have all the words and abstractions you want; that doesn’t interest us. We are interested in really carrying on hereinafter.”

80,81 Either the world knows the gospel or it doesn’t. That’s why you have this huge gap here, and that’s what these two

chapters deal with. We are dealing with two totally different spheres. There is a great and yawning gulf between them, and we want to get over into the one because we think it is possible here. The plan has been given; this is the plan by which we are going to do that. But those in the other sphere have great potential. That's where we are, but it is only potential. Their superior brethren want [those in the lower sphere] to come over and join them; they want to make that possible. We want to join them in their perfect way of life. We have visitations; we have revelations and all sorts of things—angels breaking through, etc. We want to come and join them, but we on this side have not yet qualified for it. We're far, far from it—way out of the picture. So we must be put on probation if we are going to make it at all. That's the word the Book of Mormon uses throughout, "Therefore this life became a state of probation." We are being tested every minute we are here to see how we will do. Every minute you have to make a decision, and it's never too late to make the right decision, as Ezekiel 38 says. If you have made the right decision every day of your life and suddenly decide to make the wrong decision, then you are on the way down. Then you are wicked. If you have been wicked and made wrong decisions every day of your life and finally decide to make the right ones, then you are righteous no matter what you have done in the past. It depends not on how high or low you are on the stairway but in which direction you are facing. If you are facing down, your condition is lamentable. If you are facing up, your condition is joyful—even though you may be on the bottom step facing up. It's the direction you are facing. We are subject to this test here. We haven't qualified for it [the higher life], so we are put on this time of probation to determine who, if any, can come up to the required standards. Can we do that?

81     2 Nephi 2:21 "And the days of the children of men were prolonged, according to the will of God, that they might repent while in the flesh." Isn't that a break that I've been able to hang around this long? I can do some high class repenting, and it's about time, too. I can catch up on my repentance, and that's going to take a bit of doing. You repent all the time because that consists of two things,

as the Book of Mormon tells us. It is GNOTHI SEAUTON, "knowing yourself as you are." Remember what King Benjamin said, "I would that you always remember your own nothingness." Know what you are and bring yourself around. The other part is "to endure in that knowledge." You have to keep repenting and repent every day, unless you are perfect. When can you stop repenting? When you are like the Son, full of grace and truth. Then you can stop repenting; there won't be need for anything else. You will have all knowledge, all truth, and nothing but grace. That's to be well meaning and have no ulterior motives and nothing else but pure charity. Grace is what charity is. Charities and grace are the same thing. CARITAS is cognate with the Greek CHARIS, and that's our word grace. Anyway, when you are full of grace and truth, then you can stop any old time.

81 Mosiah 15:1 We begin here with Mosiah 15:1, and how disturbing it is. "And now Abinadi said unto them: I would that ye should understand [this is something you have to understand] that God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people." That is a hard one to take; that's why they would always start stoning the prophets, etc. That's why they said he was worthy of death. Remember, this is the only crime they could charge against him: he said that God himself would come down among them. This was very disturbing. These people are less than they could be, and they've had a setback, a fall. We are [subject to] the Fall and must be redeemed and brought back. To do that he [the Father] doesn't just send an angel, or a dream, or raise up a leader because the leader would be just as fallible as anybody else. No, it is God himself that comes down, and that is really something. And while he is here dwelling in our kind of vulnerable flesh, "And because he dwelleth in flesh he shall be called the Son of God [not God, but the Son of God] and having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son."

81,82 The Son is not second rate. He is as close as you can be without being identical [with the Father]. We talk about

the rivalry between the Caesars and the Augustuses that led to the Council of Nicaea in 325, when the big fight was about [the question], “Is the Father jealous of the Son, or the Son jealous of the Father? If they are equal, then the Father is jealous of the Son. If they are not equal and the Son is lower, then the Son is jealous of the Father.” People in those days couldn’t think of it in any other terms but that because, after all, each Caesar had an Augustus ruling with him, and each was jealous of the other’s power. They were always poisoning each other and knocking each other off. And Constantine, who called the convention in 325, had gotten to the top. He had eliminated everybody, even his own family, by poisoning and other forms of murder. That’s the way you got to the top. He was the man who presided over the Christological question: Is Christ equal to the Father? You can see the terms everybody was thinking in; we’ve been loaded with that.

82     Moses 1:39 Well, that has nothing to do with it. Why should the Father be jealous of the Son, or the Son jealous of the Father? This is what glory is for, to be shared. The more it is shared, the greater the glory. It’s not like something else—giving out a little of it and not having as much left. No, his glory is this. “For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). He brings them up, and then his glory is increased. Glory increases the more it is spread around. So this is a different concept. He comes down himself, but he comes as a Son. He is the Son of God. Again, we don’t argue about the Christological question, the equality, etc. In coming down here and following commandments, he identifies his will with the will of the Father. He does exactly what he is told to do because he is setting the example for us. We must do the same thing; it’s going to make this very clear here. That’s why he comes down here, and he is called the Son.

82,83 Why is the status of Son so important? Because he is not here to rule and reign, which is his proper calling when he returns. Remember, he says, “I will return to my kingdom and the glory I had with thee before the world was.”



He lays it all aside to come here to do the will of another [the Father], to show us how it is done. We must not take over the reins. For all our free agency, we would recognize the will of the Father if we only had the wisdom. Being highly imperfect, shifting, uncertain, worried, frightened, and ignorant as we are, we must attach ourselves to someone who is none of these things. As a son to a father, we attach ourselves to the Lord. Isn't it nice that we make all our covenants with God alone, and not with each other? We are unreliable among ourselves, not equally, but nobody is completely reliable. We are shifting, slippery, uncertain, worried, and frightened. If two such people make a contract with each other, what a slippery interface that is. Either one of them could slip, or be tempted, or fall, or lie, or anything else. It compounds the danger if you have two people like that. The covenants we make are with the Father. We don't even make a marriage covenant between two people; each one covenants with the Father. If he [or she] breaks the covenant, he knows whom he has to deal with. It's not a case of personal rancor, suing each other, or anything like that. We all make direct covenants with the Father. That's a marvelous thing, you see. We are right in it there. If there is anything that can bring people together as one, it's to have all made that same covenant because they all have it in common.

83 Moshah 15:2 Verse 2 indicates that we do not sacrifice our own agency or intelligence at all, such as it is. But we recognize a good thing and want to be identified with it. The identification of the Son with the Father is complete. As an ardent pupil of the violin, in that respect you want to be as much like the teacher as possible. Then you can become your own master when you have mastered all that he has to teach you. But you are eager to identify with him.

83 Mosiah 15:3 "The Father, because he was conceived by the power of God." What does that have to do with it? The status of the Father goes back to another order of existence, obviously way back there. He [the Son] was conceived by the power of God, a godly power which is not of this earth

and has nothing to do with this earth at all. This is a place where men dwell in perishable flesh, a condition designated as “the Son.” Not second rate, but completely dependent. They are identical species working on different levels. This is the whole point—we are identical species. We get this in 3 Nephi when the Lord goes and prays. It’s the very same thing we have in John 13-17, showing exactly how we are identical. If the Father and the Son are one, we are one with the Son; thereby, we are one with the Father exactly as they are one. Of course, the Bible says that over and over again, and people won’t believe it. They say, “John can’t be that naive; this must all be just spirit.” So they make John the most ghostly, the most spiritual, the most unreal of all the gospels. They say, “John is the great mystery.”

83 Mosiah 15:4 They hold that supreme power which belongs only to “the very Eternal Father of Heaven and of earth,” as it says in verse 4. Notice, this is connecting up to something very big indeed. They are one God, that’s why “the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth.” If you go back to the eternities, time and space take on totally different meaning.

84 Mosiah 15:4,5 “And they are one God, yea, the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth.” That’s a very thrilling statement to make—that we are in on that. Then the next verse tells us that the flesh is to the spirit as the Son is to the Father, or the Father is to the Spirit as the Son is to the flesh. It’s exactly alike. They both belong to the spiritual order of things. The flesh is not against the spirit but “subject to the Spirit,” we are told. When mortals become totally subject to God, they will have passed the test and are ready to go on. You have to be subject—that’s the thing. “... the flesh becoming subject to the Spirit, or the Son to the Father, being one God, suffereth temptation, and yieldeth not to the temptation.” This is saying that you belong to this same category. He came to the same category as you. He was tempted just as much as you are, etc. You don’t have to give in, but we all do because that was the Fall. That’s where Adam did give in. This is necessary for experience, knowing the good from the evil.

84 Mosiah 15:6-8 “And after all this, after working many mighty miracles among the children of men, he shall be led, yea, even as Isaiah said, as a sheep before the shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth.” He left the celestial circuit to bring us into that celestial circuit, you might say (verses 6 and 7). The Lord must come down to us to arrange for our removal to a higher realm; we can't go up there to make arrangements. He must come to us to give us a chance to acknowledge him, and accept the offering, and understand what the thing is. It's a sort of marshaling area here. Verse 8 tells us that it is a physical breaking of confining bonds, a barrier beyond which life ceases. The bands of death have to be broken, as we are told in 2 Nephi 9:7. The second law would be in effect if it weren't for that.

84,85 Mosiah 15:8 You have to break through something; you have to gain a Victory [over death]. There is an absolute block there, a stone wall, and you'd never get through it if somebody didn't know how. “... giving the Son power to make intercession for the children of men.” He has done that; he has broken the way through and makes intercession for us. He can get us through, too, if we follow certain instructions.

85 Mosiah 15:9 It says here, “He arranges for us to emerge on the other side. He is our admission to the other order.” He goes ahead as our sponsor then. This is interesting that he sponsors us. Notice verse 9: “Having ascended to heaven [he goes up there; he wants to sponsor us and get us in], having the bowels of mercy; being filled with compassion towards the children of men; standing betwixt them and justice [we haven't deserved all this; to deserve eternal life is really something; but he says we have good stuff in us, and he doesn't want it all thrown away]; having broken the bands of death [he did that], taken upon himself their iniquity and their transgressions, having redeemed them, and satisfied the demands of justice.” Then he says, Now can I get them through? [paraphrased]. It will be on certain conditions that they would be glad to accept for what they are going to get out of it. So he goes ahead as our sponsor and clears the legal difficulties. There

is serious doubt about whether our admission is really justified, so he generously intercedes for us. He breaks the barrier, and then he faces the problem of our legal right to go on. Do we deserve it? No. His argument on our behalf is for mercy and compassion.

85 There is a great wealth of ascension stories—the ascension of Abraham, the ascension of Isaac, the ascension of Paul. It was in 1878 that Haug, a German scholar, first discovered the ascensions. There is an ancient ascension text for every apostle and every prophet you can name, and every ancient hero. These are stories in which he ascends to heaven and visits, and then comes back and reports. There is a vast number of texts on this particular thing. But in the ascension texts, the person who goes to heaven is rebuffed—whether it’s Abraham, Enoch, Isaac, Jacob, Paul, or Peter. The heavenly hosts say, “Look, they are human beings. They are tainted with all sorts of imperfections; we can’t have them in here. That’s when the Lord says, “No, I’m here to vouch for them. I’ll sign for them. I’ll take the responsibility for them.” So then it’s all right.

86 Mosiah 15:10,11 Let us go on. Here we are getting into the picture. As it has here, he [the Savior] intervenes with his goodness and mercy. Verse 10: “Who shall declare his generation?” This is a quotation from Isaiah. Who will sponsor this particular generation? These characters, do you trust them? Who will vouch for them? Then it says he introduces them as his ZERA which means “progeny, one’s very own.” All the way through the Old Testament seed is freely translated that way because it means seed in many senses. This is what has happened. Now, who shall vouch for this generation? “Behold I say unto you, that when his soul has been made an offering for sin he shall see his seed.” He shall see his progeny and accept them as his very own. The next verse says who will qualify. First, the prophets and all those who follow their teachings. “Behold I say unto you, that whosoever has heard the words of the prophets, yea, all the holy prophets who have prophesied [from the beginning] concerning the coming of the Lord—I say unto you, that all those who have harkened unto their

words, and believed that the Lord would redeem his people, and have looked forward to that day for a remission of their sins,... these are his seed, or they are the heirs of the kingdom of God.” That’s who we mean. Those are the ones who will enjoy his intercession and will become successors.

86,87 Remember, in the most famous of all the parables the sower went forth to sow his seed. Then he [the Savior] compares himself with the sower. Some accepted the seed and some didn’t. It calls to mind both the Lord as a sower who sows his seed, whose work is the planting for ages to come, and the patriarch Abraham who establishes his line. We all know that expression “the seed of Abraham.” It’s the line and it’s representative and productive. In Alma, the gospel plants the seed. He says that you must plant the seed in yourself. Our word SEMINARY comes from that word. It’s a germinal planting, anything that grows and leads to more of the same. It’s used about an equal number of times for progeny and any productive project in the scriptures. It’s designed to be fruitful and bring forth more of the same—the on-going, expanding, life process that we see in all nature. As we are told to begin with right in Genesis, “each bearing seed after its own kind.” A seed is anything which is productive of more. This is the seed image that we get here of the parent, which is the same as the parent of such like image—Father and Son. It’s all one. Which generation is which? This is what you call atonement, at-one-ment—bringing everything together in one particular plan.

88 Mosiah 15:11, 15-18 He tells us here in verse 11 that only the healthy seed hear the gospel and believe that the Lord will redeem them if their sins are remitted, which he alone can do. He gives them life as a parent; they are his seed. The prophets are his seed. They are his productive offspring because “these are they who have published peace.” There’s no need for conflict if the good tidings guarantee salvation. Verses 15-18: “And O how beautiful upon the mountains were their feet!” Why the feet? Well, it’s the feet that bring the message, so we have the stock phrase from Homer, those beautiful lines. [In mythology]

whenever a messenger, like Hermes, received a message, immediately upon receiving the message—without any delay—to his feet he bound his beautiful slippers. KALA PEDILA is beautiful feet, and we get our word PEDAL from that. “They were immortal, they were golden which bore him over the seas, or over the endless expanse of the earth like a wind.” His sandals are always represented as having wings. It’s the winged messenger, the messenger that comes to the door, the postman who brings the good news. So it’s the feet that you hail—”How beautiful are the feet of him upon the mountainside”—because he is the messenger. You can hear his footsteps. Ah, here he comes—clump, clump, clump. Well, not if he is riding on the wind, as Hermes is here. This is a theme that is very beautifully brought out in the story of Joseph and his brethren before they went down to Egypt. We won’t go into that though. He [the Savior] has redeemed his people. What a message! The poetic and romantic parts of the Old Testament are culturally aligned to the Mediterranean Minoan zone; they use that business of the feet, “How beautiful are the feet,” which means “How beautiful is the one who brings the message.” Without the feet he would never deliver the message. He doesn’t need his hands. He could hold it in his mouth, but he has to have feet to deliver it. Well, we won’t split hairs over that.

88,89 Mosiah 15:19 Whoever thought up such a scenario as we are going into here? Where did it ever come from? Verse 19: “For were it not for the redemption which he hath made for his people, which was prepared from [ah, ha, nobody made it up here; it goes way to the beginning and takes us to another realm entirely] the foundation of the world, I say unto you, were it not for this, all mankind must have perished.” There you have what we are told; that would be the second law. But somebody somewhere had enough knowledge, wit, power, and virtue to break that—to get us out of that. It begins with a basic proposition which recognizes entropy and that all mankind must perish. Are we cheated? Here [we] are, “One moment and annihilation’s waste.” This fundamental fact was taken into consideration from the foundation of the world, and something was done about it. Otherwise, it says, we would not be here—”all

mankind must have perished.”

89 The next verse says that those in charge are neither stupid nor cruel. This was only to be a preliminary; the answer to mortality was resurrection. But how could that be arranged? The power to give life is unlimited.. When we are talking about anything as fantastic as the Resurrection, don't be too fast. We accept ideas now that we never accepted in my day. Now, everybody accepts it as a matter of course. Step by step we are approaching nearer to this fantastic picture that we are given, which we call the gospel, “the good message,” especially in these two chapters of the Book of Mormon. So it has to be the resurrection here. “But behold, the bands of death shall be broken, and the Son reigneth, and hath power over the dead; therefore, he bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead.” How did he do it? Well, it's power and energy. There has to be some form of energy that will do it; and he has it. He knows what it is.

89,90 Mosiah 15:21 “And there cometh a resurrection, even a first resurrection; yea, even a resurrection of those that have been, and who are, and who shall be, even until the resurrection of Christ.” Why does it make such a fuss about the first resurrection? We are going to be resurrected anyway. First, second—a little waiting around won't do any harm, will it? What is the difference? Well, as it tells us here, the first resurrection isn't a time— it's a condition. You are resurrected in a different condition from what you are in the second resurrection—the condition of dwelling with God. The time isn't the important thing if you can dwell with him. The second resurrections take place on another level, too. There are others later. So to come forth in the first resurrection will be a great privilege— the condition of dwelling with God.

90 Mosiah 15:22,23 “And now, the resurrection of all the prophets, and all those that have believed in their words . . . shall come forth in the first resurrection; therefore, they are the first resurrection. They are raised to dwell with God who has redeemed them [that's the first resurrection; that's

why it is so very important]... And these are those who have part in the first resurrection; and these are they that have died before Christ came, in their ignorance, not having salvation declared unto them.” And the children qualify for the first resurrection if they would have received it. Not all of them heard the prophets. That includes little children, who don’t hear the prophets. “And little children also have eternal life.”

90,91 Mosiah 15:27 When such a One puts himself out for you, his kindness is not lightly rebuffed. He is kind and forgiving and may not hold it against you. He is only warning you what you are doing to yourself by this foolishness; you are missing the chance for eternal life. He says in verse 27 that he can’t help you if you won’t go along. Everybody is going to be given a chance. “Therefore ought ye not to tremble? [for those who would not keep the commandments] For salvation cometh to none such; for the Lord hath redeemed none such; yea, neither can the Lord redeem such [he can’t even if he wanted to]; for he cannot deny himself; for he cannot deny justice when it has its claim. And now I say unto you that the time shall come that the salvation of the Lord shall be declared to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.” That is important, too; it has to be a universal thing. Everybody is going to be given a chance. The gospel doesn’t just apply to those who are in the Church, who have accepted it or rejected it. Everybody is going to be given the test in one form or another. Of course, that’s where the temple work comes in. The universality is a very important thing.

91 Mosiah 15:29 “Yea, Lord, thy watchmen shall lift up their voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion.” The earth has been the scene of Zion before; Enoch’s Zion was here. There have been Zions before. Well, he is going to bring it again. This is repeated, of course, in the Doctrine and Covenants. We are all in it together, and we should enjoy it all the more being together and seeing eye to eye. Incidentally, we are all saved as individuals; we all make our own covenants with the Lord. But because we



are all in it together and we all experience this together, we know what others are feeling, and we can feel with them. We have perfect empathy, so we see eye to eye in these things when the Lord brings Zion. Of course, you can put it in other words. The Lord called his people "Zion" because they were of one heart and one mind; they saw eye to eye. We'll see eye to eye when Zion comes again. We'll see that we are in it together, and it's all one grand, happy family, etc.

91 Mosiah 15:31 "And all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God." Now Abinadi is preaching these things to King Noah. They've heard the scriptures. These priests he is talking to are proud of their knowledge of the scriptures. Remember, they tried to stump him with passages from Isaiah—"how beautiful upon the mountains," etc. They know what he's talking about, but he is explaining now what it means. Of course, this is completely beyond them. They don't get this at all because they have just been living it up and giving their own learned interpretations of things, like the doctors in the schools.

91,92 Mosiah 16:1,2 The next chapter begins by repeating the theme of universality "when every nation, kindred, tongue, and people shall see eye to eye and shall confess before God that his judgments are just." Well, that will be Zion indeed when it's universal. "And then shall the wicked be cast out." It will be a purged society then, and they will be of one heart and one mind. Those who would not participate will be simply wild at being left out, but what could they expect "because they would not hearken unto the voice of the Lord." He wanted to redeem them, but it all depended on their agency. When the wicked are cast out, there will be weeping and wailing "because they would not hearken unto the voice of the Lord; therefore the Lord redeemeth them not. For they are carnal and devilish, and the devil has power over them." They are under Satan's power. In Moses 4:4 he says that all who do not obey God will be in Satan's power. He is telling the truth, of course—you are. You have your choice between them here. We are here in a position of choice, and you can't just hang around in limbo all the

time saying, “I won’t go this way, or I won’t go that way.” Remember what [John] said to the Laodiceans. The Lord said, “I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth” (Revelation 3:15-16). I will have nothing to do with you; I want you to be hot or cold, one or the other. “For they are carnal and devilish, and the devil has power over them; yea, even that old serpent that did beguile our first parents, which was the cause of their fall; which was the cause of all mankind becoming carnal, sensual, devilish, knowing evil from good, subjecting themselves to the devil.”

92 Mosiah 16:3 Even becoming carnal, sensual, and devilish, you are not completely sunk in evil, though you wonder about somebody like Bundy, don’t you. That’s about as far as you can go, and it shows how far you can go. None of us have gone that far, I’m sure, but we all somewhat partake of that. Everyone can share his feelings and vicious temptations to some degree because all mankind has become carnal, sensual, and devilish—but “knowing evil from good.” He knew it all along, of course. That became clear. He went all the way down, and yet all the time he knew evil from good. Because of the pious way he talked in the end, he showed that. It was just a bluff, “knowing evil from good, subjecting themselves to the devil.” You do that freely. It’s very interesting that in the valley here we have a lot of devil cults and people like that. It’s quite widespread in the country. They don’t even know what the devil is. It sounds romantic to them, I suppose.

92,93 Mosiah 16:4,5 Well, this is the normal declination of human nature, and it would have been final. After all, if you are carnal, sensual, and devilish, where are you going? You are not going to pull yourself up by your own bootstraps. What can you do then? Well, we would have been sunk if God hadn’t intervened. Verse 4: “They would have been endlessly lost were it not that God redeemed his people from their lost and fallen state.” This doesn’t come in the course of nature. Evolution no longer follows an unimpeded, unconscious course of natural selection at all. Any biologist will tell you now that it isn’t natural selection

anymore. Man has long been in a condition where he makes his own selection—natural selection “ceased” a long time ago with the human family. We do our own selection now, and it’s a deliberate selection. How long has that been the case? Verse 4 says that mankind would have been lost, but God redeemed his people. “But remember that he that persists in his own carnal nature [that’s your vicious circle; he makes himself worse; it’s an obsession, like the paranoid, etc., he is not going to get out of it], and goes on in the ways of sin and rebellion against God, remaineth in his fallen state and the devil hath all power over him. Therefore he is as though there was no redemption made, being an enemy to God.”

93 He has declared himself for the other side [an enemy to God]. Why would anybody be as foolish as that? Well, that isn’t a moot question. It’s fact—we don’t say why. As Professor Wormuth used to say up at the University of Utah, “Mormonism is the only nonspeculative religion.” We don’t ask the questions, Should we be here? Should the earth have been created. It’s too late to discuss that now. There’s no point. We don’t argue those things. It’s the same thing here. When redemption is made, how could he possibly be lost? Well, it happens. It’s a fact.

93 Mosiah 16:6,7 “And now if Christ had not come into the world [all being carnal, sensual, and devilish], speaking of things to come as though they had already come, there could have been no redemption.” Notice that the time is relative here. He hadn’t come yet, but he [the author] uses the pluperfect here because the plan was working and had been going on all along. Those who follow the prophets are qualified for it, just as those who would be here in the time of Christ. Christ had to come personally here to make it possible—to loose the bands of death. Now that is the bottom line, again. “And if Christ had not risen from the dead, or have broken the bands of death that the grave should have no victory, and that death should have no sting, there could have been no resurrection.”

94 Mosiah 16:9 This about the resurrection is quoted

by Paul, and it's elsewhere. Verse 9: "He is the light and the life of the world [there's much more to it; there's more light where this came from, he is telling us]; yea, a light that is endless, that can never be darkened; yea, and also a life which is endless, that there can be no more death." He comes as the Light into the world— not just in a special role or something like that. This comes from the eternal order of things. He is the Light and Life that has always been there and always will be there, "that is endless, that can never be darkened [whether it's on this earth or anywhere else]; yea, and also a life which is endless, that there can be no more death. Even this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruption shall put on incorruption, and shall be brought to stand before the bar of God, to be judged of him according to their works whether they be good or whether they be evil."

94 Mosiah 16:12,13 Something has been added physically to make this possible, you see. This is not just spiritual. We will not dispense with our bodies because there is a resurrection. The grave has lost its victory. "If they be good, to the resurrection of endless life [this is a release] and happiness; and if they be evil, to the resurrection of endless damnation." That means detention. Damnatio means "to hold back." The Egyptians use the word HTR for imprisonment. This is because they went "according to their own carnal wills and desires [if they want that kind of an eternity, they can have it—you can have a carnal eternity]; having never called upon the Lord while the arms of mercy were extended towards them; for the arms of mercy were extended towards them, and they would not; they being warned of their iniquities and yet they would not depart from them; and they were commanded to repent and yet they would not repent."

94,95 Mosiah 16:12 Now, do these people deserve eternal damnation? Look at the situation. They damn themselves entirely. There are these steps: First, "the arms of [his] mercy were extended towards them and [they didn't want it] they would not; [This is a very eloquent passage here, incidentally.] they [were] warned of their iniquities and yet

they would not depart from them; and [then] they were commanded to repent and yet they would not repent.” That makes it as strong as it could be. First, mercy—I’ll give it to you just out of love.

Uh, Uh, nothing doing.

All right, then a serious warning. How about that?

No, I don’t want it.

Then, finally a command. I’m giving it to you, and you must do it now. I’m giving you a last chance. I want you very badly to do this.

No, I won’t do it.

95 Mosiah 16:13,14 So they refuse the command. You notice that there is a mounting urgency and mounting importance. Finally, they deserve what they get. It’s very clear here. Verse 13: “And now [in view of that], ought ye not to tremble and repent of your sins, and remember that only in and through Christ ye can be saved? [those are phases you will go through if you don’t] Therefore, if ye teach the law of Moses [he says to the priests of Noah], also teach that it is a shadow of those things which are to come.” That’s all in the law of Moses, but you have to look at it carefully; it’s buried pretty deep there. Just as you will find in the Book of Mormon better than anywhere else the whole temple ceremony. People don’t know it’s there, but it is there. Marvelous book, the Book of Mormon!

# Lecture 36 Mosiah 16-18

## **Abinadi and Alma [Death of Abinadi] [Alma Teaches the Basics of the Gospel] {Baptism Covenant Only – Not for Remission of Sins}**

96 Now with Mosiah 17 come a series of extremely interesting and significant stories. He really pours it on here. After Abinadi gave his sermon, what was the reaction? “The king commanded that the priests should take him and cause that he should be put to death.” And it’s very obvious why. After the sermon in chapters 15 and 16, what else was there left for the king to do? The contrast between what I am doing and what I could be doing is simply intolerable—I can’t face it. I must get rid of the one, or get rid of the other. You can’t share them. As Brigham Young said, nothing is harder than trying to carry the load on both shoulders. It will just tear you apart. You’ve got to decide one way or the other. He [King Noah] heard the story, and he knew it was true, but it was intolerable. He couldn’t face it. The only thing to do was get the man out of sight and out of mind. So take him away and put him to death.

96,97 Mosiah 17:2 “But there was one among them whose name was Alma,” and there’s a very important thing about Alma. You’ll notice his situation and what kind of fellow he was. What was Alma’s situation? It goes out of the way to tell us why he was in this situation. He was a direct descendant of Nephi. That meant he had the priesthood,

but he wasn't among those—the old guard—that had been kicked out by Noah at an earlier time. Remember, Noah cleaned out Zeniffs priests that he had appointed. And as we read back here in Mosiah 11:5, he got rid of them. “For he put down all the priests that had been consecrated by his father [so Alma hadn't been consecrated by Zeniff], and he consecrated new ones in their stead.” And Alma was apparently one of those new ones. Why? Well, in the first place he was young. It says that he was a young man. He hadn't been in that old group at all. In the second place, he was in the highest aristocracy. Remember, the first Nephi had been the king, so he was the nearest thing you would get to royal blood. He couldn't avoid the job. He would naturally be appointed by the king and also have the king's ear because he was in high respect, of course. And he was also honest, and he knew [Abinadi] was telling the truth. He knew too much, as a matter of fact. That's why the king had to get rid of him now. His name was Alma, he was a descendant of Nephi, and he was a young man. He was one of the new guard, but he believed the words of Abinadi. He knew what had been going on, the iniquity Abinadi had testified about. Of course, he interceded for Abinadi. He had the ear of the king and he said, well, what about it? Let's let him go. The least we can do is let him go in peace. The king wouldn't have that, and so now he wanted to get rid of Alma himself. To agree to this [Alma's exhortation] would be an admission of his guilt. He couldn't afford to do that, so he had to get rid of Alma, too. He was a troublemaker [for the king], and he knew too much, as we learn in verse 2.

97 Mosiah 17:3 Then what happened? He “sent his servants after him that they might slay him” so that nobody would know about it. See, that's the way he did things, not in the open. This Noah was quite a character, and yet he turns out to be a rather sympathetic character, and that's surprising, isn't it? “But he [Alma] fled from before them [Alma was up to that—he knew what was going to happen, so he got out of the way in time; he was no fool to stay around] and hid himself that they found him not. And he being concealed for many days did write all the words which

Abinadi had spoken.” Remember, those were scripture. Abinadi was heavy with scripture. He taunted the priests of Noah for teaching the scripture and not knowing it, not understanding it, and not following it. Then the same thing happened here. So here we come to that interesting parallel in the Dead Sea Scrolls with the Teacher of Righteousness or the Star. From now on he goes through exactly the same routine as Alma. Well, it’s altogether too close. They’re stamped from the same mold, even the same details. Here’s one from the Dead Sea Scrolls, first published in 1950, discovered in 1948. This wasn’t known, of course, to Joseph Smith, and yet he gives an identical, carbon copy of Alma’s story, all the way through. Now how is that possible? Well, this is one of those recurrent scenarios. It happened before here; we can go back to 1 Nephi 4:30. We have him right here. The same thing happens—this going out.

105 Mosiah 17:3 The king “caused that Alma should be cast out from among them, and sent his servants after him that they might slay him.” Remember, we had the Abinadi story. It parallels this very closely. Abinadi preached to the priests, and they did the same thing— the priests that lied and tried to catch him in his words. He fled and he said he lived among the fisher folk and the farmers, and he hid out from them. Then he came back into the town and started to preach. This is what Alma did. “But he fled from before them and hid himself that they found him not. And he being concealed for many days did write all the words which Abinadi had spoken” (Mosiah 16:4). That’s what we just read. And we read in the 1QS, especially the Thanksgiving Hymn where the leader praises the Lord that he has been rescued after all his sufferings, and he says, “I praise thee Lord for thou didst not desert me when I was among the people and didst not leave me in my secret affairs, but saved my life out of the pit and grave in the midst of lions. And thou didst take me to a place removed among the fisher folk and hunters [so he hid out for a while, you see]. “Thou didst hide me, O God, from the children of men and hid thy law in me [he wrote it down when he was there; the same thing is happening here, you see] until the time that thy help should be revealed to me, Thou didst preserve



my life, the life of the poor one in the place of lions.” So he went out to the desert and hid there, just as Alma hid out and wrote these things down that he heard from Abinadi.

105,106 Mosiah 17:9 Then notice the beginning of chapter 18 tells us (we're getting ahead of the game) that Alma went about “privately among the people and began to teach the words of Abinadi.... And he taught them privately (the first and third verses). So he appeared this way, just as Abinadi had gone around in disguise before until the time came when he cast off the disguise. And he did it deliberately, because he told the king here that he had deliberately put himself into his hands. Notice Mosiah 17:9: “. . . that ye may know of their surety I have suffered myself that I have fallen into your hands,” so my blood would witness against you. He says he deliberately allowed it to happen. He only cast off the disguise when he wanted to be discovered. When he came into their midst, then he said, “Thus has the Lord commanded me, saying—Abinadi ...” Then they knew who he was. And he [Alma] says here in the ninth verse, “... that ye may know of their surety [that my words are true; he's going to testify with his blood and so he says,] I have suffered myself that I have fallen into your hands.”

106 Mosiah 18:4 “And it came to pass that as many as did believe him did go forth to a place which was called Mormon, having received its name from the king, being in the borders of the land having been infested, by times or at seasons, by wild beasts” (Mosiah 18:4). This is very interesting.

107 Mosiah 17:8,9 [Referring to Christ] “He said he was king of the Jews,” they'd get out of it that way. [Christ is] guilty is because this was the crime. He [the Savior] said he was king of the Jews, and he [Abinadi] said the same thing—that Christ was the Redeemer. “For thou hast said that God himself should come down among the children of men [well, that was the claim that Christ made; that was the charge against him in the titulus on the cross], and now for this cause thou shalt be put to death.” Because he

said Christ should come down. That's the same reason that Christ himself was crucified. And it was for blasphemy, for saying a thing that was unthinkable, that the doctors would not permit for a moment, and it was appalling. And then he says, all right, that's what I expected. "I have suffered myself that I have fallen into your hands. ... I will not recall my words, and they shall stand as a testimony against you. And if ye slay me, ye shall shed innocent blood, and this shall also stand as a testimony against you at the last day."

107 Why does blood stand as a testimony? Well, when a murder has been committed or there's dirty work going on, it's blood that's the evidence, isn't it? It's the blood that testifies that there has been the shedding of blood, of course. Nothing testifies better than that—the blood itself testifies. If there's blood on the ground, you know that someone has shed blood. And that's why we get this idea of the blood testifying against you.

107 Mosiah 17:11 Then [King] Noah changed his mind. He wanted to let him go now. He didn't like it, and he was afraid of him. He feared the judgment of God would come upon him. Now this is interesting. Noah feared God? This man? Yes, he did. Remember, he considered himself the leader of religious [people]. By [their] standards, he was a righteous man. Remember, in Mosiah 12:13-15, they say he hasn't done anything wrong. They say, "And now, O king, what great evil hast thou done, or what great sins have thy people committed, that we should be condemned of God or judged of this man? And now, O king, behold, we are guiltless, and thou, O king, hast not sinned; therefore, this man has lied concerning you, and he has prophesied in vain. And behold, we are strong, we shall not come into bondage, or be taken captive by our enemies; yea, and thou hast prospered in the land, and thou also shalt prosper." That proves you shall also prosper, so you're righteous. Because we're prosperous, we're victorious and everything else. They really believed that.

107,108 So what's wrong with King Noah? He was a very popular king. He put on a great show, and the people

loved him. This is a very interesting thing about Noah. He was worried, and he wanted to do the right thing here. He was afraid because he knew darn well that Abinadi was right, and he wanted to let him go. But, notice what happened. The priests wouldn't let him out. The very same thing happened with Pilate. Remember? Pilate wanted to put it onto the Jews, and they got their revenge. Notice that he had this dialogue with the Jews, and they were each trying to outwit the other. Who had the last word? Each one tried to stick the other with responsibility for the crucifixion, the death of Christ. And so he [Pilate] said, "He is the king of the Jews."

108 Mosiah 17:12 , the king wanted to give up. He recognized Abinadi, but the priests wouldn't let him do it. Verse 12: "But the priests lifted up their voices against him ... saying: He has reviled against the king." They were putting it on the king to make him responsible. He's reviled against you. You can't deny your office. You can't deny that you're the king, and he has reviled against you [paraphrased]. They were forcing him to put Abinadi to death, to defend the kingly office and keep his royal dignity. "He has reviled the king. Therefore the king was stirred up in anger against them, and he delivered him up that he might be slain [they put it all onto the king, but it was the priests again]. And it came to pass that they took him and bound him, and scourged his skin with faggots, yea, even unto death. And now when the flames began to scorch him, he cried unto them."

109 Mosiah 17 13-15 The faggots are burning brands. They burn, and we think of scourging as with a scourge, as "to scourge with a whip." But they're the same word exactly. They scourged him and scorched him—in other words, he was being fried. It's not a comfortable way to die, either. Verse 14: "He cried unto them saying: Behold, even as ye have done unto me, so shall it come to pass that thy seed shall cause that many shall suffer the pains that I do suffer, even the pains of death by fire. And then he pronounced that the same thing was going to happen to the king himself out in the woods later on. "Yea, and

ye shall be smitten on every hand,... And in that day ye shall be hunted, and ye shall be taken by the hand of your enemies, and then ye shall suffer, as I suffer, the pains of death by fire.”

109 Mosiah 17:20 Now who was recording all this that he said? Remember, Alma wasn't on the scene in disguise then. But remember, after this happened, many repented and went out and joined Alma, and there were some there that did, you see. They had the record of this thing. They were able to report what went on because it was a public execution. Verse 20: “And now, when Abinadi had said these words, he fell, having suffered death by fire.”

109,110 Now what happened? Alma fled from the servants of King Noah, repented of his sins and iniquities, and then went about privately among the people and began to teach just exactly as the Teacher of Righteousness did here [in the Dead Sea Scrolls]. And this is what he taught—the absolute basics of the gospel. These are the big questions, these are the essentials. Without them you have no gospel; with them, you have everything. The first is resurrection of the dead. Is there any more [after this life]? That's a terrible question, you see. Is this all there is? The answer is no, as we saw the last time. There's much more, and it's the resurrection of the dead. The second is that you're not only resurrected to make life possible but to make it endurable and enjoyable. I don't want to live forever, if I've got to suffer forever. No that's not it, but to make life desirable for eternal life—to make it possible and then to make it desirable. And that's the same thing. Redemption of the people. That is atonement, bringing them back to the presence of God, and that happens through power. Things are done through power. It's a physical, real thing that happens. The suffering and death of Christ and his resurrection and ascension—now that's the atonement. What he's preaching here is resurrection, redemption, atonement, buying back again, bringing together again where you were. Notice all these words that begin with re. That means again. A resurrection means “a rising up again.” That means you were in the flesh before. Of course we're here now, and then we

will rise up again. But then after, it is the redemption. You are bought back again. You came down here, you suffered the Fall, you committed all these sins, etc. Then you're freed. EMPTIO is "to buy something," and redemption is "to buy somebody back again who was with you before." See, you were in the presence of the Lord before; now he's buying you back into his service again after you've been out of it for a while. You've been serving the devil. That's what he [Alma] preached.

109,110 Mosiah 18:2,3 "And as many as would hear his word he did teach. And he taught them privately, that it might not come to a knowledge of the king. And many did believe his words. And it came to pass that as many as did believe him did go forth to a place which was called Mormon, having received its name from the king, being in the borders of the land having been infested by times or at seasons, by wild beasts"

110 Mosiah 18:5 "Now, there was in Mormon a fountain of pure water, and Alma resorted thither [notice this is the country, and it's a desert terrain; it's no jungle, as you have to hide in a thicket], there being near the water a thicket of small trees, where he did hide himself in the daytime from the searchers of the king." So obviously it was fairly open country, desert country, because they had to search out a water place. There were groves growing around the springs; an oasis is what it was, where they were hiding here. "And ... as many as believed him went thither to hear his words." Finally they had to leave, as you know. They weren't able to stay long. The king's soldiers kept snooping around, and they finally drove them out. Then they went to another place, as we find out later.

111,112 Mosiah 18:10 And Alma says here at the waters of Mormon, "What have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him, that ye will serve him and keep his commandments?" (Mosiah 18:10). There is no mention made here of baptism for the remission of sins. It's a witness and a covenant only, and it's exactly

the same thing at Qumran. Well, this is what it says here: “With baptism he submits his soul in all humility to every commandment of God, after which he applies himself to walking carefully in all the ways of God as he commanded him for the specific time and conditions in turning aside to the right or to the left. And then he will truly be a covenant member of God’s eternal church,” as a testimony that he has entered into a covenant to serve him, as Alma tells them. And they agree, they are “willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light; . . . willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort.”

112 There’s this oneness. They called themselves the YAHAD out there, which means “the oneness, the unity in everything.” And so we read in their Doctrine and Covenants, “for all shall be united in one true church, the oneness of truth and in becoming humility, and the love of mercy and fair dealing each with his neighbor, to be perfect, each in supporting his fellow, in truth and humility and love of mercy toward all.” You see the same sort of code and everything followed here.

114 Mosiah 18:7,12 Now [to] the fountain of pure water and the many believers. Verse 7: “After many days there were a goodly number gathered together at the place of Mormon, to hear the words of Alma. . . . And now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people and are willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light; Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn [very poetic, eloquent passages] . . . even in death . . . being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered a covenant with him . . .” Notice, it uses the language of water and pouring out. There were the waters of Niddah, the waters of pouring. And it says here, “. . . and keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you.” Notice he uses the image of the water connected with the baptism. He pours out the Spirit with the baptism. No mention of sins. And notice he says in the verse 12 again, “O Lord, pour out thy Spirit upon thy servant, that he may

do this work with holiness of heart. And when he had said these words, the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, and he said: Helam, I baptize thee, having authority from the Almighty God, as a testimony that ye have entered into a covenant.” That’s why he baptized him, as a testimony, but it doesn’t say for remission of sins, you notice. This is very interesting. They’re following strictly the order before the time of Christ, and this is the order we find in the Dead Sea Scrolls, “as a testimony that ye have entered into a covenant to serve him until you are dead as to the mortal body; and may the Spirit of the Lord be poured out upon you [he refers to pouring again—this figure of pouring the Spirit, pouring the waters of baptism and dunking him in the water]; and may he grant unto you eternal life, through the redemption of Christ, whom he has prepared from the foundation of the world.” [They were] looking forward to the pre-existent, eternal, unchanging gospel that’s to be given later.

114,115      Mosiah 18:17,18 Well, there were 204 souls. Verse 17: “Whosoever was baptized by the power and authority of God was added to his church.” And then Alma gave the authority from God to ordain priests, and again we find this in the Dead Sea Scrolls. They divided themselves into companies of fifty, and the high priest, the Teacher of Righteousness, visited one community after another and checked up. He had them teach only what he wanted them to teach, very strictly; and Alma [also] said, [teach] only what I teach you. Verse 18: “Alma, having authority from God, ordained priests; even one priest to every fifty of their number [that was the normal class in Qumran] did he ordain to preach unto them. . . . And he commanded that they should teach nothing save it were the things which he had taught, and which had been spoken by the mouth of the holy prophets.” The opening lines of the SEREKH SCROLL, the first scroll that was ever found, says, this is according to all the teachings that came by the mouth of the holy prophets, which has been revealed through Moses by the hand of God and to all the holy prophets. This is what we’re going to teach, what we’re going to do [paraphrased]. So this says the same thing, “by the mouth of the holy

prophets.” He uses that very same expression.

115 Mosiah 18:20 “Yea, even he commanded them that they should preach nothing save it were repentance and faith on the Lord.” This is the first step and the last. They’re out there to preach repentance. (Well, we’ll have to mark it here, because an interesting thing comes next.) This is an astonishing parallel. Well, we find Nephi doing the same thing. We find Jeremiah doing the same thing. We find David hiding out doing the same way with his own community, and lots of people. This is the Rechabite plan. Remember, when Jerusalem fell, it was the sons of Jonadab ben Rechab who were put in charge of the temple, the only people who could be trusted. Way back in the early days, they were the ones who went out into the desert. They made a covenant not to live in houses of stone, and they felt they must live in the desert if they were to be righteous. [Thereafter], the custom of going out and fleeing into the desert to get away from the wicked city was called the Rechabite custom after Jonadab ben Rechab and his family, which Jeremiah tells us about in the chapter 35 of Jeremiah.



## Lecture 37 Mosiah 19-20

**[King Noah vs. Men of Gideon]  
[Peace Ceremony of Men of Gideon]  
The Daughters of the Lamanites  
[How to Deal With Your Enemies]  
[Lamanite Daughters Abducted]**

117 King Noah is one of the most clearly drawn characters in the Book of Mormon. He is drawn as a great artist would do it, by what he does and not by what he says. It's very subtle throughout the Book of Mormon here.

117 Let's talk about King Noah now and what happened. Alma and his people ran away, and they got back to Zarahemla, so they [Noah's soldiers] weren't able to catch up with them. They searched in vain and didn't find Alma and his people. And they searched in vain and couldn't find them [Alma's people].

117,118 Mosiah 19:1 The king's forces were not up to the task. He lost face, and the king's forces were small. They had dwindled, and they weren't able to do the job. Already because of his excesses, he had alienated a good part of the people, a small number. The forces of the king were small because there was division among the remainder of the people. He had been alienating the people with his excesses. Also, his wastefulness and extravagance had given rise to this popular unrest, and an opposition party was formed by Gideon. A little later we find out that his group actually bears his name—they're called the men of Gideon. They're

referred to a number of times by that name, making it very clear who they were.

118 Mosiah 19:3-6 “And the lesser part [notice] began to breathe out threatenings against the king [ah, things are getting tough here, and the opposition party is becoming outspoken]. And now there was a man among them [the opposition party] whose name was Gideon, and he being a strong man and an enemy to the king, therefore he drew his sword, and swore in his wrath that he would slay the king” So this was a personal feud going on, and this was a real revolution, if you pronounce that you’re going to slay the king. He met him and he chased him to the top of the tower. Verse 5: “And it came to pass that he fought with the king; and when the king saw that he was about to overpower him, he fled and ran and got upon the tower which was near the temple.” Remember, it was the tower from which you could view the whole land. Notice that it’s on a small scale. He chased him through the town, and the king went up the tower with Gideon hot on his heels. Gideon pursued him right to the top, a very dramatic moment here. Verse 6: “The king cast his eyes round about towards the land of Shemlon [that means east], and behold, the army of the Lamanites were within the borders of the land.” So he [Gideon] could see them, don’t worry. He could see that things were stirring on the eastern part of the country, and they were coming in from that side when he got on the high tower.

118,119 Here’s a comment on the character of [Noah] in verse 8. The king wasn’t really interested in his people—it was his own life he wanted to save. That reflects on his character. You notice [Noah’s] greatest sin was not lechery or luxury; it was his meanness. He was a mean, petty person. He had no feelings for anybody else but a great deal for himself. It’s characteristic here of people with great power. He said, “Gideon, spare me, for the Lamanites are upon us [he uses that as the ruse, you see; it’s the enemy at the gates routine, and it was mostly to get him out of the jam], and they will destroy us; yea, they will destroy my people” (Mosiah 19:7). So Gideon gave him the benefit of the

doubt. He spared him and let him go. These are interesting human relationships that go on in the Book of Mormon. And then what did he do? He said the king was concerned about his own life; that was what really concerned him. He had no appetite for fighting, notice. He had lost his nerve along with most of the army. He panicked and said, we'll clear out of town. He ordered a general evacuation—a silly thing to do. It shows again that he's not really a strong character at all. He did it again when they go a little further on. He ordered his soldiers with himself to leave the women and children and hightail it to save themselves. Then when he got out with them, he fled with just a company of priests to get away from them. This is the kind of man he was, and we're going to see this all through here. Nice reflection on King Noah. So he lost his nerve along with most of the army, and in the Book of Mormon, the actions tell the story and speak for themselves. He ordered a general retreat to the wilderness, an evacuation. This is the reverse of the Rechabites, you'll notice. He went out with his court, and especially with his priests, his immediate accomplices. They accompanied him deeper and deeper into the woods while he left more and more of the others farther and farther behind.

121,122      The king [Noah] escapes here with his court ever deeper into the woods, and it has happened with many others. It happens repeatedly through the Book of Mormon. Lehi left Jerusalem because the pressure was too great. And then Nephi left his brethren in the New World and went off by himself. Then, Mosiah left Nephi's community after Nephi died, of course, and went out and ended up in [Zarahemla]. Then Ammon left Zarahemla and went out and tried to convert the people. So we have this process going on all the time. Then finally the Saints came west here, didn't they? As George Albert Smith used to say, "We came west of our own free will because we had to." We had no choice—we were driven out, like Israel in the wilderness.

122      So it's God's wandering people. God's people are always being driven out. They're always wandering because here, as Paul says of Abraham, we are pilgrims and

strangers. Here we have no abiding kingdom; don't look for it. So I smile when I see these books called *How to Have a Happy Life* or *Secrets of Successful Living* and all that sort of tripe. Don't fool yourself. We're too strong on that in the Church, because this isn't where we're going to have our successful living. This isn't what we're going for at all. It's the eternities, and eternity is a big thing.

122 Mosiah 19:9-13 Well, we go on with our story now, "And the king commanded the people that they should flee before the Lamanites [a foolish thing to do], and he himself did go before them, and they did flee into the wilderness, with their women and their children. And it came to pass that the Lamanites did pursue them, and did overtake them, and began to slay them [you can't evacuate a whole people all at once; they catch up with them; and then the king panicked again]. Now it came to pass that the king commanded them that all the men should leave their wives and their children, and flee before the Lamanites [still running away—what a king]. Now there were many that would not leave them [they wouldn't do it—they wouldn't follow the king; he has a ruinous effect wherever he goes], but had rather stay and perish with them. And the rest left their wives and their children and fled [so part were left behind]... Those who tarried with their wives and children caused that their fair daughters should stand forth and plead with the Lamanites that they would not slay them."

123 Mosiah 19:14-16 "And it came to pass that the Lamanites had compassion on them, for they were charmed with the beauty of their women [this is chivalric; the Lamanites are always shown as being barbarians, but this is a more chivalric attitude than the others]. Therefore the Lamanites did spare their lives, and took them captives and carried them back to the land of Nephi." They went back with the women. That crowd went back, and they delivered up King Noah, when they caught him, into the hands of the Lamanites and delivered up their property. You can come back and settle again but you'll be sharecroppers from now on. We'll get one-half of your crops, one-half of your gold, silver, and everything else [they were told]. And this was a

condition on which they went back and suffered. Then we have Limhi. This is where Ammon found Limhi. They were completely enclosed. Notice this interlacing and all this harking back. It's very complicated [and amazing] how the author keeps this all in order, because there are different plates being used here. Verse 16: "And now there was one of the sons of the king among those that were taken captive, whose name was Limhi [he is the one Ammon found, or that found Ammon]."

123 Mosiah 19:17,18 Another love-hate issue surfaces, a very interesting reflection on character, you'll notice here. Verse 17: "And now Limhi was desirous that his father should not be destroyed [Limhi was a righteous man, but Noah was his father; he did the noble and right thing, even though Noah was his father, which threatened to make him unpopular]; nevertheless, Limhi was not ignorant of the iniquities of his father, he himself being a just man." Even in such a cesspool there can be just men, and there are. It never gets that bad. Limhi had feelings [for his father]. He was Noah's son, and we don't judge people. Don't judge people by their parents and relatives. Verse 18: "And it came to pass that Gideon sent men into the wilderness secretly, to search for the king and those that were with him." Gideon wasn't going to let up; he was a tough character, you know that. He pursued him all the way. Gideon still had it in for the king; he secretly continued the searching operation. He caught up with the whole royal force, except the king and his priests who had skipped on ahead again. He [the king] was always leaving his supporters in the lurch if he could get away faster. "And it came to pass that they met the people in the wilderness, all save the king and his priests." The king and the priests were the cause of the whole trouble, so when they fled, there was no reason why the people shouldn't go back. So they decided they'd go back again, all the rest of them.

123,124 Mosiah 19:19 Or would they? This is what happened; this is why the king had gone on ahead. "Now they had sworn in their hearts that they would return to the land of Nephi [so they wanted to go back; they wanted

to go back to their wives and children; they didn't want to be out here with the king].... And the king commanded them that they should not return [they had to stay with him again] and they were angry with the king, and caused that he should suffer, even unto death by fire" (Mosiah 19:20). This is the priests that went on with them. They were going to go back, and finally he commanded the last group that was with him to continue, and this had gone too far. They were going to go back, so they burned the king. This is the normal thing. It's very interesting

124 Mosiah 19:22-24 So this is what they did. They burned the king, and then they fled by themselves without the king. "And it came to pass that they were about to return to the land of Nephi, and they met the men of Gideon." Once they got rid of the king, everybody wanted to go back home to the land of Nephi. But was it safe? They'd have to go back under these conditions, that they share, because of what they'd done. They went back to the land of Nephi, and on their way back who should they meet but the men of Gideon. And notice the MEN OF GIDEON is definitely a title here. It's referred to four times all of a sudden. We find in verse 24 that Gideon wasn't present with them. They weren't called the men of Gideon because they were his company. He was back home, and they called themselves the men of Gideon. So it was a regular party now. (I guess we should capitalize it.) "They met the men of Gideon. And the men of Gideon told them of all that had happened to their wives and their children; and that the Lamanites had granted unto them that they might possess the land by paying a tribute to the Lamanites of one half of all they possessed [so they explained the situation back home to them]. And the people told the men of Gideon that they had slain the king, and his priests had fled from them farther into the wilderness." This was the rest of the company that went. The priests went on ahead after they got rid of the king. So the priests were the ones who were off in the woods by themselves, and they really did some mischief.

125 Mosiah 19:24 "And it came to pass that after they had ended the ceremony, that they returned to the

land of Nephi.” This is a very interesting thing here—what ceremony, you immediately ask? Notice the men of Gideon—we’re going to find out about them here. The term men of Gideon is used three times in these two verses like a title. Gideon’s followers, as might be expected, had formed a party around the old reliable fire-eater. Gideon was not with them, as we learn in verse 24. They were a special party or alliance to bear the name even in his absence, the party of Gideon. He’d been going right from the beginning, too. Now the 24th verse: “And it came to pass that after they had ended the ceremony, that they returned to the land of Nephi.” Now what ceremony is mentioned in verse 24? Well, it’s very clear. Remember these people had left the town, and Gideon had come to catch up with them and punish their leader. Gideon couldn’t leave Noah alone—he was on his heels all the time.

125 So they were hostile parties who were opposed to each other. One was the refugees, and the other was the avenging party following them, so they were hostile. They couldn’t go back home together until they had settled, smoked the peace pipe, and had the ceremony. You have to have a ceremony before you can reach peace with a hostile group. You either fight them or have the ceremony, so that’s what they did. They had a peace ceremony. They always have that, but this is putting it so casually, as if Joseph Smith knew exactly what he was saying. They carried out certain rites of reconciliation here, which is very common and has to be done, as far as that goes. It’s unthinkable to omit it. Then they went back and told Gideon himself all that they told the men of Gideon about the king, his old rival. Then Limhi and the Lamanite king both agreed and swore to the treaty. Limhi hadn’t left; they’d been out with Gideon’s people. They swore to the treaty under which the Nephites would settle down as wards of the Lamanites, completely surrounded by them. This was the condition that Ammon found them in. And the treaty was respected on both sides for two years, as we learn in verse 29, but it had the seeds of conflict in it.

125,126 Mosiah 19:28 Incidentally, I should have

noted something at the beginning of this chapter here. Chapters 15 and 16 are the doctrinal chapters of Abinadi, and then 17 and 18 describe Alma's community in the wilderness by the waters of Mormon as an idyllic setting. But these chapters, from 19 on, are the most enlightening of all. After the description of the Church, the subject here is how to deal with your enemies. Many interesting test cases are presented here for our profit and learning on how to deal with your enemies. They're dealing with enemies here. Notice this settlement we've just mentioned. They made their peace. After the ceremony, they were all ready to go back home and be happy together, but they were still dealing with them. Then Limhi was under very close guard by the Lamanite king. You'll notice in verse 28 that the Lamanite king was taking no chances; he'd had experience. He sent out inspection teams to insure compliance. "And the king of the Lamanites set guards round about the land." He's going to watch to make sure they keep the treaty now that they've made it. It shows various ways of dealing with enemies, various degrees.

126 Mosiah 19:29: Now in the next chapter it breaks into a real cold war. Two years was all they could take of this; the pressure was too great on them. After they made an oath and paid a tribute of one half, "the king of the Lamanites set guards round about the land, that he might keep the people of Limhi in the land, that they might not depart into the wilderness [he was going to keep them here; they had been fooled too many times; this departing into the wilderness had been routine]; and he did support his guards out of the tribute which he did receive from the Nephites." So the tributes they paid went to support the guards that watched over them, a very normal operation. You've got to pay for them somehow. All right, we collect half the Nephites' crops, and that pays for the guards. Verse 29: "And now king Limhi did have continual peace in his kingdom for the space of two years, that the Lamanites did not molest them nor seek to destroy them." It was profitable to them, but it wasn't very pleasant for the Nephites. So what are they going to do?



126 Mosiah 20:1,2 More dealing with your enemies in chapter 20. "Now there was a place in Shemlon where the daughters of the Lamanites did gather themselves together to sing, and to dance, and to make themselves merry." Now this reminds us of all sorts of things. Notice, there was a particular place to sing and dance and make themselves merry. At the end of the year, after all the formal dances have taken place, then the girls among the Hopis have three dances. These are fun dances. They are for relaxation more than anything, but they are still very ritually conditioned. They go out to the desert alone by themselves to celebrate. They go to a big black rock that has a lot of bumps in it, and these bumps are supposed to have significance. As it says here, the girls go out to a particular place to make themselves merry. That's exactly what they're doing.

132 Mosiah 20: 3-5 These [Lamanite] girls were out there [dancing]. The discredited priests of Noah were afraid to go home, and they watched a small company of the girls. If a man watches these rites, he's [supposed to be] struck blind. "And when there were but few of them gathered together to dance, they came forth out of their secret places and took them and carried them into the wilderness; yea, twenty and four daughters of the Lamanites they carried into the wilderness." This is plundering, which used to be a common thing, according to an anthropologist at Berkeley. They used to teach that the bridal veil came from that. You had to catch your bride, and so you went and threw a net over her. That was the bridal veil, the net you threw over her to catch her.

133 Mosiah 20:8 When they found out that their daughters were missing and didn't come home, they thought naturally it was the people of Limhi that had fled out there from the town—they hadn't all come back, and that they had done this. Now we have a very interesting business on how to deal with a very touchy, dangerous situation. Notice how well the leaders, Limhi and the Lamanite king, handled it. This is what happened: "And now Limhi had discovered them from the tower, even all their preparations for war did he discover [like the glistening goggles that I was talking

about; I mean, if that dark thing disturbs the peace of our celebration here, you can see what all this shining metal would do in the woods]; therefore he gathered his people together, and laid wait for them in the fields and in the forests [so that's what the terrain was, and he was going to catch them].... The people of Limhi began to fall upon them from their waiting places, and began to slay them. And it came to pass that the battle became exceedingly sore, for they fought like lions for their prey" (Mosiah 20:8-10). And they won—they fought like dragons. That's a very interesting thing that it uses the word dragons here. There was this surprising ferocity. You wouldn't think dragons, a concept from the Old World, would be found among these people, but it is. The one-horn and the two-horn societies get themselves up as savagely as possible, and you know in Central America this is common. The warrior phratries, every one of them, had monsters for their emblems, and they wore the mask. You see this on the vase paintings and the murals, etc. They wore these monster masks for emblems, and there was nothing more popular than the snake with the horns and all the rest. The dragons, and other monsters appear there. So it says they fought like dragons. The Lamanites must have been pretty spectacularly gotten up. They did these things later on, even more so.

133,134 Mosiah 20:12 There was a great deal of slaughter with their warrior castes. Verse 12: "And it came to pass that they found the king of the Lamanites among the number of their dead [they thought he was dead but he was only wounded].... And they took him and bound up his wounds, and brought him before Limhi." Well, that was the right thing to do, of course. And then what happened? They brought him for execution and said, "Let us slay him." But you notice Limhi was a very sensible person. He was tolerant of his own father, because there was nothing much he could do about it. Being that kind of a person, his father was going to go on doing it. But he did what he thought was right because he was a righteous man. Here again, they all came saying, hurray, hurray, we've won; let's put the king to death—which is the thing you do. That's what checkmate is—"the king is dead." In all Semitic languages,

and especially Egyptian, mat means dead. Checkmate means “the king is dead,” when you win the game. We’ve won the game; let’s kill the king. But Limhi said, no. “Ye shall not slay him, but bring him hither that I may see him [and they question him]. . . . What cause have ye to come up to war against my people? [what are you fighting for, anyway?] Behold, my people have not broken the oath that I made unto you [but they thought they had broken the oath]; therefore, why should ye break the oath that ye made unto my people?” You broke your oath, we didn’t break ours—the usual charges.

134 Mosiah 20:15 “And now the king said I have broken the oath because thy people did carry away the daughters of my people; therefore, in my anger I did cause my people to come up to war against thy people.” Limhi had heard nothing concerning this. He didn’t know anything about this breaking of the oath, because it was the priests who had done it, not his people. So he said, “I will search among my people, and whosoever has done this thing shall perish.” I’ll launch a thorough investigation, he says in verse 16. This is not the usual reaction. The usual reaction would be “boys will be boys.” Following lots of atrocities, we can just say “boys will be boys,” but he’s going to see that this is done.

134 Mosiah 20:17-20 “Now when Gideon had heard these things, he being the king’s captain . . .” He was there when they had brought the captive king up there; naturally the chief military man had to be present for consultation. So he said, hey, we know who did that, remember? Don’t search this people; go out and look for the priests of thy father [paraphrased]. Now there’s a very interesting rhetorical device used here. It tells us what the word is here. In Arabic, for example, and in Hebrew less, you cannot begin a sentence cold. You just can’t say “he went into the house” or “there was a house on the hill.” You have to begin with HINNEH, behold. Behold, this happened, whether it’s a nominal sentence or a verbal sentence. You begin with HINNEH or behold, or it is so. But in urgent cases you have to introduce what you’re saying by an excitement word. In

Egyptian you have to use it before every sentence. In this case it would be WN IN. And notice the way he builds up here. The way it's translated here is behold. He says in verse 18: "For do ye not remember the priests of thy father whom this people sought to destroy? [he gets more excited about it]. And are they not in the wilderness? And are not they the ones who have stolen the daughters of the Lamanites?" And now behold, and tell is redundant, but it's used three times in this sentence: "And now, behold, and tell the king of these things, that he may tell his people that they may be pacified towards us; for behold they are already preparing to come against us; and behold also there are but few of us. And behold, they come with their numerous hosts" (Mosiah 20:19-20). See, he builds up the climax and excitement; he says we've got to act quickly here. It's just like it came to his mind in a flash. He knows who it was now, so he uses this series of beholds which are very Semitic, very eloquent, and very necessary. Anybody could see that. Joseph Smith knew this very well, of course [speaking ironically].

135 Mosiah 20:20 "And behold, they come with their numerous hosts; and except the king doth pacify them toward us we must perish [you've got to do something]. For are not the words of Abinadi fulfilled, which he prophesied against us—and all this because we would not hearken unto the words of the Lord and turn from our iniquities?" All this progeny of evil comes of us, from our debate, from our dissension. It always comes back to our own guilt. Here we are, having come full circle here.

135 Question: Why do you think that Limhi became king after his father was deposed instead of Gideon seizing power?

Answer: He didn't seize power. It was the Lamanites that made him king; they put him in. The Lamanites trusted him, and he was a man you could trust. He was reliable. You'll notice he had this agreement all along with the Lamanite king, and that's why he was in. Gideon was a fire-eater. He was chasing around anyway. He was too busy getting rid of Noah.

135 Question: Are you saying that if the Lamanite king hadn't put Limhi in charge, Gideon might have become king and seized power? Answer: Yes, if he had seized power. He was a revolutionary and had already chased the king out with a sword. He was not necessarily ambitious, but he had a thing for Noah— one of these classic feuds.

## Lecture 38 Mosiah 20-23

**[This is Not a Blessed Land Unconditionally]  
[Possessors of This Land Must Serve God]  
[No Military Solution]  
[The Gift of Wine Permits Escape]  
[Alma Refused to be King]**

137 Mosiah 20:6 We are on chapters 20 and 21 of Mosiah, on the important subject of how to deal with an enemy in just about every situation that comes up. It's marvelous how these things are analyzed here. You get the impression that it really was carefully edited. You notice in Mosiah 20:6 that the Lamanites were literally up in arms when the girls had been missing and failed to show up. Limhi saw their preparations from the tower; we saw how a little glitter was enough to give it all away. Their dealing with the enemy was a general ambush. They were greatly outnumbered, etc.

137 They [Limhi's people] fought like dragons. Then the Lamanite king was wounded and brought in. They immediately wanted to put him to death because of what he had caused them. Limhi said, nothing doing; let's find out what's going on first. He asked reasonable questions; there was no threatening or bullying or righteous indignation here. Then King Laman explained why: We didn't break our oath, but you did. You stole those girls. Limhi's reaction was not "boys will be boys" at all. He said, well, let's find out who did it and they will be severely punished. He immediately launched a full scale investigation to find out

who to punish, but old Gideon was at hand. He was the one who had kept check on Noah's crowd, as you know. Although he wasn't there, the men of Gideon had made contact and reported to him about these hiding priests out there in the "sticks." So Gideon said, don't blame your own people until you have checked on your father's immoral priests loose in the jungle. We'd better explain them to the Lamanites in a hurry. Then we get this urgent speech, where he goes "Behold, behold, or HINNEH.

137,138 Mosiah 20:19-22 "And now, behold, and tell the king of these things, that he may tell his people that they may be pacified towards us; for behold they are already preparing to come against us; and behold also there are but few of us [we are in a bad fix]. And behold, they come with their numerous hosts; and except the king doth pacify them towards us we must perish. For are not the words of Abinadi fulfilled, which he prophesied against us [now this is the old fire-eater Gideon speaking; he's a great patriot, but he says, it's our blame— we are responsible. 'We are their author and original,' as Titania says]—and all this because we would not hearken unto the words of the Lord, and turn from our iniquities? And now let us pacify the king, and we fulfil the oath which we have made unto him." Notice that he is being very realistic; these are the steps by which the problem is solved here. It's a very touchy thing, but they solve the problem very sensibly on both sides—a thing people rarely do. He's being a realist, of all people. Where's your Patrick Henry? He says, "For it is better that we should be in bondage than that we should lose our lives [well, that's a terrible thing to say; we have 'sooner dead than red' and all that sort of thing, our slogans that never get any farther than slogans]; therefore, let us put a stop to the shedding of so much blood."

138 Mosiah 20:22 Gideon is the last man you would expect to do this. But he had the experience of these things, and he knew. It's the old commander that knows. The most passionate talks I've ever heard against war in the Army have been by generals, without any exception. They know what it is, and boy do they light in! There were some

wonderful ones by Omar Bradley, Max Taylor, and others. Eisenhower said some pretty strong things, too. “Therefore, let us put a stop to the shedding of so much blood,” Gideon said, with his rush of excitement. This is the Gideon who chased the king up the tower with a sword, and all that sort of thing. He is the one who is making a plea to put an end to all this bloodshed, whatever they do.

138 Mosiah 20: 22-25 Limhi explained that the priests in the wilderness were the most likely kidnappers. Notice that Limhi took the blame for his father’s behavior, and the king was pacified. Everybody did the sensible thing, and Limhi was a realist. Verse 22: “For it is better that we should be in bondage than that we should lose our lives; therefore, let us put a stop to the shedding of so much blood.” Then Limhi had the courtesy to explain everything to the Lamanite king. Then instead of standing tall the king humiliated himself. The Lamanite king humiliated himself before his own people to plead for the enemy. Can we imagine doing such a thing today as that? Both sides were being very reasonable, and they solved their problem that way. Verse 24: “The king was pacified toward his people; and he said unto them: Let us go forth to meet my people, without arms; and I swear unto you with an oath that my people shall not slay thy people. And it came to pass that they followed the king, and went forth without arms to meet the Lamanites. And it came to pass that they did meet the Lamanites; and the king of the Lamanites did bow himself down before them, and did plead in behalf of the people of Limhi.”

139 Mosiah 20:26 There’s none of your standing tall here and refusing to make concessions. Then there is the most important element of all—the humanity of it. “And when the Lamanites saw the people of Limhi, that they were without arms, they had compassion on them and were pacified towards them.” You have to have the humanity, too, and that solves it. It’s going to appear a number of times here that the Lamanites were always more merciful than the Nephites when they had the upper hand; it’s a very interesting thing. The Indians will still spare



the whites, and not the other way around. I have some wonderful things on that. The Lamanites “returned with their king in peace to their own land.” Now that’s a happy solution to what could have been a long and nasty war, but they were pretty fed up on that by now. Then things were back to normal, but there was still human nature. It only lasted for two years, and the people got restless again. It was an unstable situation. The Lamanites resented the prosperous, defeated Nephites again. The Lamanites had always been nervous about these industrious Nephites. They brought the Nephites there in the first place so they would cultivate the land. The country was run down in that particular area, so they let them come in. It was a trick the king played. This man’s father played this trick on them to get them to settle there. Then they really began to prosper, and it made the Lamanites worried. So that began to happen again.

139 Mosiah 21:2-4 “After many days the Lamanites began again to be stirred up in anger against the Nephites, and they began to come into the borders of the land round about” (Mosiah 21:2). They started harassing; that’s the way it starts. They couldn’t kill them because they had made an oath to King Limhi. (Isn’t that nice they observed their oaths? We observe oaths, too, as long as it is convenient. Our treaties with the Indians, for example; there are some “beauties.”) But they did bother them and do what Indians would do. They were brutal. They would hit them in the face, boss them around, and then “put heavy burdens upon their backs, and drive them as they would a dumb ass.” That was the prophecy—they started bullying them. “Yea, all this was done that the word of the Lord might be fulfilled.” They had brought it on themselves.

139,140 Ether 2:8,9 This should cause us concern here. This is not a blessed land unconditionally. The promise is the same for every people that shall inhabit the promised land. I’m going to read chapter 2 of Ether on that, which is very good. That’s getting slightly ahead of the game, as you’ll see. But this is what the promise is. Notice that these people have been good for a long time. They’ve been

valiant and saved themselves, but the time isn't up. They still have to pay a price here. So we have this situation. "And he had sworn in his wrath unto the brother of Jared, that whoso should possess this land of promise, from that time henceforth and forever, should serve him, the true and only God, or they should be swept off when the fulness of his wrath should come upon them" (Ether 2:8). Until then everything is [apparently] fine; it's business as usual, as it was in the days of Noah. They bought and sold, gave in marriage, ate and drank. They did all the normal things, and then suddenly it hit them. That's what the Lord says it's going to be like. "And now, we can behold the decrees of God concerning this land, that it is a land of promise; and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall serve God, or they shall be swept off when the fulness of his wrath shall come upon them. And the fulness of his wrath cometh upon them when they are ripened in iniquity" (Ether 2:9). Notice fulness and ripened. When the cup is full, you can't add anything else. You can't dilute it or do anything about it. And when the fruit is ripe, if you let it go on ripening, it will just get rotten. So when the fruit is ripe, it is plucked. But he waits until it is ripe, and he waits until the cup is full. How soon is it going to be full now? You see things going on.

140 Ether 2:10,11 Again he repeats it the third time in verse 10: "For behold, this is a land which is choice above all other lands [true]; wherefore he that doth possess it shall serve God or shall be swept off; for it is the everlasting decree of God. And it is not until the fulness of iniquity among the children of the land, that they are swept off [so he's going to let them go all the way; this is a very interesting pattern]. And this cometh unto you, O ye Gentiles, that ye may know the decrees of God—that ye may repent and not continue in your iniquities [the assumption here is that they are wicked] until the fulness come, that ye may not bring down the fulness of the wrath of God upon you as the inhabitants of the land have hitherto done. Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the

land, who is Jesus Christ, who hath been manifested by the things which we have written.”

140,141 That's the condition, and it's a very close thing in that case. You have to do more than we are doing if you are going to serve the God of this land. It's very clearly stated there the way it happens, and it happens all of a sudden. Notice that this is unique. They are still writing all sorts of studies about the disappearance of the Toltecs, the Mayans, the Aztecs, etc. There are some theories, but nobody has the vaguest idea why they disappeared. The point is that we have ruins and we have remnants of people, some Aztecs and especially Mayans. Everywhere we have the scattered remnants of these [civilizations] after they have broken up, but the civilizations have gone completely. But in the Old World it doesn't happen that way at all. The people sin and go on sinning. They suffer and pay for it, but it's a going concern. They pay as they go. The Greeks, the Arabs, the Chinese, the Hindus, the Egyptians were ancient civilizations when Lehi left Jerusalem, and they are still there. Their languages, customs, and everything are still there; they were not swept off. But what they suffer and go through! The Russians, for example—suffer, suffer, suffer—like the Moscow Art Theatre. They have to go through that, but we don't. It's different here—we prosper. We are powerful, free, and everything else. Then we take advantage of that and start misbehaving. It's a hard test. Who can stand prosperity? Nobody has stood it yet, as we see in the Book of Mormon. Why does this [the Book of Mormon] come to us? All the others have fouled up, but we never shall! In that case, why have such pains been taken to give us the warning? Not that we will be saved, but, as the Lord says, “that they may be left without excuse” when they get hit. We can't complain that we didn't hear it.

141 Mosiah 21:5-9 Now here, for example, with their advantage and after fighting like dragons, they are going to do the thing again. But they don't pull it off at all. “And now the afflictions of the Nephites were great [they couldn't stand it very much longer], and there was no way that they could deliver themselves out of their hands, for the Lamanites

had surrounded them on every side [as I said, they were in a trap, an enclave]... The people began to murmur with the king because of their afflictions; and they began to be desirous to go against them to battle” (Mosiah 21:5-6). They said, we’re not going to stand this anymore. They kept pestering the king until he couldn’t take it anymore. Notice verse 6: “And they did afflict the king sorely with their complaints; therefore he granted unto them that they should do according to their desires.” All right go against them; fight like dragons and see what happens this time. “And they gathered themselves together again, and put on their armor, and went forth against the Lamanites to drive them out of their land [it didn’t happen at all].. . . The Lamanites did beat them, and drove them back, and slew many of them. And now there was a great mourning and lamentation among the people of Limhi... Now there were a great many widows in the land [the widows started raising a rumpus and stirring up patriotic fervor], and they did cry mightily from day to day, for a great fear of the Lamanites had come upon them [we’ve got to do something about it] ... their continual cries did stir up the remainder of the people of Limhi [and himself] to anger against the Lamanites [they said, all right we’ll go out and do it this time]; and they went again to battle, but they were driven back again, suffering much loss.”

141,142 Mosiah 21:13 They were beaten again. Well, how long can this go on? Verse 12: “Yea, they went again even the third time, and suffered in the like manner.” So the Lord said, have you learned your lesson? You’re not going to take it by force. It’s not going to be done that way [paraphrased]. So three vain attempts to free themselves by war were not the answer. God is in charge of these things. So what happened? They did the very opposite of marching forth in their might. “And they did humble themselves even to the dust, subjecting themselves to the yoke of bondage [not just to the Lord, but to the Lamanites, their enemies], submitting themselves to be smitten, and to be driven to and fro, and burdened, according to the desires of their enemies.” You can’t go lower than that. But the point here is this: Was their spirit completely broken? No, God doesn’t

break anyone's spirit. To be humble before him is only to be honest. Everyone must be humble before something.

142,143      The Book of Mormon tells us in Ether, the brother of Jared said, God talked to me in all humility, as one man to another. To be humble is not to bow down to somebody who is above you, not to lick the boss's boots, not to be subservient to higher rank, but to be equal with all. That's to be humble. Our thing is usually to be arrogant to those below you and subservient to those above you. That's the way you get success in this world, but that's not to be humble at all. Remember, the Lord himself is humble, as the brother of Jared said. The Lord said he was meek and humble. Everybody has to humble themselves to something; the idea is, what are you going to humble yourself to? Before God it is easy. That's no test at all. If someone has overpowering might and glory and all the splendor of a Spielberg production, or Paul Lucas and the glories of space, you can be humble with that sort of thing. But that isn't to be humble at all. If somebody knocks you down, you can be humble. No, to be humble is to speak to one as you would to another. The person who was really that way was President George Albert Smith. There was a man who was really humble. Never subservient or looking down on anyone, but he would get up at 3:00 o'clock in the morning and go down to the lower part of town. (My mother knew him very well.) If some poor old bum had been picked up at the police station, he would come down and try to help him out, bail him out, etc. He put himself out all the time, and nobody knew about it. I know some stories like that. As President of the Church, he was on a big business trip in Portland. Brother Westergard was a Dane and a poor carpenter in our ward, with a lot of girls. His little girl was sick, and the President sat up with him and his little girl all night. He let the business go and everything else. That little sick child and sitting with Brother Westergard were more important to him. The President stayed with my grandfather who founded the Oregon Lumber, Western Pacific, and all that stuff. But all business had to wait so that he [President Smith] could sit with a sick child. And, of course, he never told anybody about a thing like that.

It was Brother Westergard who told me about that years later. He said, “He stayed up with me all night when my little daughter was so sick.”

143 Mosiah 4:11; Helaman 12:7, Mosiah 21:13, Mormon 4:5 You have to humble yourself to somebody, and who is it to be? Remember Mosiah 4:11: “And always retain in remembrance, the greatness of God and your own nothingness, and his goodness and long-suffering towards you, unworthy creatures, and humble yourselves even in the depths of humility.” And Helaman said, “How great is the nothingness of the children of men; yea, they are even less than the dust.” Here it says, “And they did humble themselves even to the dust, subjecting themselves ... to the desires of their enemies.” Now that is humility, but is it abject humility? No, it was their own sins that lay heavily on them. The Lamanites were merely an instrument; they knew that. They had beaten the Lamanites badly on other occasions when they were greatly outnumbered by them. Pray that one may never become such an instrument because, after all, to be an oppressor is far worse than to be oppressed, as we learn later on in Mormon 4:5 where he says, “But, behold, the judgments of God will overtake the wicked; and it is by the wicked that the wicked are punished.” Your business isn’t to dominate or punish anyone; it’s the wicked that do the punishing, as well as the wicked who are punished. The Lord sees to that.

143 Mosiah 21:15 Then there was no military solution. Verse 15: “And now the Lord was slow to hear their cry because of their iniquities [which had been building up for a long time. There is no military solution but this]; nevertheless the Lord did hear their cries, and began to soften the hearts of the Lamanites that they began to ease their burdens.” There must be a softening and a yielding on both sides. This is sort of an anti-climax. You might say, “Where are the heroics?” The Lamanites themselves began to yield now under those circumstances.

143,144 Mosiah 21:17-20 Now notice what Limhi does in verse 17. His people were living under oppression,

but they are now forced to live the Law of Consecration. That's the only way we'll ever live it, if we're forced to live it. "Now there was a great number of women, more than there was of men; therefore king Limhi commanded that every man should impart to the support of the widows and their children, that they might not perish with hunger; and this they did because of the greatness of their number that had been slain [slain in vain]. Now the people of Limhi kept together in a body as much as it was possible [that was the strategy], and secured their grain and their flocks; And the king himself did not trust his person without the walls of the city." This is going to finish up the story and take us back to Ammon, where he meets the king outside the gates. The king was out there with a patrol at night; nobody trusted anybody else. The Lamanite king kept constant watch over them, and they were paying for the watch with the grain he took from them. And they kept watch over the Lamanites because they were constantly patrolling the borders there. "And the king himself did not trust his person without the walls of the city, unless he took his guards with him, fearing that he might by some means fall into the hands of the Lamanites. And he caused that his people should watch the land round about."

144 Mosiah 21:21 They were keeping a check on everything here, and always on the defensive. It was a very tense situation there; you can see that. They were going to watch the land round about and keep an eye open and do some scouting and patrolling, I suppose, to see if they could catch those priests because there would be the solution. They were the troublemakers who had stolen the daughters. The priests had been robbing and plundering. Verse 21: "For they had come into the land of Nephi by night, and carried off their grain and many of their precious things." For their supplies, they were stealing horses, etc. First Nephi lists the four things, and 2 Nephi lists the same four. People are after power, gain, popularity, and the lusts of the flesh.

144 Mosiah 21:22 "And it came to pass that there was no more disturbance between the Lamanites and the

people of Limhi, even until the time that Ammon and his brethren came into the land.” Things were quiet for the time being. The fire-eating Gideon had urged peace through concessions. Then Ammon comes in, and that takes us up to where we were before; the story resumes at this point.

144 Mosiah 21:23,24 Here was the king outside the gates with his patrol, and he discovered Ammon. He supposed them to be the priests of Noah; they had been keeping an eye out for them all along. What would be more natural? So that’s why he hauled him away and brought him into court to see who he was. When he found out who he really was, that he actually came from Zarahemla, “he was filled with exceedingly great joy. Now king Limhi had sent, previous to the coming of Ammon, a small number of men to search for the land of Zarahemla.”

145 Mosiah 21:25-27 Anyway, just before the arrival of Ammon the search party returned. They had missed Zarahemla, but they had found a land of dry bones. When Ammon and his party came in, he [the king] said, strange that you should mention it; we just had another party come in, too, a party we sent out to look for Zarahemla. They didn’t find anything but a lot of dry bones and a record [paraphrased].

145,146 Mosiah 21:31 So they did find these dry bones, an impressive thing. Ammon’s people mourned for Abinadi who had been put to death and for the departed Alma, who left King Noah’s people. This isn’t Zarahemla; these are the Nephite people who were in bondage to the Lamanites. They were found by Ammon who did come from Zarahemla. They come together now. It says that they mourned for both of them. Verse 31: “Yea, they did mourn for their departure, for they knew not whither they had fled. Now they would have gladly joined with them, for they themselves had entered into a covenant with God to serve him and keep his commandments. And now since the coming of Ammon, King Limhi had also entered into a covenant with God, and also many of his people, to serve him and keep his commandments [remember, Ammon did



not have the priesthood, as Alma did; a direct descendant of Zarahemla, he was a Mulekite, not a Nephite]. And it came to pass that king Limhi and many of his people were desirous to be baptized [but you notice that Ammon wouldn't do it; he refused to do it because he didn't have authority or wasn't worthy] but there was none in the land that had authority from God. And Ammon declined doing this thing, considering himself an unworthy servant [we learn in Mosiah 7:3 that he was a Mulekite]. Therefore they did not at that time form themselves into a church, waiting upon the Spirit of the Lord [well, that's what the people were doing at Qumran—waiting upon the Spirit of the Lord, but they did form a church]. Now they were desirous to become even as Alma and his brethren, who had fled into the wilderness. They were desirous to be baptized as a witness and a testimony that they were willing to serve God with all their hearts.”

148 Mosiah 22:1-9 Here these people had the Nephites under their thumbs. Then life got to be a bore; everything was going on the same as ever month after month. Guard troops have nothing to do but see that nothing happens. If nothing happens, they've fulfilled their duty. It gets very boring, and they welcome a little nip now and then. The wine was so welcome to them. They took it joyfully and passed out, and the people just went out. This sort of thing has happened again and again

149,150 Mosiah 22:10-15 To say that they [the Nephites] could have walked out on them in the middle of the night [is not farfetched]. It would have been the easiest thing in the world. For two years this had been going on, and the tension was built up now. They had the Nephites where they belonged; they were completely submissive now. If you were at a guard post, you wouldn't be worried about them. [Someone would say], “Oh, forget it; get some sleep for heaven's sake!” Before you know it, they are all gone. So they paid their last tribute of wine. Verse 10: “And king Limhi caused that his people should gather their flocks together; and he sent the tribute of wine to the Lamanites; and he also sent more wine, as a present unto them; and

they did drink freely of the wine which king Limhi did send unto them.... And they went round about the land of Shilom in the wilderness, and bent their course towards the land of Zarahemla. . . . And after being many days in the wilderness they arrived in the land of Zarahemla, and joined Mosiah's people, and became his subjects." That was a short one; they finally got there. It was like the Exodus—they took all their gold and silver and everything else

150 Mosiah 22:16 What happened then? After two days the tracks gave out, and their enemies couldn't chase them. They couldn't be found. That makes us wonder what kind of terrain it was if the tracks gave out. Of course, through the woods everything would be broken and smashed as they went along. It's obviously desert, and there could have been a strong wind. You can lose tracks very easily. How can you lose track of an army?

150 Mosiah 23:1 Anyway, they couldn't follow their tracks. Now the story resumes, and we go back to Alma in chapter 23. "Now Alma, having been warned of the Lord that the armies of king Noah would come upon them . . ." Remember, this is his company that fled to the wilderness. They followed the Rechabite routine. They fled eight days. This is another repetition of the same motif. But this is the very nature of this civilization, this mobility, even though they were settled people. It's like the Asiatic peoples and the Americans, especially on the America frontier. We've always been on the move.

151 Mosiah 23:3,4 "And they fled eight days' journey into the wilderness. And they came to a land, yea, even a very beautiful and pleasant land, a land of pure water." How could a land very beautiful and inviting like that have gone unsettled all that time?

151,152 Mosiah 23:5-7 There was this beautiful land that had not been settled before, so they [Alma's people] went in and settled it. Verse 5: "And they pitched their tents, and began to till the ground, and began to build buildings [see, they started right in here]; yea, they were industrious, and did labor exceedingly And the people were desirous that

Alma should be their king.” Now this little group wanted a king. The word is obviously chief throughout here. A king is a chief. A chief is on the same scale as the Anglo-Saxon kings were—the Edwards, the Eldreds, the Harolds, and all the rest of them. It was small stuff, but they were kings, and we’ll see that’s exactly the way it was. We are going to get that marvelous story now [about] Amulon and Alma. There is a real scenario there, and what a character study between these two men here. They want Alma to be their king, so he gave them a speech on being king. “Behold, it is not expedient that we should have a king; for thus saith the Lord: Ye shall not esteem one flesh above another, or one man shall not think himself above another [that is equality—he says there should be no racism and no elitism]; therefore I say unto you it is not expedient that ye should have a king. Nevertheless, if it were possible that ye could always have just men to be your kings [like Benjamin or Mosiah] it would be well for you to have a king.” That would be a dandy thing.

152 As a matter of fact, just as REX means king, as far as that goes, RECTE FACERE is judgment; the CYNUNG is “the one who knows.” According to Horace, “You will be king if you do what is right, but who doesn’t do right will never be a king.” REX means KING, and REX means RIGHT. With the same meaning, we have rule, regulation, right, and righteous. All those words go together. The REX is “the one who knows and understands.” That’s why in Zion we can accept an absolute monarchy because God is the king there. He doesn’t make the mistakes that men do. Anything else won’t do. We don’t have dominants and submissives here, or the usual achievers.

152 Mosiah 23:8-10 “Nevertheless, if it were possible that ye could always have just men to be your kings it would be well for you to have a king [that’s the only problem, of course; but here was a thing vivid in their memories]. But remember the iniquity of king Noah and his priests; and I myself was caught in a snare, and did many things which were abominable in the sight of the Lord, which caused me sore repentance.” Because of his association

with Noah, Alma himself did abominable things. He was one of the bad priests of Noah, so obviously he went along. That's why he had Noah's ear, and that's why there was this understanding. When Alma defended Abinadi, Noah decided he would have to get rid of him. He knew too much. He [Alma] went along there, and he is ashamed of it now. "Nevertheless, after much tribulation, the Lord did hear my cries, and did answer my prayers, and has made me an instrument in his hands in bringing so many of you to a knowledge of his truth." His prayer shows what you should ask for when you pray. He said that his prayer had brought many to a knowledge of the truth. Darkness covers the earth. Why? Because people don't ask for truth. Remember, the Lord commands us to ask for certain thing, and then we will receive them.

153 Mosiah 23:11,12 "Nevertheless, in this I do not glory, for I am unworthy to glory of myself. And now I say unto you, ye have been oppressed by king Noah [they remembered that], and have been in bondage to him and his priests, and have been brought into iniquity by them; therefore ye were bound with the bands of iniquity." Now there is the great threat to freedom. You are bound in the bands of iniquity; it's not somebody who is going to take over and put you in jail and things like that. That's not it, of course. "And now as ye have been delivered by the power of God out of these bonds; yea, even out of the hands of king Noah and his people, and also from the bonds of iniquity, even so I desire that ye should stand fast in this liberty [this is what liberty really is—to be rescued from the bonds of iniquity] wherewith ye have been made free, and that ye trust no man to be a king over you [no man to be a king over you; the emphasis is on that. Who must you fight to be free?] And also trust no one to be your teacher nor your minister, except he be a man of God, walking in his ways and keeping his commandments." Now here's the catch. How do you decide who is a "man of God, walking in his ways and keeping his commandments"? Nobody who puts himself forth for that is going to qualify. But it's actually rather easy, isn't it, to find out whether a man is doing this. You can find out if a man is worthy or not by suggesting

a project and seeing what kind of solution you will get. It's just like handing somebody a questionnaire.

153,154      Mosiah 23:15-17 “Thus did Alma teach his people that every man should love his neighbor as himself, that there should be no contention among them.” Well, how could you avoid that? He is going to tell us that. Ephraim is always under stress. Ephraim is always the overachiever, the scriptures tell us. (We're Ephraim, not Manasseh.) Ephraim is always making himself obnoxious, always pushing people around, etc. That's a temptation, and one has to control those things. Brigham Young used to say, “A wild horse is easier to control than these people.” Anything would be easier to control than such people. But how do you get people to love their neighbors as themselves? How can you avoid contention? Alma was their high priest, and this is the way he did it. He had this plan, the same one that was used at Qumran. Verse 17 “He consecrated all their priests and all their teachers [they were personally consecrated by him; he had that authority which Ammon didn't have]; and none were consecrated except they were just men.” He saw to that, like Samuel of old. Remember, he was a direct descendant of Nephi. The priesthood was patriarchal, and he had the power to bestow it. “Therefore they did watch over their people, and did nourish them with things pertaining to righteousness [Nourishment is increment, of course, as we learn in verse 10. It was necessary for them to have high visibility. To nourish is to improve the condition of a thing]. And it came to pass that they began to prosper exceedingly in the land; and they called the land Helam.”

# Lecture 39 Mosiah 23-26

## **Amulon and Alma** **[Escape from Bondage Done by the Lord]** **[Seven Distinct Tribes]** **[Two Tests of Whether a Person is a Real Believer]**

155 Mosiah 23:31 Now we come to one of the most satisfying parts of the Book of Mormon. This is what historiography should be. It's full of drama, personality, and all sorts of things. We'll start with Mosiah 23:31. Remember how it happened [background information]: Mosiah had gone out from the Nephite community and ended up in Zarahemla. He became king of Zarahemla, which was a Mulekite settlement. Then out of that came other settlements. Zeniff went out and got himself stuck in the midst of the Lamanites, but he flourished there completely surrounded by Lamanites. His son, Noah, was the corrupt one. Noah was hard pressed and decided that the whole nation should take off and flee, which they did. When the enemy started to overcome them, he said to his army, "We will go on—forget the women and children." That was not a nice thing to do. But they did go on, and a lot of them started to regret it. A lot of them refused to go and stayed back; others started to drift back very soon. King Noah got very unpopular and got himself burned up. Then the priests continued on under the leadership of a man called Amulon. This man, Amulon, was a VIP, a very important and ambitious person, which becomes clear here.

155,156 Mosiah 23:31-33 “And behold, they had found those priests of king Noah, in a place which they called Amulon.” They named it after their leader—just like Brigham City. Amulon was their leader, and he must have been important back there. We learn a little later on that he had been a rival and “old friend” of Alma back in the priests’ quorum, and he hated his guts. This tension between them is really something. Verse 32: “Now the name of the leader of those priests was Amulon [look ahead to verse 9 of the next chapter].... For Amulon knew Alma, that he had been one of the king’s priests.” He was a priest too; they had both been in the quorum. Apparently, Amulon was an important guy who was aspiring to be chief priest. He was here. They named the settlement after him, and he became leader of the priests. He still aspired to leadership and achieved it; he got a real break. He got a sponsor and was able to rule, as people do who get sponsors. Notice what he [Amulon] did. The reason the priests were being chased now is that they had captured the Lamanite girls. They married them. Notice what “small potatoes” this is; there were only twenty-four of them. Amulon decided that they should go forth and plead with the Lamanites. After all, we’re fellow Lamanites (ha, ha, ha); let’s let bygones be bygones, etc. The Lamanites were always more compassionate than the Nephites, so this is what happened. Verse 33: “Amulon did plead with the Lamanites; and he also sent forth their wives, who were the daughters of the Lamanites, to plead with their brethren that they should not destroy their husbands.” That worked; the Lamanites had compassion.

156 Mosiah 23:35 “And Amulon and his brethren did join the Lamanites, and they were traveling in the wilderness in search of the land of Nephi when they discovered the land of Helam, which was possessed by Alma and his brethren.” After Amulon joined their company, a mass of them were moving on and discovered the land of Helam, the happy land which means prosper. Helam is like Phoenix, it means reborn, prosperous, flourishing, and that sort of thing. It was a name of good omen for a colony, and that’s where Alma was. They came to Helam, and what happened? Amulon took over everything and not only pushed Alma

into the background, but started persecuting in grand style. “The Lamanites promised unto Alma and his brethren, that if they would show them the way which led to the land of Nephi that they would grant unto them their lives and their liberty.” Amulon was putting them on; you can be sure of that. Alma agreed and showed them the way, and then they said “April fool.” They wouldn’t keep their promise. I see the fine hand of Amulon there, don’t you? He refused to do it.

156 You notice we have no race problem here. You can’t talk about Nephites and Lamanites [as distinct and separate groups] because look how these things are mixed up now. Here is another mixing of Lamanites, and a group in which the women are Lamanites and the men are Nephites. That’s a common phenomenon, as you know. You mustn’t be too simplistic about the Book of Mormon; it’s complicated enough.

156,157 Mosiah 23:38 Then what happened? They wouldn’t keep their promise, but they went on. They were moving through. Verse 38: “And the remainder of them went to the land of Nephi; and a part of them returned to the land of Helam, and also brought with them the wives and the children of the guards who had been left in the land. And the king of the Lamanites had granted unto Amulon that he should be a king and a ruler over his people, who were in the land of Helam.” Amulon said he would stay there, and he persuaded the king of the Lamanites to make him the local chief and give him absolute power there. We see now that the king of the Lamanites had a lot of territory, as the Indians always do. The idea is that you have a great chief and chiefs under him. You have tribes and then you have clans within the tribes; every tribe has clans within it. This is what they had.

157 Mosiah 24:1 So Amulon got himself made king over the Nephites of Alma’s community. They joined up with Alma’s people, and this put Amulon in the driver’s seat. Mosiah 24:1: “And it came to pass that Amulon did gain favor in the eyes of the king of the Lamanites.” You can be sure he would; the high king was only too glad to turn over



to him the responsibility for judging those people.

158 D & C 121:39 ;Matthew 24 & 25 Remember Doctrine and Covenants 121:39: “We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion.” That’s what happened with Amulon, and he took it out on Alma. And the classic example is in Matthew 24 & 25, where the master of the house goes away and leaves the house in the charge of his servant. The apostles were asking, “How shall we behave until you come again?” He said this is the way: You don’t know when the Lord is coming again, but don’t act like this man. As soon as he was put in charge of the house, he started lording all over the other servants, oppressing them, giving high commands, and making everybody miserable. What will happen when the lord comes home and discovers him doing that sort of thing? That’s why he [Jesus Christ] is going to come by surprise and not announce his coming—we would all be dressed, spit polished, and ready for inspection, like when the general comes around. If we knew ahead of time, it wouldn’t be a good test that way. So the Lord comes like a thief in the night and catches everybody by surprise, including the servants. What are these servants doing? Don’t be found living riotous and expensive lives while you are oppressing other people. That’s what the Lord doesn’t want to find when he comes back, but that’s what he’s going to find.

158 Mosiah 24:1 He [Amulon] was appointed not only this [a ruler], but “the king of the Lamanites granted unto him and his brethren that they should be appointed teachers over his people.” That was natural because they were educated priests, in this case a mixture of Lamanites, Nephites, and Mulekites. Here was Amulon and his college of priests, Noah’s council, some of the most learned men in the land. They are the ones to appoint as teachers, so he naturally appointed them teachers. They took the job naturally as a part of the empire, “... teachers over his people, yea, even over the people who were in the land of Shemlon, and in the land of Shilom, and in the land of

Amulon.” It went right back to the place where they had settled originally; they connected the two lands. They must have been close together. It was all connected and put under the rule of Amulon. The city called Amulon was a village. If you have a big village, that’s ten or fifteen thousand; that’s a good size. So they had the Amulon lands; and the Shemlon lands, which means the lands to the east on the left side; and the Shilom lands, which means the “higher lands, the high and dry lands.” Here’s an ambitious man. We overlook Amulon among the dangerous characters in the Book of Mormon. We just pass by him, but he was as clever as any of them.

158,159 Mosiah 24:2-4 “For the Lamanites had taken possession of all these lands; therefore, the king of the Lamanites had appointed kings over all these lands [that’s the idea, to appoint chiefs; he was the high king, and he appointed kings to take the load off his shoulders]. And now the name of the king of the Lamanites was Laman [that’s natural; just as you have a long string of Caesars, you’re going to have a long string of Lamans here]; ... therefore he was called king Laman. And he was king over a numerous people. And he appointed teachers of the brethren of Amulon [as I said, they were the educated, priestly class here] in every land which was possessed by his people [so he sent them around not just in Amulon territory, but throughout the whole Lamanite territory, which was an extensive and populous one; they were circulating and being the teachers] and thus the language of Nephi [notice this racial mixture again] began to be taught among all the people of the Lamanites.” They broke up very soon into dialects and languages.

160 Mosiah 24:4 They began to have the people learn the language of Nephi. It “began to be taught among all the people of the Lamanites.” They were going to have the lingua franca. They used it for business, and, of course, they became very prosperous.

161 This is all perfectly credible and perfectly in order that [the King of the Lamanites] had them learn the

Nephrate language and had them adopt writing as a means of expediting business. With these [business] exchanges they [Amulon and his brethren] were able to increase their riches. They began to trade with one another. How would Joseph Smith figure out this? It's a marvelous thing the way this is constructed, with such tremendous economy. While he is telling this story of Amulon and Alma, he just throws this in without any extra charge.

161 Mosiah 24:7 “And thus the Lamanites began to increase in riches, and began to trade one with another and wax great, and began to be a cunning and a wise people [if you start trading, you do], as to the wisdom of the world, yea, a very cunning people, delighting in all manner of wickedness [that means exchanges and tricks] and plunder, except it were among their own brethren.” (Mosiah 24:7). No white-collar crime—that's very interesting that they wouldn't rob their own people.

162 Mosiah 24:7 So they were doing that, but they didn't cheat their own. “... delighting in all manner of wickedness and plunder, except it were among their own brethren [they had that honor among thieves]. And now it came to pass that Amulon began to exercise authority [you can believe that] over Alma and his brethren, and began to persecute him.” He had it in for Alma. Now, would he think that Alma was a traitor because he walked out on the priestly group? He fled with the priests, but he took the families with him and set out. He could have an argument that Alma was a traitor, but he was the worst traitor. He was with the ones who walked out on their wives and children. He not only deserted the king, but he deserted everybody. He went out and took over himself, and then he stole the Lamanite girls, etc. But who was guilty of doing the wrong thing? Alma kept the people together and took them out. We know the reasons, etc. But you can imagine what the rivalry would be between the two men—how he would hate Alma. Alma was the great man who was doing the right thing. This represents the famous maxim, “We can pardon those who injure us, but we can never pardon those whom we injure.” He had wronged Alma, so he could never pardon Alma. That's true.

We can easily forgive those who have wronged us, but never those we have wronged. That rankles. You have to have a reason for it, so you will never forgive that guy if you have wronged him. But he began to persecute him; Alma got on his nerves, etc. Notice this pecking order of the corporate ladder. He [Amulon] is middle management. The king put him in, and he could do what he darn pleased. Alma had been chosen as king of his people, and now Amulon just pushed him out. He was going to take over now.

162,163 Mosiah 24:9 “For Amulon knew Alma, that he had been one of the king’s priests, and that it was he that believed the words of Abinadi.” He knew about that, you see. You’ve started all this, he said. “For Amulon knew Alma, that he had been one of the king’s priests, and that it was he that believed the words of Abinadi and was driven out before the king, and therefore he was wroth with him [he was mad at him for that reason]; for he was subject to king Laman, yet he exercised authority over them, and put tasks upon them, and put taskmasters over them.”

163 Mosiah 24:11,12 He was really rubbing it in; he was the unjust steward. This again is a Nephite characteristic. It’s their meanness when they have the upper hand. It’s like the insolence of apartheid, etc. “And Amulon commanded them that they should stop their cries [if they complained]; and he put guards over them to watch them, that whosoever should be found calling upon God should be put to death.” Well, how low can you go? See, he was a priest himself, but anyone calling upon God he would put to death because these were the people he didn’t like—and all this because of his personal enmity with Alma. So they prayed in their hearts. How can you pray in your thoughts? The standard prayer is, “Lord, hear the words of my mouth.” We are required to pray vocally, although Joseph Smith didn’t until he went to the Grove. He was raised in a religious family, but nobody ever prayed out loud at that time. That was a new thing. “And Alma and his people did not raise their voices to the Lord their God, but did pour out their hearts to him; and he did know the thoughts of their hearts.”

163 Mosiah 24:13,15 Well, the most powerful force in the world is thought, and the most powerful form of thought is faith. They could count on this; suddenly they were feeling reassured. This is a perfect setup for revenge, but they have no thought of revenge at all here. Then they began to be comforted [in verse 13]: “for I know of the covenant which ye have made unto me [the Lord tells them through Alma]; and I will covenant with my people and deliver them out of bondage. And I will also ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, that even you cannot feel them upon your backs, even while you are in bondage.” We are going to be disappointed that we don’t find the revenge scenario here. After all this villainy of [Amulon] we are not going to have the mandatory, final super explosion at the end of the film, when everything has to be blown up. No, the vengeance never takes place. Verse 15: “And now it came to pass that the burdens which were laid upon Alma and his brethren were made light; yea, the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord.” Now that was the pioneers. A less aggressive people could not be imagined in every case when there was a showdown, when they had a great possibility of [taking revenge]. There were some hotheads, but it was remarkable how they avoided [violence].

164 Mosiah 24:16 So what were they going to do about it? They were going to get out. Verse 16: “so great was their faith and their patience that the voice of the Lord came unto them again, saying: Be of good comfort, for on the morrow I will deliver you out of bondage.” Remember, we’ve had Rechabites before; this is the way they do. I think you could list at least twenty examples in which large factions or tribes or clans [have done this].

164 Mosiah 24:17; Mosiah 22:2 So the Lord said to Alma, “Thou shalt go before this people, and I will go with thee and deliver this people out of bondage. Now it came to pass that Alma and his people in the night-time gathered their flocks together, and also of their grain.” We notice that the same thing happened back here in Mosiah 22:2,

where it is talking about Ammon and Limhi. “And it came to pass that they could find no way to deliver themselves out of bondage, except it were to take their women and children, and their flocks, and their herds, and their tents, and depart into the wilderness.” These two migrations are very close together, but this is the way things were being done. That’s what they were getting to in a time of tension like this.

164 Mosiah 24:18 Well, anyway the same thing happens here [as happened in Mosiah 22:2], all night long they were gathering their flocks together and getting ready

165 Mosiah 24:19-23 This is what happened here; in the night-time they built up. Remember, we mentioned before that these people had been watching. They used the wine trick the other time, but they didn’t this time. They didn’t need the wine because it was the Lord that “caused a deep sleep to come upon Lamanites, yea, and all their task-masters were in a profound sleep.” So they sneaked out, and they came to a valley which they called “the valley of Alma. They name [the place] after the people that settle them], because he led their way in the wilderness. Yea, and in the valley of Alma they poured out their thanks to God” with a sigh of relief and settled down. Don’t fool yourself; you’re still in danger. Get moving. You’re not safe yet just because I have performed one miracle. Go on [paraphrased]. Verse 23: “And now the Lord said unto Alma: Haste thee and get thou and this people out of this land, for the Lamanites have awakened and do pursue thee; therefore get thee out of this land, and I will stop the Lamanites in this valley that they come no further in pursuit of this people.” Don’t worry!

165 1 Nephi 14:1 We think of Nephi’s prayer when he said, Lord, block up the way of my enemies pursuing me. Don’t block up my way. Make the level way open for me. He was talking about fleeing through the desert and said, block up the way of my enemies; place stumbling blocks before them so they won’t pursue me. It’s the same thing here. The Lord does that. He stopped the Lamanites. See,

the Lord blocks people in various ways. He did it here [for Alma's people].

165,166 Mosiah 14:25 "And after they had been in the wilderness twelve days [that gives us a geographical tip since there was such a gang of them moving, and they stopped a while, in fact too long; the Lamanites nearly caught up with them, but they got away], they arrived in the land of Zarahemla [these places were fairly close together, but they were safe home now in Zarahemla]; and king Mosiah did also receive them with joy." They celebrated that, of course.

166 Mosiah 25:1 "And now king Mosiah caused that all the people should be gathered together" (Mosiah 25:1). Well, this is ancient too. They did that same thing in the ancient world. They didn't have the Book of Mormon at all in those days, but it's all down here. Here they all come together, so this gives us a survey and a census. It doesn't give us numbers, but it says there were the descendants of Nephi and the people of Zarahemla, the descendants of Mulek. And the Mulekites were far more numerous than the Nephites. But the Nephites and Mulekites together weren't even half as numerous as the Lamanites, so they had increased much more rapidly. It breaks them down into tribes.

166,167 D & C 3:16 Let me show you something in the Doctrine and Covenants 3:16. On the 116 pages that were lost there was information that we don't have today. This is a broad hint of the sort of things that was in them. Section 3 discusses the loss of the 116 pages, which were not going to be replaced at that time. It's a very interesting thing here. "Nevertheless, my work shall go forth, for inasmuch as the knowledge of a Savior has come unto the world, through the testimony of the Jews, even so shall the knowledge of a Savior come unto my people—And [this message will go] to the Nephites [there are still Nephites around], and the Jacobites [it breaks them down into seven tribes], and the Josephites [they are still distinct], and the Zoramites, through the testimony of their fathers." Now they are the four tribes that are classed as Nephite; as it tells us later, that

is just purely a cultural, political classification to call them Nephites because they include these four tribes: Nephites, Jacobites, Josephites, and Zoramites. The other three are the Lamanites, Lemuelites, and Ishmaelites. That makes the seven tribes. You usually have to have seven tribes. Seven or twelve you have to have. But it's more complicated than you think. And even though the Lamanites had only three tribes, they were far more numerous—an interesting development. Well, it's because they had a healthier family life. It tells us that they loved their children, and they didn't play around, like Amulon and people like that.

167 Mosiah 25:4 “And now all the people of Nephi were assembled together, and also all the people of Zarahemla [it was a great assembly and must have been an impressive gathering], and they were gathered together in two bodies.” That's natural, of course. If I had a Bible, I would read Deuteronomy 31 and Exodus 24, where the same thing happened in Israel. They united in separate bodies and kept a certain identity, as it says there. These tribes were still aware of their identity because genealogy is important. What they did is have the law read to them; that was what they must do. If you go up north to Iceland, you will still find the THINGSTADR, the place where they used to hold the ancient ALLTHING.

167,168 Mosiah 25:5-8 The point is that he [Mosiah] read them the law. The same thing happened in Israel, in Rome, in Greece, etc. When the law was pronounced, it was sent down from the mountain and read to the people, as Moses read it to them. He brought it down and read it, and the people were camped at the foot of the mountain living in booths. It is called “the festival of the booths—the gathering.” These are customs you will find throughout the world. It's a very surprising thing. This is not the sort of thing you would invent spontaneously; it went back to a single source. They [Mosiah's people] met here in the two bodies, and it was very impressive. He read them the records of Zeniff and the account of Alma, and this gave them a new perspective entirely. The reading filled them in on both the history and the important events. We must be



informed, and this was something new to them. Notice that it says in verse 8: "For they knew not what to think." They never knew such things were going on.

168 Mosiah 25:8 Question: Why do you suppose they were so struck with amazement when they read these records? Answer: This is back in Zarahemla and is telling us what has been going on with these people who had been going out everywhere. He is talking about three or four different colonies of people—where they originated, their tribulations, etc. They didn't know any of this had been going on with their relatives or anyone. Is this what has happened since we left Jerusalem? Well, they were struck with amazement. It says, "For they knew not what to think; for when they beheld those that had been delivered out of bondage they were filled with exceedingly great joy"\* (Mosiah 25:8). They were glad to hear this. You have to have the book of the law read and by acclamation you have to approve it. The classic example here is King Benjamin. With the new coronation and the new year, the people came, brought their first fruits, and camped in booths. The king gave them a speech from the tower, exactly as happens in "Nathan the Babylonian," who recorded that thing happening with the Jews in ancient times. There's nothing in the Bible about that, but it's in the Book of Mormon and in Jewish records. That's the way they used to do when they gathered all together.

168 Notice that they were filled with both joy and sorrow. These people are easily moved; they sit around and weep their heads off at conferences, etc. It's a very cheerful event when you go to a conference with the Indians, and they "even shed many tears of sorrow." This is the warp and the woof—this in our life. There are many accounts of the old man at the gate in heaven. There are two gates, one where the righteous go through, and one where the wicked go through. An old man sits there. It's Enoch with a book, and he records. He weeps and he smiles. He smiles and is happy every time a righteous person comes, and he weeps every time a wicked one does. We find the same thing in the Book of Mormon a little later on in Alma, when he talks

about the Title of Liberty. That's another story, and we'll never get to it if we don't get along here. But this is all relevant, you see—it's all here. How did this ever get in the Book of Mormon?

168,169 Mosiah 25:11 “And again, when they thought upon the Lamanites, who were their brethren, of their sinful and polluted state, they were filled with pain and anguish for the welfare of their souls.” Can we suffer that they go in ignorance? The thought of the pagans in ignorance breaks the hearts of Christians, supposedly, so they send missionaries out. Then this is a very interesting note. Amulon and the priests had children with these Lamanite girls. The Lamanite girls were still Lamanites, and they raised their children. The children always stay with their mothers until they have regular initiations into puberty. These kids were all raised by Lamanite mothers, so they “were displeased with the conduct of their fathers.” Their mothers were much more moral than their fathers were, and probably their fathers didn't treat their mothers very well. So they wanted to be Nephites, and “they took upon themselves the name of Nephi [no desire to dominate here at all], that they might be called the children of Nephi and be numbered among those who were called Nephites.” Here's more racial complication; this is not a simple ethnic story at all. These kids wanted to be called Nephites and join the Nephites. This is a thing that happens.

169 Mosiah 25:13 “And now all the people of Zarahemla were numbered with the Nephites [so we don't call them Mulekites anymore; they're Nephites too; they are numbered with them and that's the name], and this because the kingdom had been conferred upon none but those who were descendants of Nephi.” See, it's a political designation beginning with Mosiah, because only Nephites could rule. Then [Mosiah] desired that Alma should take charge of the church. Now we come to the most interesting parts of what happens—how to manage the church is very important. (This information comes very soon now.) They are back in Zarahemla now, not out with that other crowd, and the king said, I'll put you in charge of the whole thing;

you can go around and establish the church [paraphrased]. Alma went from one body to another, preaching unto the people repentance and faith on the Lord. And he 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. And it came to pass that after Alma had taught the people many things, and had made an end of speaking to them [this is still at the meeting], that king Limhi was desirous that he might be baptized [Alma is the one who brought the authority; Ammon refused to do it until Alma showed up]; and all his people were desirous that they might be baptized also.”

169,170      Mosiah 25:18-24    It's the same thing that happened in the case of Benjamin, when they all accepted the covenant and cried out in a single voice that they accepted it when the king asked them. [Limhi and his people] accepted the covenant also and were baptized to show that they accepted the covenant. Verse 18: “Therefore, Alma did go forth into the water and did baptize them; yea, he did baptize them after the manner he did his brethren in the waters of Mormon [using the same method]; yea, and as many as he did baptize did belong to the church of God; and this because of their belief on the words of Alma [it's very much like the Dead Sea Scrolls here].. .. King Mosiah granted unto Alma that he might establish churches throughout all the land of Zarahemla [remember, this is a large expanse here with many cities]; and gave him power to ordain priests and teachers [wherever he wanted to] over every church [it was going to become a sacral state, in other words; the priesthood is approved by the king]. Now this was done because there were so many people that they could not all be governed by one teacher; neither could they all hear the word of God in one assembly [so they had different assemblies in different churches everywhere; they couldn't all have to come together in one group because they had to come too far]. Therefore, they did assemble themselves together in different bodies, being called churches,” and they were ruled by Alma. And they were to preach nothing in the churches “except it were repentance and faith in God.” Verse 23: “And now there were seven churches in

the land of Zarahemla.” We just said there were the seven tribes there. When John wrote in Revelation, he wrote to the seven churches in Asia. That’s probably a coincidence. But seven churches would certainly suggest seven tribes or seven groups. “And they were called the people of God [they were given a name; remember, Benjamin said, I’m going to give you a name today when he talked to the people in the general assembly]. And the Lord did pour out his Spirit upon them, and they were blessed, and prospered in the land.”

170 Mosiah 26:1 The next chapter is devoted to the church. This is another very important thing. What about the church? What authority does the church have over people? What authority does the church have over individuals if they don’t want to belong to it, if they want to leave in a group, or if they want to join a group? What do we do in that case? These are the rules that are to be laid down here. Both the king and Alma are completely stumped. They don’t know what to do, so they call upon the Lord and get instructions. This is the reason this becomes troublesome. Can the church force people to stay in it? “Now it came to pass that there were many of the rising generation that could not understand the words of king Benjamin [and it tells us why they didn’t understand them], being little children at the time he spake unto his people; and they did not believe the tradition of their fathers.” So they weren’t there for Benjamin at all, and Benjamin is basic. Well, do we understand Benjamin’s teaching? Do we follow it? It is addressed to us actually. They didn’t follow it. They gave it up, and they didn’t understand it because they didn’t believe on the two main points.

170,171 There are two standards tests of whether a person is a real believer or not in ancient records. What are the tests of whether they are real Christians or not? Well, this is a letter discovered about 1950 in which Paul was writing his third letter to the Corinthians. He said, how can you tell [a person who does not believe]? The first thing is that they will deny the literal resurrection. The second thing is that they will deny the literal returning of

the Lord, the coming of Christ. Notice that these are the two things these people can't believe. They will believe in the morals. They will believe in the Word of Wisdom and all the rest if you want it. But they won't believe in the literal resurrection (when people die, they die dead), and neither will they believe concerning the coming of Christ (he won't come again). This is why they didn't believe; it's a vicious circle. Because of their unbelief, they couldn't understand it. And because they couldn't understand it, they wouldn't believe it.

171 Mosiah 26:3,4 “And now because of their unbelief they could not understand the word of God; and their hearts were hardened.” They started to campaign against it. This always happens when people turn away from the church—that's the way. Verse 3 is the process, the anatomy of apostasy, and verse 4 goes on with it. “And they were a separate people as to their faith, and remained so ever after, even in their carnal and sinful state [they wanted it that way]; for they would not call upon the Lord their God.” This is going to lead very soon to the establishment of the religion of the Nehors, which dominates throughout the rest of the Book of Mormon. The religion in which they call themselves “Christians” is not the dominant religion among the Nephites and Lamanites; it's the Nehors. They far outnumber them, persecute them, and everything else. We haven't gotten to Nehor yet, but they dominate throughout the Book of Mormon.

171 We'll see now what happens. How do you deal with these people? If you are the king or the high priest, and you have a state religion here, and the king has recognized and authorized the priesthood, what are you going to do with these people who don't want to cooperate and won't believe any of that stuff? That's what he talks about, and it's a very interesting chapter.

## Lecture 40 Mosiah 26-27

**Believers and Apostates**  
**[Alma Unaware of Apostasy]**  
**[Second Resurrection]**  
**[Equality is the Mother of Righteousness]**  
**[An Angel Appears to Alma the Younger]**

172 Mosiah 26:1 Mosiah 26 is an enormously important chapter, and the first verse is very impressive. We mentioned it before. “Now it came to pass that there were many of the rising generation that could not understand the words of king Benjamin, being little children at the time he spake unto his people.” Well, the first thing we notice is the tremendous speed with which things move in the Book of Mormon. This generation was alive in the time of King Benjamin, and all that has happened. It impresses one how much has happened in how short a time.

172 Matthew Arnold, in what has been considered the greatest work of literary criticism in the English language, said there are four things that make Homer preeminently great. First, he is preeminently rapid; second, he is preeminently noble; third, he is preeminently simple and direct in content (what he tells); and fourth, he is preeminently simple and direct in language. By far the hardest of these to achieve, that no other great epic poet ever achieved, is the rapidity. Milton drags on all day just to have Satan turn around twice. But not Homer—he rushes along. And the Book of Mormon moves like an express train, right from the first chapter. Right from the

first event at the beginning, Nephi plunges into it, and he never stops going. The book just moves like lightning all the way through. That's a feat that nobody can accomplish who doesn't know exactly what's going on, or doesn't have a document before him. Nobody can get away with that. Look at how much has happened, how much is going to happen, and how fast it happens. But it's the situation that's significant here. Notice this: "Being little children at the time he spake unto his people ... they did not believe the tradition of their fathers." Well, why shouldn't little children believe the tradition of their fathers? What's wrong with that? Most of the little children I know took it from me. In my family on both sides, the grandchildren have far stronger testimonies than the children did. Is being young going to stop you from getting a testimony? What went on here? The reason for it is very well explained here. What is happening here is this, and we will see that it comes out very clearly in this chapter. And notice Mosiah 24:4-7. The Lamanites and Nephites over a wide area started mingling freely and exchanging goods, services, and information. They were friendly, etc.

173 Mosiah 27:7,8 They had this business civilization here, and we are told in verse 7 that with the business civilization and prosperity, crime began to flourish. They began to increase in riches, in trade, in cunning, and in all manner of wickedness and plunder (sophistication). The connection is made quite clear, for example, a little later on in the case of the sons of Mosiah. Turn to Mosiah 27:7-8 for just for a moment to see what the situation is there. It tells us "they became a large and wealthy people." And notice that the sons of no less than the great King Mosiah and the oldest son of Alma joined the hell-fire club, the smart-aleck club, and rejected the gospel completely. They wouldn't take it from their parents. That's a remarkable thing, isn't it? But you notice what it was. It's right in the same breath with their being a large and wealthy people. Then the next verse says that the kids weren't taken in by religion anymore. With this sort of thing, it becomes a corrupt society. Verse 8: "Now the sons of Mosiah were numbered among the unbelievers; and also one of the sons

of Alma; ... he became a very wicked and an idolatrous man.” These kids were rich, sophisticated, and cynical; they spoiled a lot of things.

174,175 Mosiah 26:5 This is what happened to these people; this is what it is describing now. Let us proceed happily here. We got down to verse 5. It seems that every chapter is the most important, but this one tells us about the church—what the church is for and why we have to have a church. The problem is this, you will notice. “And now in the reign of Mosiah they [the dissenters] were not half so numerous as the people of God; but because of the dissensions among the brethren [inside the church itself; this is what caused the apostates to grow in number] they became more numerous [and finally they outnumbered them]. For it came to pass that they did deceive many [these outsiders deceived the members of the church; these apostates were able to get away with it—how?] with their flattering words.” They came on strong with all sorts of flattering words—words flattering to the intellect like: “You can’t believe that infantile stuff; you don’t believe that stuff.” Some of my friends don’t believe the gospel, but the interesting thing is that they don’t believe I believe it either. They can’t believe that I actually believe this stuff. It’s one of the tests. They’re so naive about it; they don’t know a blessed thing.

175 Mosiah 26:6-9 “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.” If you are a member of the church and you have accepted some of this smooth talk and started misbehaving yourself, [you might say:] “We can’t quibble about these things. This old puritanical strictness just doesn’t go. We are an enlightened people; we’re emancipated.” If you had started that and were still a member of the church, then you would be admonished by the church, and they would tell you to get back on the track again. They didn’t like that, of course. Notice that we have priests and teachers in verse 7. It was the teachers



who would catch onto it first, of course. The teachers reported them to the priests. I guess we could call them “home teachers” in this case. Notice it says, “They 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.” What could the priests do? The teachers wouldn’t have anything to do with it. This is a “hot potato,” and nobody will take it, you notice. It was handed to the priests, and they went up to Alma, the high priest. (Well, take it to the General Authority; he should know.) But Alma didn’t know; this is another surprise in verse 9. Alma wasn’t aware of what had been going on at all. Now that’s a surprising thing. Why not? Shouldn’t he have known that? Verse 9: “And it came to pass that Alma did not know concerning them; but there were many witnesses against them; yea, the people stood and testified of their iniquity in abundance.”

175,176 But Alma didn’t know about what was going on. Was he ever naive! But there were many witnesses against them. He was apparently reluctant to believe it; they had to pour on the witnesses. It took a lot of pressure to make Alma give in there. He was a real idealist, wasn’t he? He didn’t want to get involved in this thing; yet he was the head of the church. He was troubled. The next verse tells that Alma was upset by this sort of thing. This is a common thing, too.

176 Mosiah 26:10,11 Well, anyway Alma didn’t know, so you’ll have to excuse him for not knowing. It took some pressure to convince him, but when he was convinced, he was upset. He was “troubled in his spirit,” and said, Well, I’ll have to take this to the king. He is passing the buck, too, see. Verse 11: “And he said unto the king: Behold, here are many whom we have brought before thee, who are accused of their brethren; yea, and they have been taken in divers iniquities.” Now what can the church punish them for, and how can the church punish them? That’s what this chapter is going to tell us. He doesn’t know what to do about it, and neither does the king, because they are civil offenses. Here he says, “Therefore we have brought them

before thee, that thou mayest judge them according to their crimes.” See, they are civil offenses. If they commit a crime, the church doesn’t punish them. The king punishes them; the government punishes them. If they haven’t committed a crime, what can the church do about it? They are not criminals, so we’re going to decide that.

176,177 Mosiah 26:12 What does the king do? He passes it on, too. It’s a “hot potato” for him just as well. Verse 12: “But king Mosiah said unto Alma: Behold, I judge them not; therefore I deliver them [right back to you] into thy hands to be judged.” So the king passes them right back to Alma again. See, the question is, “What action should I take?” The answer is that it’s through the church that God intends to deal with men. The human race is admittedly lost and bemused. This is the closest exposition you will get of the purpose of the church. Why do we have to have a church? Why do you have to have a ship? Why do you have to have a house? Well, we have no choice but to live together is the reason. If we were living alone, we wouldn’t need them. But we all have to live together. Even Cain had an entourage wherever he went. We are living in a community with each other, and we will see what comes of that.

177 Mosiah 26:13-15 Alma is not the typical boss, you’ll notice. He isn’t the manager that knows exactly what to do and does the wrong thing. The spirit of Alma was troubled—he was worried. He was afraid that he might do the wrong thing, a very humble man. Notice it says, “for he feared that he should do wrong in the sight of God.” Well, how many leaders, bosses, managers are in constant fear that they will do wrong when they are faced with a problem? They may not know how to solve it, but the idea of doing wrong [doesn’t bother them]. Nobody does wrong anymore, as you know. They deny all guilt no matter what they do. You may be caught with your hand in the till, but you deny every charge because the lawyers always tell you, “Only fools plead guilty—always say that you’re innocent.” But he was worried about it and “feared that he should do wrong in the sight of God ... [so] he poured out his whole soul to God

[this is where we take it—to the Lord, of course, and] the voice of the Lord came to him, saying: [this is in the manner of the Doctrine and Covenants; when Joseph Smith wanted to know he asked] ... Thou art blessed because of thy exceeding faith in the words alone of my servant Abinadi.” Now what about childish faith? What about being gullible, etc.? He believed in the “words alone.” He saw no evidence, no proof, or anything like that. And it wasn’t the words of God; it was the words of Abinadi alone that he believed in. What’s going on here? Why is there merit in this?

177,178      The great Krister Stendahl is now bishop of Lund and chief of the Swedish church. He was here at a luncheon and someone (namely me) quoted Joseph Smith as saying, “Nobody was ever damned for believing too much.” Well, he found that extremely offensive. But when it comes to it, everybody believes too much. There’s not a person here who believes a single thing that has been absolutely and completely proved—gravitation or anything else. You have to believe all sorts of things that you can’t possibly prove, and everybody believes them. Well, what’s the point here then? Because Alma believed in his words alone. I would emphasize his. You are blessed because of the things you choose to believe—not by the act of believing, not just by faith. You weren’t blessed because you believed, but because you chose what to believe. Everybody chooses what to believe. The atheist is a very strong believer. He is the most passionate arguer you can possibly find, and the positivist. You find faith all around you. You must believe in something and everybody does. But the Lord said, blessed are you because of the things you chose to believe; you chose to believe in the things that Abinadi taught [paraphrased]. He could have chosen all sorts of other things. So it isn’t that he was naive and gullible, but he was blessed because of what he chose to believe. It’s up to you to choose what you’ll believe. As I said, everybody does. But what he chose to believe were the words of Abinadi.

178      Mosiah 26:16-19 “And blessed are they because of their exceeding faith in the words alone which thou hast spoken unto them.” See, “faith in the words alone.” That

seems awfully shallow, doesn't it, just to accept something on somebody's word? But they were not accepting it on somebody's word. They had chosen what they would believe. What rang the bell for them is what they believed, and [they were] blessed. And here's another thing in verse 17. It is often asked, what authority, what priesthood did Alma have to do what he was doing here? He went ahead and did it alone, and here he is congratulated for it. He is congratulated for taking the initiative. "And blessed art thou because thou hast established a church among this people; and they shall be established, and they shall be my people." [The Lord] is going to accept them, but he went ahead and established a church. Having the priesthood, he took the initiative, and the Lord said that's good. He doesn't want to command in all things. Verse 19: "And because thou hast inquired of me concerning the transgressor, thou art blessed." We love to make moral judgments of others, but Alma didn't. He would not do that. He was blessed because he asked the Lord concerning those things.

178,179 Mosiah 26:20-22 "Thou art my servant; and I covenant with thee that thou shalt have eternal life." Alma was speaking for the church, and yet God always covenants with us as individuals, as we will see three verses after this. How could it be otherwise? Is there any virtue in membership? Can you be blessed because you are a member of anything? No. The Lord deals with you alone—only with the individual participant. It's like an orchestra, a choir, a faculty, or anything like that. It's a community, but everyone makes an individual contribution, and he deals alone with the Lord. We have it here: "Thou art my servant; and I covenant with thee that thou shalt have eternal life [it's between Alma and the Lord]; and thou shalt serve me and go forth in my name, and shalt gather together my sheep [then in the next verse he says, whoever is acceptable to me should be acceptable to you]. 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. For behold, this is my church [we're here all working together; if anyone wants to come back, he says the door is always open]; whosoever is baptized shall be baptized unto repentance.

And whomsoever ye receive shall believe in my name; and him will I freely forgive." If I forgive him, you must forgive him. So the door is always open here. With baptism [the Lord] will receive them again.

179 Mosiah 26:23 "For it is I that taketh upon me the sins of the world; for it is I that hath created [I am the one that hath created them]; and it is I that granteth unto him [notice it is singular] that believeth unto the end a place at my right hand." He is not talking about the church as a whole here, but is speaking of the individual. He says, Alma, the deal is between you and me, and I'll grant to anyone that believes unto the end a place at my right hand. It's a personal relationship. I'll grant to that individual who believes on me a place at the right hand. That's the Atonement, the YESHIVAH, sitting down with God. That's the word that's translated as atonement in the Old Testament. When you go in and sit down with God, that's YESHIVAH; that's an atonement, when you become AT ONE.

179 Mosiah 26:24 "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." It's one hundred percent up to the Lord himself. He will make the decision; he will decide who is righteous and who isn't. As he says in Isaiah, Don't tell me who are my sheep and who are not. Don't tell me who are the people of God—who are the good people and the bad people. That's for me to decide; that's not for you to decide [paraphrased]. It's the easiest thing in the world to say, "Are you on the Lord's side? We are God's people. This is the Lord's university." Calling this "the Lord's university" used to make Harvey Taylor furious when he came here. He thought that was a gross insult to the Lord. Not because of the quality of this or any other university, but we had no right to say it. Let the Lord say that if that's so. We shouldn't pin that medal on ourselves. We have no right to put medals on ourselves that way.

179,180 Mosiah 26:25-27 "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.” And if they absolutely refuse, he will deal with them personally again. Notice the second trump, the second resurrection. What’s wrong with having to wait a few years in eternity? You are willing to wait for a second resurrection—six months or something like that—you’ll graduate a little later? What’s the difference? There’s all the difference in the world. The second resurrection is a different type of experience—a different type of resurrection. You’ll be resurrected, of course, but it’s a different environment and a different setting. You’re a different type of person from those who come out in the first resurrection. It’s not a matter of timing at all. What’s going on here is a matter of quality. Verse 26: “And then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, that I am their Redeemer; but they would not be redeemed.” Remember, we mentioned that before? I was nice to you, but you would not. I warned you, but you would not. I commanded you, but you would not. It’s the same thing; they would not be redeemed. There’s nothing he can do; he is not going to infringe on their agency. Verse 27: “And then I will confess unto them that I never knew them.” They thought they could fool him and that they would be recognized anyway. No, I knew what was going on, he’ll say; you never fooled me. That’s why he says, “I will confess unto them that I never knew them,” because they were never behaving; they tried to pull a fast one. Remember, they say, God will beat us with a few stripes and then everything will be all right. He won’t notice what’s going on here [paraphrased]. “And they shall depart into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” This is explained later in the Book of Mormon.

180 The teachers asked the question, “What will we do with these guys?” The priests asked the question. Then they asked it to Alma. Alma took it to the king, and the king turned it back to Alma. He said, “I don’t know; what will we do?” So Alma asked the Lord, and this is the answer to the question: What do you do with members of the church who deny their testimonies and make trouble? This happens in the church all the time. There are people who don’t want to belong but want to stay in. I know lots of people who are

that way because they will lose their audience and have no prestige. Nobody will listen to them once they are out of the church. They always want to be connected with the church so they can get an audience. If they weren't panning the church, they never could get anybody out. All you have to do is start jumping on the church and then you can get somebody interested; they'll listen to you.

181 Mosiah 26:29 But if a person has committed a sin, "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. Yea, and as often as my people repent will I forgive them their trespasses against me [this is the good news of the gospel—it is the gospel of repentance; we are repenting perpetually here; if you are not repenting, you are not improving]. And ye shall also forgive one another your trespasses [he forgives you, too, and you must take his word for it]; 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." If he says he has repented, but he hasn't really repented, do you refuse to forgive him? No, that's not for you to judge. He has condemned himself then. You know he's a hypocrite and has made trouble for a long time. He says, "Oh, I'm repenting all right" because he wants to get back into the church and have some influence. You forgive him his trespasses. The Lord says, "Forgive him." He has condemned himself if he says he has repented and hasn't; you must take his word for it. Then if he hasn't, if he has been lying, he takes the consequences. He has brought himself under condemnation.

181 Mosiah 26:32,33 "Now I say unto you, Go; and whosoever will not repent of his sins the same shall not be numbered among my people [he will be struck off the records],... And it came to pass when Alma had heard these words he wrote them down that he might have them [like the Doctrine and Covenants and like the 1QS here], and that he might judge the people of that church according to the commandments of God." Remember, he established churches far and wide. He couldn't be in all of them. There

were various churches. That's why he established the preachers, etc. For his particular branch of the church that he lived in, he wrote down the record for them. There were many communities of like-minded people.

181,182 Mosiah 26:34 "And it came to pass that Alma went and judged those that had been taken in iniquity, according to the word of the Lord." It had to be their acts. The church is not a corporation that answers for my beliefs. That's what St. Augustine taught. He said, whatever the most people believe, we can believe, and believe it without any doubt at all. He also said, I know that I'm a Christian because I'm received by them. In any community that receives me, I'm sanctified. I receive my testimony because I identify myself with the church. Of course, this is the doctrine of the Catholic Church. The church as an institution is its own proof, it's own evidence of divinity. The theological is actually secondary. You come onto that quite a bit. It's the other way around: I am a member of the church because I believe, but I don't believe because I'm a member of the church. In Catholic countries it's very common that people believe what they can because of the church.

182 Mosiah 26:37,38 Now here is the "doctrine of the two ways." We have to move on here. Verse 37: "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. And now all these things did Alma and his fellow laborers do who were over the church, walking in all diligence, teaching the word of God in all things, suffering all manner of afflictions, being persecuted by all those who did not belong to the church of God." Look at this! Alma, with all his authority and everything else, was being persecuted. They were going around teaching the others, and they were given a bad time. They were greatly outnumbered now. They caused a lot of dissent and concern, cutting all these people off from the church, etc. There was real trouble here, and they had enmity wherever they went, as it says here, "being persecuted by all those



who did not belong to the church of God.” There was no obvious advantage in membership anymore, was there? You see all these guilty people. As we said from Rachfoucauld yesterday. “We can forgive those who wrong us, but never those we have wronged.” The apostates are really bitter, as you know. These were bitter apostates, and they were numerous now.

182,183 Mosiah 26:39 “And they did admonish their brethren; and they were also admonished.” You notice it wasn’t a case of dominant and submissive here. Just last night I was reading a very interesting thing in Philo of Alexandria. (Nobody ever reads Philo.) He said, “Equality is the mother of righteousness.” That’s a very interesting thing because it’s inequality that starts men fighting among themselves, abusing each other, being ambitious and competitive climbers, and making up mean stories about each other. It says here that they admonished their brethren and were also admonished by them, so it’s this equality [that’s important]. There’s not somebody laying down the law to you, and you laying down the law to somebody below you. You lick his boots and somebody else licks yours. It’s not that at all. It was this equality, and we are going have a lot about that. That word equality occurs a great many times in the Book of Mormon. But I like that from Philo: “Equality is the mother of righteousness.”

183 Mosiah 26:39 “And they were also admonished, every one by the word of God, according to his sins, or to the sins which he had committed, being commanded of God to pray without ceasing, and to give thanks in all things.” This is the way you hold on; this is the way they kept going, to pray to God without ceasing. It doesn’t mean constantly. When it says, “they continued in prayer without ceasing,” that doesn’t mean they had a monastic fanaticism here, or anything like that.

183 Mosiah 27:1 The persecutions get pretty bad, and this is very important. Here we recognize the source of pride and haughtiness. “And now it came to pass that the persecutions which were inflicted on the church by

the unbelievers became so great that the church began to murmur [they didn't like it], and complain to their leaders concerning the matter [this was going too far]; and they did complain to Alma. And Alma laid the case before their king, Mosiah. And Mosiah consulted with his priests." So they had another conference on these things.

183,184        How do you handle [dissenters within the church]? The usual thing was persecution, just wipe them out. St. Augustine recommended it. The Donatists were making trouble because they had a different doctrine. They believed people weren't living the pure life of the early church, and the Donatists were strict old-fashioned Christians. St. Augustine recommended solving the Donatist problem by killing them all. So 400,000 Donatists were slaughtered in North Africa because they practiced Christianity in too strict a manner.

184        Mosiah 27:2-4 "And it came to pass that king Mosiah sent a proclamation throughout the land round about that there should not any unbeliever persecute any of those who belonged to the church of God." And no member of the church should persecute anybody. "And there was a strict command throughout all the churches that there should be no persecutions among them, that there should be an equality among all men." There's your theme of equality. If we're going to have righteousness and judgment, there should be an equality among all men—a very hard thing to achieve. Are you going to achieve this just by making rules? No, it doesn't work, as we will see, but this is the best you can do. "That they should let no pride nor haughtiness disturb their peace; that every man should esteem his neighbor as himself, laboring with their own hands for their support." This shows where the inequality comes from; it's an economic thing. They should labor with their own hands, and that means that we do not have a professional priesthood. Back a little ways, we are told that the priests also labored for their support. This recognizes the source of this pride and haughtiness. Remember, the people of the church were following the old order of Alma. Alma went out and established his model church in the

wilderness, where they were all humble and equal—just like the Qumran community. We saw that they were driven out; then they came to Zarahemla. When he established the church there at the request of the king, it was on that order with that same humility, and with the rule that everybody should labor with his own hands, including the officers. This is what they found offensive, and this is what led them to persecuting, etc. This is what led to the pride and haughtiness of those who were more successful because the others weren't striving for success.

184,185 Mosiah 27:5 “Yea, and all their priests and teachers should labor with their own hands for their support.” Well, that they didn't like at all; this equality was much too austere, much too old-fashioned. A rich Hopi would be something to laugh at. There is no such thing. A Hopi can't possibly get rich. “If one has corn, we all have corn, and that's it,” they say. And [the people in Zarahemla] had no professional clergy either. And what did they abound in? “They did abound in the grace of God.” We are promised that if we do that sort of thing, but we're not willing to trust it, as Brigham Young said. There are people that say, “I trust the Lord, but I feel better with money in the bank.” That may be true, but that's not the way the Lord wants it.

185 Mosiah 27:6 “And there began to be much peace again in the land.... And the Lord did visit them and prosper them, and they became a large and wealthy people.” There is the paradox again, that these people who don't set their hearts on wealth and don't strive for it at all become a large and wealthy people. Brigham Young said, “I could easily make this the richest people in the world, but I'm afraid it would destroy them.” It says they were a large and wealthy people; it doesn't say they had great fortunes among them.

185 Mosiah 27:8-10 Now this is what the situation was: “Now the sons of Mosiah were numbered among the unbelievers; and also one of the sons of Alma was numbered among them [well, they were in a large and wealthy nation; their fathers were the leaders of the church

and the kingdom, and they shared the wealth], he being called Alma, after his father; nevertheless, he became a very wicked and an idolatrous man. And he was a man of many words [very clever, a great talker and very popular], and did speak much flattery to the people [it's like a Beverly Hills party where everybody speaks so flattering to everybody else]; therefore he led many of the people to do after the manner of his iniquities. Everybody imitated Alma apparently. This is the sort of thing that happens at the height of fashion. Verse 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." Now, this was the public. Well, why wasn't he locked up for this? Why wasn't he punished? He was the son of Alma, mind you, and he got the sons of Mosiah to doing the same thing. Why weren't they locked up? Their parents had the highest authority in the state. Was it because they were being spoiled? They must have been spoiled in the first place. Alma neglected some things because he didn't know about the troubles in the church, etc. But they went around secretly, too, making it even worse. "For he did go about secretly with the sons of Mosiah seeking to destroy the church [what a strange thing; why would he do that? Well, just ask hundreds of apostates; I know plenty of them], and to lead astray the people of the Lord, contrary to the commandments of God, or even the king."

186,187 Mosiah 27:11 "And as I said unto you, as they were going about rebelling against God, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto them." The only thing that would stop them would be an angel. Their fathers couldn't do any good. There was an earthquake; it was earthquake country. The earth shook, and there was a lot of dust in the air. There was a cloud and a voice of thunder. It seems to be one of those periodic earthquakes. [and the Lord knew the timing]. "And so great was their astonishment, that they fell to the earth, and understood not the words which he spake unto them."

187 Mosiah 27:13 These [miracles] are correlated, you

see. They are correlated from the other side. When the Lord or somebody else can see a comet on a collision course with something, you can predict or prophesy it. You know when it's going to happen. You see it happening already; it has happened as far as you are concerned. It's absolutely certain. In the miraculous, the element of time is a very important thing. Here it just happened, and "they fell to the earth, and understood not the words which he spake unto them." But Alma understood. He passed out, and the angel gave him a good dressing down and talking to. "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 [period? no], save it is the transgression of my people." And you are transgressing, Buster. Notice that it is not an absolute promise that since it is [the Lord's] church nothing shall overthrow it. It doesn't say that at all. It says, "and nothing shall overthrow it, save it is the transgression of my people." That can overthrow it, but we forget that. We say we have a guarantee, etc.

187 Mosiah 27:14 Here's a long sermon without scriptures. It says that Alma had "prayed with much faith concerning thee that thou mightest be brought to the knowledge of the truth [Alma was terribly worried about his son. He couldn't appeal to him directly. It didn't do any good, so all he could do was pray to the Lord, just as he prayed about the other wayward members of the church]; 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. 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."

187 Mosiah 27:16 Just as Moroni cites the scripture to Joseph Smith, he cites past history here. They do that for our profit and learning, as we read [similarly in] Isaiah. Verse 16: "Now I say unto thee: Go, and remember [these are the things within recent history that he would remember; this isn't Moses crossing the Red Sea or even

Lehi leaving Jerusalem; this is things he knew about from the experience of his father] the captivity of thy fathers in the land of Helam [where Alma was in charge] ... 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.” It’s very interesting here. Why are apostates not satisfied to go their own way? Even if he wanted to be cast out, he was told not to seek to destroy the church.

188 Mosiah 27:18 : “And now Alma and those that were with him fell again to the earth [the earth was shaking and giving them a bad time], for great was their astonishment; for with their own eyes they had beheld an angel of the Lord; and his voice was as thunder, which shook the earth.” Thunder always goes with an earthquake. But again, it’s this correlation. We mentioned that before—the idea from the Talmud that when men misbehave nature responds. The girls danced, and if they missed that there was all this trouble and upset of nature. “This progeny of evil comes of our debate, of our dissension.” If men misbehave themselves, nature will misbehave. You can see why, because they are setting themselves against nature.

## Lecture 41 Mosiah 27-29

**[This World & the Real World]  
[Alma the Younger's Conversion]  
[Visiting Angels from the Real World]  
[Ammon]  
[Urim and Thummim & Seer stone]  
[B of M given to us Today  
Because We Are Very Sick]  
Mosiah's Translating**

189 Now this story about Alma's conversion and confrontation with the angel is immensely important. It's as important as anything in the Book of Mormon, and it's directly applicable to us. These things concern us very closely. The issue to be decided is this: Which world shall we take seriously? What kind of name will we give the real one? This is not the real world.

189 The experience of Alma [the Younger] and his friends is our experience. We must all decide how seriously we are going to take this side or the other side. He laughed at the other side and took it lightly. He wanted to make fun of it and have his fun here. How much does this count for? Let's get started and see what happened to Alma. He was at the top of his form, on the top of a wave. He was the darling of the city; everybody was following him around. The [four] most important young men, the sons of the king, were with him, and he was the son of the high priest. They were going around raising hell. When he was at the top of his flight,

all of a sudden (whether in a narrow street or outside, I don't know) he was stopped cold. There was a shaking of the earth and dust in the air, confusion, and thunder. Obviously, there was an earthquake, but with it an angel stopped him dead in his tracks. Just like that! What a reversal! Talk about embarrassing moments; this is it. The angel caught him "dead to rights" here and rebuked him. You know what happened. How would you react to that? What could you reply to that? Talk about being caught off guard, humiliated, and turned upside down! The only thing he did is just stand there and go blank with a foolish look on his face. He was frozen stiff and couldn't do anything—he was paralyzed. It's just what you would do in such a situation. How would you handle it? You couldn't handle it, because this is a complete reversal. Is he going to explain to the angel and try to talk himself out of it, or something like that? You don't do that to an angel.

190 So the subject comes up here. Why do these rascals get to see an angel, and none of the rest of us do? This is very important. There are lots of people who have lived righteously all their lives, and none of them are going to see an angel. But you will notice throughout the Book of Mormon and elsewhere that angels only appear in times of great crisis to reverse the course of history. They turn it around. Whether it was the Angel Moroni to Joseph Smith, or the Angel Gabriel to Zachariah, it [the appearance] started things going in a reverse direction. It reaches a point where everything has to be changed, and this has great results.

190 Mosiah 27:19,20 What's going to follow from this is basic to the end of the Book of Mormon history. It was a very important thing that happened, and he was turned around. His three friends carried him home. They brought him in the house, and a multitude gathered around. Everybody was talking at once when [Alma], a majestic figure, came out and said, what is going on here. Alma [the Younger] was "carried helpless, even until he was laid before his father [and they all started explaining to him]. And they rehearsed unto his father all that had happened unto



them.” I imagine they were breathless and everybody was talking at once, the way these things happen. But Alma, who had had plenty of guidance and revelations himself, knew exactly what had happened and said, Oh happy day! (a reaction they didn't expect).

190,191 Mosiah 27:22,23 He [Alma the Younger] was dumb and out. As high priest, his father sent messengers to bring the priests. He gathered the brethren of the quorum to pray for Alma. He knew what the situation was. They prayed for two days, and then Alma finally bestirred himself and came out of it.

191 Now the question is this: Why are we expected to invest in an unseen proposition? What evidence do you have for the other world at all? Is there any reason why you shouldn't celebrate here and make this the whole show? That was it as far as Alma [the younger] was concerned. I have an older brother the same way. Now he's coming around, but he was that way all his life. He was really a wild one and just pooh-poohed everything. He didn't exactly always disbelieve it all the way, but he made a big show. He reinforced himself in his position by making fun of things. You have to do that—you can't just take it indifferently. This happened here. Why should the average person believe in the other world? What experience does he have of it? Well, for one thing, he has a vacuum that disturbs him from time to time, no matter who he is. And then there's a tradition that moves into the vacuum. There have been connected stories going on all the time, but that's just tradition and the vacuum, etc. But we will see what explains this here.

191 Mosiah 27:24; Mosiah 28:4 They united their faith and prayers and brought him around. Then he came back and said, “I have repented of my sins, and have been redeemed of the Lord; behold I am born of the Spirit.” This sounds like “born again.” Is he going to get out of it so easy after all those years of sneering and this sort of thing? Now all he has to do is have one experience and say, “Behold, I'm born again,” and everything is all right. Don't worry. He's not getting out of it easy at all. The passage in Mosiah 28:4

is the one I was thinking of before. “And thus did the Spirit of the Lord work upon them, for they were the very vilest of sinners [this was after their conversion]. 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.” They suffered the rest of their lives because of what they had done. And they put themselves to every extreme of effort and strain to preach the gospel. They were willing to undergo anything to wipe that out—when they asked to go on the mission, etc.

191,192      Mosiah 27:25 “And the Lord said unto me: Marvel not that all mankind ... must be born again.” Notice that it’s nothing less than being born all over again. We are so completely out of it when we are here. We cannot make the change without leaving the scene. You have to be born again. See, there’s the one world or the other; you can’t mix them. It’s a very hard thing, as Brigham Young said, as he tried to take the water on both shoulders. “The Latter-day Saint who tries to live in both worlds is torn apart.” There’s no such agony, no worse experience than that, and it happens to them here. As it explains here, “. . . yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness [a complete change], being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters.” They become new creatures; it’s an entirely different thing, as this explains.

192      If there’s another world open to us, why don’t we know about it? This explains why we don’t know about it. We are “miles” removed from any kind of interface here. To the people living in one, the other doesn’t exist. We’re not going to draw time cones here, but it’s very much like the time cone. Nothing can exist outside of the cone of time. If other worlds exist beyond the range of the speed of light in certain time and space, you can never know about it. All you can know about your existence is one single line (it’s monolinear), the line you happen to be on, where time and space meet. Of course, time is measured by space, and space is measured by time. But there’s just one line, and

everything outside of that just isn't there. It's either past or future, and you'll never know it's there. There are absolute limits set to what you know by the speed of light. That's the constant. It can go so far, and from that you structure your whole universe and all your experience. It turns out to be a very narrow cone of experience. The point is that everything outside of that you can know nothing about as long as you are in this life. You'd never know about everything that exists there. So don't go making judgments that this is all there is. You have to cut loose from one or the other. Notice he says here that being in the other world, he had nothing to do with God's world, the real world. We call this "the real world," which it isn't.

192 Mosiah 27:27 "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." That means "cut loose and forgotten." There's no easy going for apostates and never has been. They have to be in the one or the other. It bugs them and eats at them all the time. But once you've known the gospel (although nobody knows it very well), once you've had any experience with the possibility that this just might be so, it's something you will never shake again.

192,193 Again the problem: All right, why doesn't somebody give us a hint? Why don't we hear a voice from the other side? Our dreams are crazy, silly dreams. They deal with trivia, as they should, unless you're able to interpret them. But where do we have the dreams and visions of glory, of old returning, and angels coming to visit the earth? Where are they? Well, the point is obvious here: If we had easy contact with that, if that was open to us, this life would be no test at all. As the Book of Mormon tells us repeatedly, this life is a probation. We are here being tested. You must be in quarantine for that. You are being watched through a one-way window, but you don't know that you are being watched necessarily. What you do here is your own behavior, and you are to be tested. In the Adam literature, when the three heavenly visitors depart and say, "We'll leave you alone now for a while," then Satan strikes. Then he says, "Now is the great day of my power," and he

tells Adam they will never be back again. “Just some fakes will come back; don’t worry about that. Now you are not being watched; now you can do what you want.” If we were constantly being reminded, if we had visits by angels [it wouldn’t be a test].

193 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.

193 Moses 7:36 Don’t think this is the real world. What a test for us all! Remember what the Lord told Enoch, “Wherefore, I can stretch forth mine hands and hold all the creations which I have made; and mine eye can pierce them also, and among all the workmanship of mine hands there has not been so great wickedness as among thy brethren” (Moses 7:36). We won’t even let a little slit of light through from the other world. It terrifies us if we do; we don’t want it at all.

193,194 And that’s the world that Alma [the younger] was in. He was a playboy and all the rest of it. What a change this had to be! It had to be a complete change. We are being quarantined here, so don’t expect visions, revelations, and glory. You are being tested all the time. You provide them [the spiritual experiences], and reading the scriptures is the same way.

194 Mosiah 27:28,29 He speaks now in the terms of the mysteries. Verse 28: “Nevertheless, after wading through much tribulation, repenting nigh unto death ...” He would rather die than go on, in other words, because he was reduced so low. After this humiliation, being shown what he was, being so guilty, and knowing what it was, he says he was “repenting nigh unto death.” He would sooner die than go on, he felt so bad. “... the Lord in mercy hath seen fit to

snatch me out of an everlasting burning, and I am born of God [it was a close call; the word snatch is a good one, isn't it?] My soul hath been redeemed from the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity." But this is the language they use: "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."

194 There is your definition of "eternal torment." You might ask, "Well, how could he be out of it? It was eternal. If his soul was racked with eternal torment, he would still be there, wouldn't he?" No, he said, I'm out of it now, "I am snatched, and my soul is pained no more." That means the torment by nature is eternal. Anybody who qualifies for it will get it from now to the end of time. It's there all the time, not that you have to suffer it all the time. This is one of the errors of Christian theology: It's eternal torment. Once you go to hell, it's eternal—forever and forever. Well, he had been as most people who go to hell, but it's not eternal. He gets out of it now.

195 Mosiah 27:30 "He remembereth every creature of his creating [that is good news—he will make himself manifest unto all]. Yea, every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess before him. It's future, you notice, and everybody is going to be included in this sooner or later.

195 Mosiah 27:32 Then from this time forward, Alma began to be a zealous teacher. He became alien to the one world. You must be alien to the one or the other. If you are really in the gospel, [you are alien to the world]. See how the early Saints were always persecuted, etc. Why were people so upset? Why did they attack them? Why did they say and do these terrible things? They didn't worry about anybody else that way. But from the very first, it bothered them terribly. Something was wrong there. So Alma went traveling around the country, just as his father had done, and preaching everywhere he went. He was going to try to make amends here. He traveled around the country "preaching the word of God in much tribulation, being greatly persecuted by those who were unbelievers, being

smitten by many of them.” Now this is it. He was a smart boy; you’d think they’d at least receive him for what he was and respect him. Maybe it was his background as the old friend. But now, they were mad at him now; he had betrayed them. They [the believers] are in a tiny minority by now. He had been just going with the majority. Remember the scripture says, “Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.” That’s what he was doing. No wonder he was popular, everybody was cheering him. He was telling them what they wanted to hear. If you tell people what they want to hear, then you will be their friend, and you will win the election. So it was here, but now he was extremely unpopular. They didn’t want him anywhere. They started kicking him around here.

196 Mosiah 27:33 “... Confirming their faith, and exhorting them with long-suffering and much travail to keep the commandments of God [he didn’t fight back, you notice]. And four of them [with him] were the sons of Mosiah; and their names were Ammon, and Aaron, and Omner, and Himni.” Now we come to the great Ammon, one of the great characters of the Book of Mormon. The oldest son of Mosiah was Ammon, who would have been the king and the priest. “And they traveled throughout all the land of Zarahemla . . . zealously striving to repair all the injuries which they had done to the church.” This is another thing—when people are “born again” [in other churches], they feel no guilt or any thing about their past.

196,197 Mosiah 27:36,37 “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.” After all, it was good. God turned this evil into good, and this is a thing that often happens. He turns what would be calamity into an all the more glorious victory, and this is what happened. They were instruments in the hands of God because look at the experiences and background they’d had. We know of cases in the Church like that—of really wicked people who have been converted and done great good. There are some very notable ones, and the other way around. “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." Everything was all right. To worry is sin and folly, and hanging back from the action is also. It was the good news, the gospel, they were preaching now. Talk about happy endings! After all this hectic story, they published peace and good tidings and [told people that] the Lord is reigning after all.

197 Mosiah 28:1-5 They were helping people and doing what they could, but their thoughts went further. How about the Lamanites; can't we help them out, too? Remember Enos prayed for his own people, and then he prayed for the Lamanite brethren, too. He said they might as well be included. Of course, we find them all mixed up here. So they got that idea. "They took a small number with them and returned to their father, the king, and desired of him that he would grant unto them that they might ... 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." Their father was very cautious because they had been stung. The one thing that kept the peace was a very wide buffer zone between them. They had to travel through quite a wilderness to get to the Lamanites (remember it's a big country). They weren't in constant conflict, as they were when they were bordering, as in Central America, where they had the line of division between them and they had the borders they had to fortify and all that trouble. They had trouble then, but here they had no trouble with them. [Mosiah] didn't want any trouble; he was very cautious and didn't want to let them go at first. Here's his policy: "They did plead with their father many days that they might go up to the land of Nephi. And the Lord [finally] said unto Mosiah: Let them go up, for many shall believe on their words, and they shall have eternal life." So they were following a very cautious policy. They didn't want to mingle too closely with the Lamanites. But they [Alma and the sons of Mosiah] were so filled with this idea: Let's go see if we can do this for the Lamanites—if it happened to us it can happen to them.

197,198 Mosiah 27:28 Question: Could you go back to verse 28 in the last chapter and explain Alma's use of the words "everlasting burning"?

Answer: Oh yes, in verse 29 he says "eternal torment." Well, that's the everlasting part; it's always available. But he mentions this later on. He says, "It is like the burning of a real fire." It consumes you and constantly gnaws on you. You can never get it out of your system. It's like a fever, which he explains later on. It's also made very clear that this is a metaphor, a figure [of speech]. It's the best thing you can find to call it. Yet how near is it to real burning; this is the interesting point. In physiology a real fever can be stirred up by certain states of mind, etc. You can think yourself into a high temperature—this sort of thing. These things are connected, but burning is the best image you can use. It doesn't mean that he is going to be in flames surrounded by elegant imps with tridents, etc. But it means that as long as he lives hereafter, no matter what progress he attains, he will always have that awareness and always have that guilt with him. It will hold him back forever. Well, there are things we have all done that it would better if we hadn't done. We will regret them forever. They will hold you back no matter what happens hereafter. So let's make the best of it from here on out. What do you say? The burning is a figure [of speech], and he has a good deal more to say about that a little later on.

198 Mosiah 28:1,2 "... that they might impart the word of God to their brethren, the Lamanites [can't we help them?]- that perhaps they might bring them to the knowledge of the Lord their God ..." If the Lord reigns, there's no cause for hatred. They were so happy at the end; they didn't worry anymore. God is in charge of things, and that being the case, why shouldn't we go to them? What have we got to worry about? Notice this: "... perhaps they might cure them of their hatred towards the Nephites [This is what their tradition was; they had this built-in, traditional hatred. It was a chance, and if there was any chance at all, they felt they should take it.], that they might be brought to rejoice in the Lord their God, that they might become friendly to one



another.” This is fraternizing with the enemy, isn't it? This is the only solution to the problem; we find this throughout the Book of Mormon. This is the basis of coexistence, not self-interest.

199 Was this a practical idea, you might ask, to go and preach to the Lamanites? Their father hesitated a long time; he wasn't so sure about it. How did it work out? This is a neglected leitmotif in the Book of Mormon here. What appeals to the simple mind is the military solution. You see that we're getting nowhere with that. You never get anywhere with that. It's just going to get worse and worse. We're doomed if we don't have a generous impulse and act on that. It's the impulse. You're doomed if you have to be in danger of starvation before you eat. You eat because you want to and feel it would be a nice thing to do. If you only drink when you are in danger of dehydration, you are not going to last long. You have to drink because you want to drink. It feels good, and you love to do it. In the same way you are doomed if you don't get rest until you are dropping from exhaustion. We do these things because they are the proper thing to do, and it works out. That's the way we should. It's the same way with this. We are doomed unless we yield to our friendly, generous impulses—the more magnanimous side of human nature—and agree to be friends. Otherwise, it's going to go on and on. We've seen that sort of thing, and the Lord has told us that. The Book of Mormon is a classic treatment of this particular subject, here with this and in the case of the great Ammon, of course. What is not in our interest isn't the first voice we [should] listen to; we have to listen to that other voice. We are doing our best to damper it now, and it's going to be disastrous.

199 Mosiah 28:2 “... That they might become friendly to one another [imagine becoming friends with those people; they are their brethren], and that there should be no more contentions in all the land which the Lord their God had given them.” God had given the land to both of them. Why should they be fighting in it? And this overrides everything: “Now they were desirous that salvation should be declared to every creature.” They were like Enos, who was

completely worked up about that. When he got assurance of his salvation, then he couldn't let go. He prayed all the time for both his own people and the Lamanites. Alma was determined that no one would have to go through what he did. He had seen hell. He had been there, and he wanted none of that. If he could possibly help it, nobody else would have to suffer that. That was the generous impulse that drove him here.

199,200 Mosiah 28:3,4 “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 thought that any soul should endure endless torment [what they got a taste of] did cause them to quake and tremble.” So they weren't happy, settled, and redeemed so that they could go back home and enjoy themselves now because they were forgiven and everything was all right. Far from it. They were just beginning to work it off now. “And thus did the Spirit of the Lord work upon them, for they were the very vilest of sinners [after all their revelation, repentance, etc.]. 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.” Right to the end they were not safe home—they were fearing that. We are told in the Book of Mormon that God has prolonged our lives that we might have more chances to repent, because we are going to need every minute we can get. They were worried; they were not pleased with themselves.

200 Mosiah 28:5-7 We see in verse 5 that it was a dangerous undertaking. “And it came to pass that they did plead with their father many days that they might go up to the land of Nephi.” There was this long stand-off with the Lamanites. Mosiah was very cautious here. “And the Lord said unto Mosiah: Let them go up, for many shall believe on their words [so they did go].... And they took their journey into the wilderness to go up to preach the word among the Lamanites.”

200 Mosiah 28:10 “Now king Mosiah had no one to confer

the kingdom upon, for there was not any of his sons who would accept the kingdom.” This is an interesting thing that they were not ambitious. They were all in line beginning with Ammon. Why did they turn down the kingship? Well, of course, they had a new sense of values. They knew what had priority now; otherwise, they would have jumped at it, I’m sure. Ammon was the crown prince, so to speak, and he added luster to Alma the Younger and his gang. But they knew what counted now. He wasn’t impressed with it [becoming king] and wouldn’t do it. Then there was this knowledge of the sick world Alma had persecuted and mocked. As soon as they repented and came around, then their old friends, the whole mob, and the general public started making fun of them and giving them a very bad time—started persecuting them. Well, would you want to be king over that crowd? He didn’t want to be king. All they wanted to do was preach the gospel now. That’s it, as far as they are concerned.

200,201      Mosiah 28:11 It was still the law of the Old Testament they were preaching; they were still preaching the Torah. Remember the brass plates they brought from Jerusalem were the basic law on which Benjamin and Mosiah built the organic law of the Nephites—namely, the Law of Moses. Verse 11: “Therefore he [King Mosiah] took the records which were engraven on the plates of brass, and also the plates of Nephi, and all the things which he had kept and preserved according to the commandments of God, after having translated and caused to be written the records which were on the plates of gold which had been found by the people of Limhi.” These were the national treasures, along with the sword of Laban, the Urim and Thummim, etc.

201      Mosiah 28:15,16 Question: Where did Mosiah get the two stones fastened to the rims of a bow? The reason I asked is that when Ammon’s group found Zeniff’s colony and were captured, they asked Ammon if he could translate the record of the Jaredites they had found. He said that the king had means at that time whereby he could translate. But this appears to be what the brother of Jared hid up

with his record.

Answer: Mosiah translated them himself by means of two stones fastened into the two rims of a bow to interpret language. This is a very interesting thing. Notice that it mentions this interpreting language as a very matter of fact sort of thing. Notice that verses 15 and 16 are entirely alien to our world. We don't have anything like that today, but there are such things. I can assure you of that. We'll talk about them in a minute. But this is entirely alien to our world, as a computer would be alien to theirs. A few years ago a computer would be absolutely unthinkable, especially a computer that draws diagrams and pictures, makes portraits, and does anything you want it to. That sort of thing is another Urim and Thummim, as far as they are concerned. Did you people really have something like that? Yes, and what did you have? Well, we had this Urim and Thummim, and it worked that way.

202,203      Mosiah 28:16 Question: So is it possible that Mosiah had a seer stone or something before they found the stones with the bow?

Answer: Yes, you'll notice in the case of Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon that if we didn't have the Book of Mormon, we would say he was faking the whole thing. But we have the Book of Mormon, and he wasn't faking anything. Sometimes it was a seer stone, sometimes it was the Urim and Thummim, and sometimes it was neither. Sometimes it was inspiration. Section 7 of the Doctrine and Covenants is a translation of a particular document written by John on parchment and hidden up by him. We know since the Dead Sea Scrolls that in John's day everybody was writing on parchment and hiding them up in the desert. That's exactly what happened. It was probably one of the Dead Sea Scrolls, but we don't have the scroll. Joseph Smith translated it. He didn't have the scroll, but he said it was translated from a scroll. Sometimes the words would appear, or the letters would appear. Emma Smith said, "Joseph never read a proper name; he always spelled it out." He could see it spelled out for him. If Joseph, being

what he was, had given phonetically what he read, and Oliver Cowdery, being the clerk he was, had written down phonetically what he said to him, you wouldn't recognize a single name in the Book of Mormon. They had to be spelled out, so they can be reliably used as philological evidence, etc. This is a DISCIPLINA ARCANI; this is hermetic. Notice verse 16: "And whosoever has these things is called seer, after the manner of old times." That's what I mean; it belongs to another culture and to another world.

203,204 Mosiah 28:17-19 Now this is an interesting thing. What did it [the record] give? Verse 17: "Now after Mosiah had finished translating these records, behold, it gave an account of the people who were destroyed back to the building of the great tower," which was destroyed. Well, can't we have anything less negative than that? Why must it always be the grim message? Why is that necessary? Well, Mormon and Moroni, who give us the book, are physicians. They are meant to heal. The Book of Mormon is a prescription for people who are very sick. It's for us, so it's going to talk about the diseases that we have. "... building of the great tower ... and even from that time back until the creation of Adam. Now this account did cause the people of Mosiah to mourn exceedingly." They didn't like it; they mourned exceedingly when they read it. It was very sad. Again, why would that be? It's our story. It's like American history, a ghost town sort of story. This is what I was talking about, that this does apply to us. It is expedient that all people should know the things that are written in that account about Ether. Everybody should know that because this is the classic story of what happens. Were they expecting something great? They got something very sad. These were solemn admonitions that they received. Yet, what happened next? "Nevertheless it gave them much knowledge, in the which they did rejoice." They rejoiced in the knowledge, in the ultimate assurance that there is someone who knows and someone who cares—that we are not, as William James said, "an atom on a speck of dust spinning around a bubble of gas." There's more to it than that. So this gave them great knowledge and reassurance, and they did rejoice because the story was being told to

them for a purpose—not just to gloat over their fate and say, “This is what’s going to happen to you.” No, it doesn’t have to, and it’s all good news. Verse 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.”

204 Mosiah 28:20 They had the Law of Moses on the bronze plates. Remember, in Joseph Smith’s day the word bronze wasn’t used at all—not until the 1880s. That’s a French word that was adopted by the artists in Paris, but it means the same thing. Verse 20: “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.” These were the state treasures. That’s what this was, and all this stuff was conferred upon Alma, who was the son of Alma—all the records that had been handed down “from one generation to another, even as they had been handed down from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem.”

204,205 Mosiah 29:1-3 Then chapter 29 is on government; it’s the last one in Mosiah. This has been a very sobering lesson. It’s a lesson on kingship, and this chapter now is a lesson on government. “Now when Mosiah had done this he sent out throughout all the land, among all the people, desiring to know their will concerning who should be their king.” This is the great assembly which happened in all ancient societies. They had to come together for the panegyrics, the gathering of the tribes, the festival, the pow-wow. This was when everybody in a particular tribe was required to come. They were always at the spring equinox or at the solstice. They were desirous that Aaron, his second son, should be king. “Now Aaron had gone up to the land of Nephi, therefore the king could not confer the kingdom upon him [he went on a mission, so he couldn’t take it and didn’t want it]; neither were any of the sons of Mosiah willing to take upon them the kingdom. Therefore king Mosiah sent again among the people; yea, even a written word sent he among the people.” Remember, that’s the way King Benjamin did when he couldn’t reach

them. . So the king sent again among the people a written word.

205 Mosiah 29:5 “Behold, O ye my people, or my brethren, for I esteem you as such.... Now I declare unto you that he to whom the kingdom doth rightly belong has declined, and will not take upon him the kingdom. And now if there should be another appointed in his stead, behold I fear there would rise contentions among you. [He doesn't want them to have a king, and this is what would happen, he says] And who knoweth but what my son, to whom the kingdom doth belong, should turn to be angry and draw away a part of this people after him, which would cause wars and contentions among you, which would be the cause of shedding much blood.”

# Lecture 42 Mosiah 29-Alma 1

**Treatise on Power**  
**[Equality is the Mother of Liberty and**  
**Righteousness]**  
**[Elected Judges Rule]**  
**[Alma the Younger Becomes First Judge]**  
**[Priestcraft and Rhetoric]**  
**[Nehor Church Becomes Large]**  
**[Law of Consecration Lived by the Church]**

206 Mosiah 29:8,9 ;29:34 We are in Mosiah 29:34 where he is talking about the king. These chapters are a magnificent treatise on power; that's the thesis here. You won't find a better one anywhere. Let's go back to verse 8: "Now I say unto you let us be wise and consider these things.... And if my son should turn again to his pride and vain things [they made him king, and he decided not to—he was going on a mission; but what if he got back from his mission and wanted to be king—after all, he was in line] he would recall the things which he had said, and claim his right to the kingdom, which would cause him and also this people to commit much sin."

207 Mosiah 29:10,11 "And now let us be wise and look forward to these things, and do that which will make for the peace of this people." He repeats that again; this is very important, you see. This is no longer divine kingship; it is now our government. The constitution though is still the TORAH; they are going by that. "Therefore I will be your



king the remainder of my days; nevertheless, let us appoint judges.” They were now going to act together, not the king by himself. He will remain the king, but he will not appoint the judges anymore— as the President does in our society. Again, you see, it’s the judges that count; it’s the BOULE, the council, the judges that really in the end have the say in the government. They did in Egypt where the priest kings were the judges and took over the kingdom of Thebes. “And we will newly arrange the affairs of this people, for we will appoint wise men to be judges, that will judge this people according to the commandments of God.” They were going to change and revamp the whole government from top to bottom. That’s a sensible thing to do.

207,208 Mosiah 29:11-13 “Therefore I will be your king the remainder of my days. . . . We will appoint wise men to be judges, that will judge this people according to the commandments of God.” How can you tell they are wise? Well, just ask them what they would do in a certain situation. If they start weaseling or waffling or something else, you can find out quickly enough whether a person would be wise or not. It’s still the Torah they are going by entirely. “Now it is better that a man should be judged of God than of man.” If we could have perfect judges, everything would be fine. Remember, the Constitution ultimately rests on the judiciary. The Supreme Court decides what is the law after the legislature has made it, and decides how far the executive can go in executing it. It’s all up to the good old court; this is the thing. “For the judgments of God are always just, but the judgments of man are not always just [well, there’s the understatement of the year]. Therefore, if it were possible that you could have just men to be your kings, who would establish the laws of God, and judge this people according to his commandments.”

208 Mosiah 29:13 “Yea, if ye could have men for your kings who would do even as my father Benjamin did for this people, . . . if this could always be the case then it would be expedient that ye should always have kings to rule over you.” That’s the way it happens in the Book of Mormon; it doesn’t happen for long. God is king. There’s the divine

right. You are supposed to be secure in that. The king claims divine right, but it isn't. We won't go into that.

208,209 Mosiah 29:14 Mosiah established peace throughout the land. Notice the list of crimes here [in verse 14]: “that there should be no wars, no contentions, no stealing, nor plundering, nor murdering, nor any manner of iniquity.” It comes right down the ladder here, but at the top is wars. That's the worst crime. War is a crime; it's not just a mistake or something like that. It's a terrible crime, and everybody knows it, too. Wars are the result of these other things—the contention, the stealing, the plundering. If nobody is going to play fair, you are going to end up resorting to violence. This is what happened because nobody was playing fair— everybody was grabbing. In a gang war who is breaking the law? Well, all wars are gang wars, as far as that goes. That's the beginning of Clausewitz or the famous Roman maxim, “All laws are suspended as soon as the fighting begins.” Clausewitz said it's absolutely cynical to think of the laws of war, because the only reason you are going to war is to take every possible mean advantage you can. You want to agree to some laws so you can break them. If you could settle things by sensible discussion, what are you doing shooting at each other and trying to kill each other? It's the silliest thing in the world. Clausewitz knew the answers. No war is going to come unless somebody wants it; we'll see that.

209 Mosiah 29:16-20 “Now I say unto you, that because all men are not just it is not expedient that ye should have a king or kings to rule over you.” Well, what should we do in that case? In verse 18 he tells us what we are to do. He says, remember the case of king Noah—55 years before. Because of his iniquity the people were brought into bondage. In other words, don't blame the Lamanites. After all, “because of their iniquities they were brought into bondage.” But the king led them in their iniquities; he could be responsible. They were in bondage to the Lamanites, yes, but don't blame the Lamanites. It was their [the Nephites'] iniquities. Verse 19: “And were it not for the interposition of their all-wise Creator, and this because of their sincere repentance

[this is what got them out of it], they must unavoidably remain in bondage until now. [And this is not a special case:] But behold, he did deliver them because they did humble themselves before him.... And thus doth the Lord work with his power in all cases among the children of men." It's not peace through strength, refusing to yield, standing tall, and all that. He delivered them because they humbled themselves. It is all in his hands "and thus doth the Lord work with his power in all cases among the children of men." This is the only way our quarrels will be solved. These are lessons in power.

209 Mosiah 29:21 And we don't accept the reality of the gospel. Verse 21: "And ... ye cannot dethrone an iniquitous king save it be through much contention, and the shedding of much blood [Cromwell succeeded, but then they dethroned him]. For behold, he has his friends in iniquity [this is the way they do it; notice this case], and he keepeth his guards about him; and he teareth up the laws of those who have reigned in righteousness before him."

210 Mosiah 29:25-27; Moroni 7:15,16 "Therefore, choose you by the voice of this people, judges, that ye may be judged according to the laws which have been given you by our fathers [that which was handed down, the Torah], which are correct, and which were given them by the hand of the Lord [so we know where the laws come from in the end]. Now it is not common [and this is the key; it does happen but is not common] that the voice of the people desireth anything contrary to that which is right [if they understand what they're doing]; but it is common for the lesser part of the people to desire that which is not right [there are always some who do]; therefore this shall ye observe and make it your law—to do your business by the voice of the people." Why? He says because they are going to be responsible then. And for a good reason they should be responsible. Moroni tells us back here in Moroni 7:15-16 that the people can be held responsible. You say, "What, the ignorant people?" It's for this reason: "For behold, my brethren, it is given unto you to judge, that ye may know good from evil; and the way to judge is as plain, that ye

may know with a perfect knowledge, as the daylight is from the dark night. For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil [so you can trust that; every man will know; we do have consciences, no matter how we rationalize and get around them in our interest]; wherefore, I show unto you the way to judge; for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of God.”

210,211 Mosiah 29:27 The impulse will tell you it is of God, just as the impulse will tell you when something tastes nasty or smells nasty. It is given you to know with a perfect knowledge the good from the evil, so why shouldn't the people be held responsible and vote—most of them? But he knows this time will come: Verse 27: “And if the time comes that the voice of the people doth choose iniquity, then is the time that the judgments of God will come upon you; yea, then is the time he will visit you with great destruction even as he has hitherto visited this land.” The Book of Mormon constantly holds up to us this vivid possibility. America is especially vulnerable to self-destruction. Well, look at the Civil War, which was a senseless, terrible thing. We have acquired an insatiable appetite today for violence and destruction. These are keys and indications, etc. Why if they can't judge any better than that is it going to happen? Because the buck stops with them. If they suffer, they will answer for it, not the king. They can't blame Noah; they can't blame anybody but themselves. That's why it is given to them now because it is given to every man.

211 Mosiah 29:28 “And now if ye have judges, and they do not judge you according to the law which has been given, ye can cause they may be judged of a higher judge.” But who is going to judge the higher judges? The first rule of Roman law was, “Who watches over the watchers; who takes care of the custodians?” He says this is the way it is: A small number of lower judges watches over them; and those lower judges are chosen at the local level. They are popular judges. The people know them, so they are

responsible for the judgments that are made. “Your lower judges should be gathered together, and they shall judge your higher judges, according to the voice of the people.” It always comes back to them because they chose the lower judges at grass level. They elected them locally at the grass roots, so they are responsible. Verse 30: “And I command you to do these things ... that if these people commit sins and iniquities they shall be answered upon their own heads.” That’s the whole point. That’s why he was having them make the decisions instead of being able to blame the king or anybody else. The judges are truly representative of what the people want, and they are in this country, too.

211 Mosiah 29:31 Otherwise, in the old system, as described in verse 31: “For behold I say unto you, the sins of many people have been caused by the iniquities of their kings.

212 Mosiah 29:32 “And now I desire that this inequality should be no more in this land, especially among this my people; but I desire that this land be a land of liberty.” Notice that liberty and equality go together. It’s very interesting that today we interpret liberty as inequality—the right of anyone who wants to pile up as much power and wealth as he can and take advantage of anybody he can. If they are weaker, that’s just too bad. We have free, competitive enterprise now, and you do what you want. So you have the perfect right to be unequal, but you are not going to have liberty with inequality because some people are in bondage to others. There are all sorts of legal tricks you can play. What are lawyers for? “... and every man enjoy his rights and privileges alike ...” But you don’t when you can’t hire the law. You know how the rights and privileges are bestowed in any society. But freedom is equality. I mentioned that [comment] from Philo last time; I just came across that. “Equality is the mother of righteousness.” And it’s the mother of liberty, too. [Mosiah] wants every man to “enjoy his rights and privileges.”

212,213 Mosiah 29:33 And here’s another thing. He has been a king, and he doesn’t want anybody to suffer

the way he has suffered. Verse 33: “And many more things did king Mosiah write unto them, unfolding unto them all the trials and troubles of a righteous king [‘uneasy lies the head that wears a crown’]. . . . And he told them that these things ought not to be; but that the burden should come upon all the people, that every man might bear his part.” And what is his part?

214 “And many more things did king Mosiah write unto them, unfolding unto them all the trials and troubles of a righteous king [notice that there’s rhythm and poetry in that line; it’s a very nice iambic pentameter], yea, all the travails of soul for their people, and also all the murmurings of the people to their king; and he explained it all unto them.” That’s marvelous poetry.

214 Mosiah 29:34 “And he told them that these things ought not to be; but that the burden should come upon all the people, that every man might bear his part.” Then what do you have when you have an unrighteous king? Here is another eloquent passage; listen to verse 36: “Yea, all his iniquities and abominations, and all the war, and contentions, and bloodshed, and the stealing, and the plundering, and the committing of whoredoms, and all manner of iniquities which cannot be enumerated.” This is what a king will bring you. Can a king steal? Well, he owns everything anyway. The people were “convinced of the truth of his words.” Mosiah got through to them.

214 Mosiah 29:39,40 They assembled in bodies to cast their votes and elect the judges. Since the judges were going to run the country, why not elect them directly and hold them responsible instead of having them appointed by a legislature or executive? Verse 39: “And they were exceedingly rejoiced because of the liberty which had been granted unto them. And they did wax strong in love towards Mosiah . . . for they did not look upon him as a tyrant who was seeking for gain [this is what tyrants are after], yea, for that lucre which doth corrupt the soul [money corrupts]; for he had not exacted riches of them, neither had he delighted in the shedding of blood; but he had established peace in the

land.” This is the usual military complex—gain, corruption, riches, the shedding of blood, etc. “With the treasures of the earth I will buy up armies and navies and rule with blood and horror on the earth,” [Satan said]. The two go together, as they do here. And when the treasury is empty, whether it’s the king or his empire, they’re finished.

215 Mosiah 29:42 “Alma was appointed to be the first chief judge, he being also the high priest, his father having conferred the office upon him, and having given him the charge concerning all the affairs of the church.” So he was the head of the state now. It was a sacral state; there was no king anymore. Alma was first judge. He was going to be head of the state, head of the army, and head of the church. He held all three offices at once, and pretty soon he is going to lay them all down. He said you can’t do any good with that—even being the top man and having all that authority. Remember, he laid them down and felt that he could do more good by bearing down in pure testimony. He went out on a mission. Then they spit on him and kicked him around, because he had lost his clout—nobody cared anymore. He was a “has-been” then and went through that. What a remarkable essay on power, and where you get with power, the Book of Mormon presents to us! As we read in Alma 2:16, he could have been absolute dictator. He was in a perfect position to take over and run everything. Well, he was absolute dictator, wasn’t he? No, he refused to do it. The man makes the difference.

215 Mosiah 29:43-47 “And there was continual peace through the land. And thus commenced the reign of the judges throughout all the land of Zarahemla, among all the people who were called Nephites [notice, they were called Nephites, although they were mostly Mulekites]; and Alma was the first and chief judge. Verse 47: “And thus ended the reign of the kings over the people of Nephi; and thus ended the days of Alma, who was the founder of their church.” The older Alma died, being 82 years old, and also Mosiah died. So we begin the book of Alma with a new reign and new troubles. It starts out with Alma “in the first year of the reign of the judges ... king Mosiah having gone the way of

all the earth, having warred a good warfare . . . [notice these ancient figures of speech—'the path of righteousness, slept with his ancestors,' etc.] nevertheless he had established laws, and they were acknowledged by the people [notice this]; therefore they were obliged to abide by the laws which he had made"—because the people acknowledged and accepted them. He didn't just impose them and say, "This is the law; therefore, you will keep it." They were obliged to keep the laws which they had acknowledged. They were based on the Torah which was their constitution.

215,216 Alma 1:2 Now they're already going to have trouble. This Nehor went about among the people. He's an interesting person. The trouble was that they were living under the law that Alma had given them. Alma and his community went back to the law and a very strict order of things. Men like Abinadi, who were great sriptorians, were living according to the law of Moses the way it should be kept. It was strict and austere, and the people didn't like it. They are going to go for this man Nehor "hook, line, and sinker." From this time on, the Nehors rule the roost, and they claim to be the church. Theirs was a much more genial and easy religion to take. People didn't like the rigorous religion, so they went over to the Nehors here. This will tell us how it happened. Verse 2: "In the first year of the reign of Alma in the judgment-seat, there was a man brought before him to be judged, a man who was large, and was noted for his much strength."

216 Alma 1:3 Nehor becomes the perennial opposition, which represents the majority throughout here. He was a great orator, a powerful personality, a very persuasive speaker. He was a real evangelist, and he preached what he termed to be the word of God. He was not preaching atheism or anything like that. Verse 3: "And he had gone about among the people, preaching to them that which he termed to be the word of God, bearing down against the church; declaring unto the people . . ." This [doctrine which follows] was [Nehor's] doctrine, a more relaxed religion; people immediately opted for this more agreeable philosophy. "... declaring unto the people that every priest and teacher



ought to become popular; and they ought not to labor with their hands, but that they ought to be supported by the people.”

216 Mosiah 27:5; Alma 1:4 Remember back in Mosiah 27:5 it told us that in the church of Alma there were not professional clergy—the priests all worked with everybody else. It was an agrarian society. Everybody, including King Benjamin, worked in the fields. Well, that wasn't going to go; that would go over like a lead balloon in our society, too. Nehor was a sophist, and he was an evangelist. He was very clever and told them what they wanted to hear. Now here's a nice soft gospel: “And he also testified unto the people that all mankind should be saved at the last day, and that they need not fear nor tremble, but that they might lift up their heads and rejoice [now this is an easy-going, happy teaching; it's highly permissive, you notice]; for the Lord had created all men, and had also redeemed all men; and, in the end, all men should [be saved and] have eternal life [period].”

216,217 What is wrong with this upbeat, cheerful religion—this popular message? Well, it's the period that is wrong. It says, “In the end, all men shall have eternal life”—and that's the whole story. Everyone is saved, and that is that. This short circuits and bypasses the whole plan of salvation, which is that this is a time of probation here, accepting salvation the hard way. When you accept the gift, you prepare yourself to enjoy it here. We do the same thing. We don't feel bound by all the covenants and commandments very strictly. We are very strict on the Word of Wisdom. Some we make a big thing about, but others we don't take seriously. Should we lower our standards to gain converts? Well, that's the great thing. The great Catholic Church historian—not only of our time, but I think the greatest of them all—was Duchesne. He said that's exactly what happened. The church was able to expand and conquer after the fourth century because it just kept lowering its standards, lower and lower. Every time it lowered them, it could get more people in. Finally, everybody was willing to join because they didn't have any

standards at all as far as morals were concerned. This is the thing that happened here with Nehor; he made himself very popular. He was like a popular evangelist, and this is what people want to hear. They are not too bound by anything; they don't worry about things like that.

217,218 Alma 1:5 “And it came to pass that he did teach these things so much that many did believe on his words, even so many that they began to support him and give him money.” Now all religions are supported by money, but the immorality of it (as Plato shows in the Protagoras and the Gorgias) is when you start giving it to individuals. When you have a line veto that it be used for this or that, then you are not giving it at all. If I give money to the church specifying that it can only be used for this, I'm not giving it to the Lord or trusting him at all. I don't specify what it's for; I just pay my tithing and that's that. If it's misused that's none of my affair; I've done what the Lord requires of me.

218 Helaman 13:27-28 So they began to support him and give him costly apparel, “and even began to establish a church after the manner of his preaching.” This crowd-pleasing evangelist established his church. We have some very interesting Old World documents about this sort of thing, too. The Chilam Balam, the oldest record from Central America, talks about this sort of thing— how the priests would be lifted up on people's shoulders dressed in elaborate apparel and carried around town. It talks about this later on when Samuel the Lamanite says, “And if a man shall come among you and say this [what you want to hear], ye will receive him, and say that he is a prophet. Yea, ye will lift him up, and ye will give unto him of your substance; ye will give unto him of your gold and of your silver, and ye will clothe him with costly apparel” (Helaman 13:27-28). We have pictures of these overdressed priests being carried in on poles.

218 Alma 1:8 And rhetoric is aggressive. He used a rhetorical message to be a crowd pleaser. Then old Gideon came along, and there was sharp talk. He was the old war

horse, you know. He took an aggressive approach and began to argue with Nehor, who was a large and powerful man. They began to dispute sharply. Verse 8: "And it was he who was an instrument in the hands of God in delivering the people of Limhi out of bondage. Now, because Gideon withstood him with the words of God he was wroth with Gideon, and drew his sword and began to smite him." Now, what's going on here? What would he be doing with a sword? This is an interesting commentary on the frontier. There was this great contention going on. When Alma and the sons of Mosiah changed their opinion, then they started being knocked around. People started throwing rocks at them and all sorts of rough stuff. Gideon would probably have a sword for defense because he traveled around a lot; moreover, the peace was very new here. They had barely settled down. Gideon traveled throughout various territories in the wilderness, and it was like the Old West. What's more, Gideon, in spite of his age, had a truculent temperament, so I guess he would carry a weapon anyway.

218,219 Alma 1:9,12 "Now Gideon being stricken with many years, therefore he was not able to withstand his blows, therefore he was slain by the sword." It was Nehor traveling around with a sword here. That was allowed, I suppose. And he was brought before Alma for his crimes—not for his doctrine, but for his crimes. Then Alma says a very interesting thing in verse 12. Remember this priestcraft? He knows about it and that in the time of Lehi, in the twenty-sixth dynasty, it ruled the world.

219 Alma 1:12 "But Alma said unto him: Behold, this is the first time that priestcraft has been introduced among this people [they had never had it before, but they had a memory of it]. And behold thou art not only guilty of priestcraft, but hast endeavored to enforce it by the sword; and were priestcraft to be enforced among this people it would prove their entire destruction." Alma knew what happens when that starts. Incidentally, the first high priest [of the twenty-first dynasty in Egypt] was called Korihor, and his son was called Piankhi—two Book of Mormon names. They have the same relationship in the Book of

Mormon. Paanchi is one of the high judges. Those Egyptian names come in just right here. They knew those names and had those names. Piankhi was a very famous name at the time Lehi left Jerusalem. It was a priestly name and a royal name. Some say it was Piankhi who founded the twenty-fifth dynasty; some say it was Shabako.

219,220 Alma 1:13 “And thou hast shed the blood of a righteous man. . . . Therefore thou art condemned to die, according to the law which has been given us by Mosiah, our last king; and it has been acknowledged by this people; therefore this people must abide by the law.” There it is again. It is the law; they accepted it; therefore, they must abide by it. Then they carried out the old ritual of Harut and Marut. In the days of Enoch the Watchers came to the earth and started corrupting men. They started taking the sacred ordinances and claiming them, but perverting them. They claimed that they had the right gospel. They gave a false slant and a false teaching to it, and justified all sorts of immorality. Therefore, Harut and Marut were hanged on a high hill because the earth would not accept them. They were the first to betray the law of God to men. There was plenty of wickedness and murder, etc., but they were doing it in the name of the gospel and the priesthood. They introduced the temple ordinances but falsified them. There is quite a story about the Watchers here. One was Harut and one was Marut; there are various names given to them. They were hanged between heaven and earth because the earth wouldn’t receive them, just as it wouldn’t receive Cain. Remember, the earth refused her strength to Cain. And heaven wouldn’t receive them. So what can you do? You can just leave them hanging there because neither would receive them. And they hang there until the Day of Judgment— that’s the point. That’s very widespread; everybody knows about the story of Harut and Marut suspended between heaven and earth because they were the first corrupters of the human race in the name of preaching religion.

220 Alma 1:15 “And it came to pass that they took him; and his name was Nehor; and they carried him upon the top

of the hill Manti [the hill Months], and there he was caused, or rather did acknowledge, between the heavens and the earth [the one won't take him and the other won't take him] that what he had taught to the people was contrary to the word of God; and there he suffered an ignominious death." He had first corrupted the gospel. Alma said, you're the first one [among us] to do a trick like this in the name of religion—to take the teachings of the gospel and pervert them in this manner. The penalty is always hanging between heaven and earth. That's why they put a person on a gibbet; they hang him up on a high tree that way. That is to witness his crimes against heaven and earth and mankind.

220 Alma 1:16 “Nevertheless, this did not put an end to the spreading of priestcraft through the land.” This was a winner! This religion is going to last right until the end; everybody goes for it. It's much more popular than the church is. “For there were many who loved the vain things of the world [they wanted that easy-going religion], and they went forth preaching false doctrines [giving it out as the gospel; they had their missionaries]; and this they did for the sake of riches and honor. [Well, and why do the TV preachers preach? For fame and fortune, of course.] Nevertheless, they durst not lie, if it were known, for fear of the law, for liars were punished; therefore they pretended to preach according to their belief; and now the law could have no power on any man for his belief.” They pretended this was a sincere religion. With separation of church and state, they couldn't be persecuted if they really believed it. And who was to judge whether they were sincere or not? Therefore, they were allowed to preach. Remember, Nehor was hanged for his murder, not for his preaching.

221 In this early stage, they [the Nehors] “durst not steal, for fear of the law, for such were punished.” The legal system was new, but they soon found ways of getting around it. We will see that. Then they had the Ten Commandments. They couldn't lie and steal and that sort of thing because they were being judged by the Ten Commandments. “But it came to pass that whosoever did not belong to the church

of God began to persecute those that did belong to the church of God.” The church was being persecuted by this other church, which was a big church now. They were able to do it. They persecuted at first with words—slander and all sorts of things like that. Well, is that bad? If you call a person a “communist” or something like that, you can persecute with words. You can make things very bad for him. “Bred of an idle word”—you can put a person into real trouble with words.

221 Alma 1:20 “Yea, they did persecute them, and afflict them with all manner of words, and this because of their humility; because they were not proud in their own eyes [now here’s the contrast; here’s what the issue was between these churches: The new system was nice and easy going, and the other was much too rigorous], and because they did impart the word of God, one with another, without money and without price.” Well, that hit them hard. [The Nehors] thought there should be some pay here and some structure. [The true believers] went out and worked like anybody else, and this made them very unpopular. It was a standing rebuke to them, like Socrates and the Sophists. That’s exactly why the Sophists got Socrates put to death, because he didn’t take money for his teaching. Here it is uncontrolled and very suspicious. Religion should be uncontrolled, sincere, etc.

221 In the early church in the first century there was the three-day test. We read this in both the Clementine Recognitions and in the Pastor of Hernias. Many people went about preaching and becoming professional clergy. The three-day test was that you could entertain them and keep them in your house for three days. But after three days, they had to leave. If they stayed longer than that, they were CHRISTEMPOROI—people who were selling Christ for a price. They were making an emporium, making a business of religion. A CHRISTEMPOROI was one who makes a business or a profit from religion. If they stayed more than three days, that’s what they were. That’s what these people were doing. They didn’t want that rigorous old system. There was plenty of ground for persecution here.

222 Alma 1:21,23 “Now there was a strict law among the people of the church, that there should not any man, belonging to the church, arise and persecute those that did not belong to the church, and that there should be no persecution among themselves.” No persecution at all! Two things: Don’t persecute outsiders, and don’t persecute each other. But they started doing both. This is a sad thing that happened, especially persecuting each other. Notice that religion is the most socially sensitive subject there is, the one in which offence is most easily given and taken. It touches one’s innermost feelings, and quickly the sparks begin to fly. This is a very sensitive issue here. They were not supposed to persecute anyone. “Nevertheless, there were many among them [now we’re back to the true church; notice what’s happening there] who began to be proud, and began to contend warmly with their adversaries [in the church], even unto blows; yea, they would smite one another with their fists.” That’s an interesting thing that the outsiders couldn’t smite them; it was against the law. During this period they persecuted them only with words. But now the members of the church started fighting unto blows. This was the second year of the reign of the judges. It only took one year, and things were already starting to fall apart—inside and outside. In the second year of the reign of Alma, they had just established their new model government, and the whole thing was “going to pot,” with Nehor and the church itself. Verse 23: “And it was a cause of much affliction to the church, yea, it was the cause of much trial with the church.” Well, you can believe that; it was a terrible time!

222,223 Alma 1:24,25 “For the hearts of many were hardened, and their names were blotted out.” Remember the rule the Lord taught was that if the people separate themselves, argue, and go out and found their own churches, the only penalty is to cut them off from the church. So many were excommunicated at this time—just when the persecution was going on. “And also many withdrew themselves from among them.” Many voluntarily apostatized, and many were struck from the records and excommunicated. This began already. Did they need a king

to make them corrupt?

Verse 25: “Now this was a great trial to those that did stand fast in the faith [you can believe that! What were they to do? This is what they were to do]; nevertheless, they were steadfast and immovable in keeping the commandments of God, and they bore with patience the persecution which was heaped upon them.” This was from both sides—inside the church and outside the church. The real church was just a nucleus remaining here now, and this is a standard situation in Church history. It has always been the same, so don’t be upset by things like this. It’s what you can expect.

223 Alma 1:26 This is what the motive was. This is why there was a great division between them and the rest of the society—why the other people went on and joined the Nehors, and why they didn’t like the way the church was being run. “And when the priests left their labor to impart the word of God unto the people, the people also left their labors to hear the word of God. And when the priest had imparted unto them the word of God they all returned again diligently unto their labors; and the priest, not esteeming himself above his hearers, for the preacher was no better than the hearer, neither was the teacher any better than the learner; and thus they were all equal, and they did all labor, every man according to his strength.” Well, we [Americans] don’t like that at all; that’s not the way we do things today. They were equal and every man labored according to his strength and wasn’t required to labor more. If he was stronger, that didn’t give him the advantage to accumulate vastly more and take advantage of the weaker person, which is the standard situation. It occurs hundreds of times in the Egyptian record—the strong begin to dominate the weak. Well, they always will, but they’re not supposed to. Every man is to labor according to his strength.

223 Alma 1:27 “And they did impart of their substance, every man according to that which he had, to the poor, and the needy, and the sick, and the afflicted.” They followed the Law of Consecration. Every man gave according to that



which he had, to the limit of his capacity as much as he could give, “and they did not wear costly apparel, yet they were neat and comely.” How long could they resist the corroding effects of riches? Four years is the outside limit here. Two of the years were during war. The next year after this war broke out again as a result of this. This is not a happy history, but a very instructive one, and it’s meant for somebody. President Benson really hit it on the head when he said, “The Book of Mormon wasn’t written for people long past; it was written for us here and now!” So here it is.

## Lecture 43 Alma 1-2

**[The Lord Forces Change when They Escape]  
[Escapes Listed from the Beginning]  
[Earning of Wealth Qualifies  
You for the Next Test]  
[Power, Gain, Popularity, Lusts of the Flesh]  
[Nehor Church (Amlici) Takes Over]**

224 This is a game. I just wrote this down this morning, and it may expedite things. We will call it “The Escape Game” or FUGA MUNDI which means “flight from the world.” We will mark it this way: Who does the escaping? and from what? First of all it was Lehi who did the fleeing, the getting out. This game is based on the passage that you find in Revelation 18:4, a passage we all know: “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” So all of these people are running away from something, and we will see what it is. Each time we are going to refer to the scripture here. We are not talking about Lehi’s Jerusalem this semester, but it is described by his contemporary and friend Jeremiah. So we will put this reference down: Jeremiah 5:25-31 and Jeremiah 7:4 and following. These are good passages which are typical of what he is running away from. I will read them to you for your delectation.

224 Jeremiah 5:25-31 This is speaking to Jerusalem in the time of Lehi: “Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from

you. For among my people are found wicked men: they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men. As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich. They are waxen fat, they shine: yea, they overpass the deeds of the wicked; they judge not the cause, the cause of the fatherless, yet they prosper; and the right of the needy do they not judge. Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this? A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land. The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so; and what will ye do in the end thereof?"

224,225      Jeremiah 7:4-11      The other passage I mentioned was Jeremiah 7:4: "Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these. [This was a famous saying; you trust in the temple and everything will be all right.] For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doing; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt: Then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever. [But Lehi and his family had to move out.] Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not; and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered to do all these abominations [because we are in the temple]? Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your eyes? [Remember, that's what the Lord said when he drove the money changers out: My Father's house is a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves. He was quoting Jeremiah here.] Behold, even I have seen it, saith the Lord." You are not getting away with anything. God is not mocked, as we are about to find out.

225 1 Nephi 17:20 Who else makes an escape? Then Nephi made his great escapes. What was he escaping from? Well, the perils of the desert, but especially from Laman and Lemuel and from the slough of Jerusalem. This is what Laman and Lemuel represent. We will put it this way [writing on the chalk board]. What did they do? They didn't want to go, and they repeatedly tried to kill him. He was always escaping from them and from the trials and dangers of the journey. In 1 Nephi 17 the brethren [Laman and Lemuel] were reluctant about having been brought along and said, "We've got to go back home." They planned to kill both their father and their brother in order to go back to Jerusalem to this sort of thing, which is what they had been escaping from. 1 Nephi 17:20: "And thou art like unto our father, led away by the foolish imaginations of his heart." This is the objection; the other side had a case, too. They were escaping to something else. Lehi was escaping from a prosperous city, and the sons resented it. They thought, "Everything is going to be all right; we're safe." As they were escaping, Nephi left all their precious things behind. This was a foolish thing [in their opinion]; they wanted to escape from the desert and get back home where they could live comfortably. ". . . yea he hath led us out of the land of Jerusalem, and we have wandered in the wilderness for these many years; and our women have toiled, being big with child ... Behold, these many years we have suffered in the wilderness, which time we might have enjoyed our possessions and the land of our inheritance; yea, and we might have been happy."

225,226 1 Nephi 17:22 They had given up gracious living for this, but this is the thing that Nephi was fleeing from, through a much more austere type of life. Even if they had stayed in Jerusalem, he wouldn't have lived the way they were living. They [Nephi's family] were getting away from it. The Lord forces us to change. 1 Nephi 17:22: "And we know that the people who were in the land of Jerusalem were a righteous people; for they kept the statutes and judgments of the Lord, and all his commandments, according to the law of Moses [just as Jeremiah said, they went to the temple and all that]; wherefore, we know that

they are a righteous people; and our father hath judged them ...”

226 2 Nephi 5:6,10; Revelation 18:4 So this is another escape. From what and to what? We know that he escaped to the life in the desert, the rigors, etc. But soon after they got in the New World, Nephi had to make another escape. They started quarreling again—remember the big fight? From the New World settlement he escaped with as many people as wanted to go with him. They lived the law in its strictness and austerity. We find what they were escaping from in 2 Nephi 5:10. They went out to a rigorous and austere life. “And we did observe to keep the judgments, and the statutes, and the commandments of the Lord in all things, according to the law of Moses.” That was basic. [The others] wouldn’t believe the warnings, so he took his family and Zoram and others. “And all those who would go with me were those who believed in the warnings and the revelations of God.” They went out, and again they were fleeing from the destruction. “... Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” (Revelation 18:4).

226,227 Jacob 2 13:21 Nephi founded another colony, and then Mosiah escaped from it. That colony went bad. Jerusalem had gone bad, and they went bad after they settled here. Then Nephi went out and settled his own colony, and it went bad. This is a pattern, isn’t it? Then Mosiah was commanded in a dream to escape and take his people. What was he escaping from? I think a good example is that eloquent passage in Jacob 2:13-21. There are plenty of examples in Jacob. We know what they were running away from, what was dangerous, and what was going on here. “And the hand of providence hath smiled upon you most pleasingly, that you have obtained many riches; and because some of you have obtained more abundantly than that of your brethren ye are lifted up in the pride of your hearts [already, and they are still in the wilderness], and wear stiff necks and high heads because of the costliness of your apparel [this is Lehi’s own family—this is his son Jacob; in the first generation, they

have already done this after escaping from Jerusalem], and persecute your brethren because ye suppose that ye are better than they.... Do ye suppose that God justifieth you in this thing? Behold, I say unto you, Nay. But he condemmeth you, and if ye persist in these things his judgments must speedily come unto you. O that he would show you that he can pierce you, and with one glance of his eye he can smite you to the dust! O that he would rid you from this iniquity and abomination. And, O that ye would listen unto the word of his commands, and let not this pride of your hearts destroy your souls! Think of your brethren like unto yourselves [then the appeal for equality] ... Ye were proud in your hearts, of the things which God hath given you, what say ye of it? [God has given you these things, but you are proud of them] Do ye not suppose that such things are abominable unto him who created all flesh? And the one being is as precious in his sight as the other.” He [Jacob] kept rubbing in that equality, but the people wouldn’t take it; they liked this better. We have two totally different ways of life—two totally different economies, two totally different disciplines as described here.

227 Mosiah 29: 32; Jacob 2:17 Who was the next person to escape then? It was Benjamin. He was the son of Mosiah, and he undertook a great reform. He gave a great reformist speech. People needed to get back on the track again. We can find this in Mosiah 4:2 and Mosiah 5:7. You know what he was escaping from—the inequality. “I would that this inequality should be no more. Think of your brethren like unto yourselves.” They had acquired riches. He said the Lord would bless them, but they didn’t need to go bad because of it. You all know Benjamin’s great speech, so we don’t need to go into that. “Always remember your own nothingness and the greatness and goodness of God.”

227 Mosiah 4:2 “And they had viewed themselves in their own carnal state, even less than the dust of the earth. And they all cried aloud with one voice, saying: O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified.” He really cut them down to earth. They practically worshipped

Benjamin, and they were celebrating after years of victory, prosperity, and success. This was a great national assembly to let the “eagle scream.” They were going to stand tall, and in everything he said, Benjamin just cut them down to nothing. “You are less than the dust,” he said. Don’t get the idea that you are anything at all. Then you will be equal, and “then you will feel to rejoice ... Are your hearts changed? Are you born of him this day?” In chapter 5 he gave them a new name and a new title. They took the covenant of Moses. “This day has he begotten you.” It’s a new birth. He said he was going to give them a new name, and they were going to have an entirely new way of life. Well, how long did it last? Not very long.

227,228 Mosiah 9:1,6-8 Then Zeniff had a reason for escaping. What was he escaping from? This everlasting tension and unpleasantness with the Lamanites. It can’t go on like this, he thought. When he found out the Lamanites weren’t such bad people after all, he wanted to make concessions. He went out from the settlement [of Zarahemla] and became a king within them because he was deceived by the Lamanite king. In Mosiah 9:1 we find what he was escaping from: “I, Zeniff, having been taught in all the language of the Nephites, and having had a knowledge of the land of Nephi, or of the land of our fathers’ first inheritance, and having been sent as a spy among the Lamanites that I might spy out their forces . . . but when I saw that which was good among them I was desirous that they should not be destroyed.” He wanted to save them, which happens. Then verses 6-8: “And I went in unto the king, and he covenanted with me that I might possess the land of Lehi- Nephi, and the land of Shilom. And he also commanded that his people should depart out of the land.” Zeniff went out to relieve the tension and started an entirely new community in the midst of the Lamanites. It was quite a project. Mosiah 9:1 and 6-8 are just a few examples; you can find lots of them.

228 Mosiah 11:2, 7, 15, 18, 27; Mosiah 24:7 Then who went out from this colony? His son was the wicked King Noah. Alma had to run away from Noah, so we have

another escape. Alma went out by himself and founded his own church in the wilderness by the waters of Mormon. He was escaping from Noah (Mosiah 11:2, 7, 15, 18, 27). You know what the situation was when he went out there. [His community] was founded just like that of the Dead Sea Scrolls people—very disciplined. They all worked; the priests visited them and also did their work; they baptized and lived holy lives out there. That’s much too strict for most people. Notice that they settled in the land of Helam, and they were driven out of that. They were able to make an escape to the land of Helam; then they escaped from Helam because they were running away from Amulon. Amulon wouldn’t let them even breathe. He came down so hard because he was jealous of Alma. The Lamanite king made Amulon an underking. We get this in Mosiah 24:7. This time they ran away and they ended up in [Zarahemla]. Mosiah was just waiting for him with open arms because he brought the priesthood and the knowledge of the church and its organization, which he had gotten from Abinadi and from the scriptures. He was a direct descendant of Nephi, and he was able to help Mosiah out.

228 Mosiah 27:7-10 Mosiah hesitated and felt he couldn’t launch the church in a big way. Then Alma came and they started working together. Then what happened? Immediately, in the first year there was general defection. Mosiah and Alma put their heads together and said, What should we do? We don’t know what to do with these people. The only thing to do is excommunicate them [paraphrased]. They started to do that on a huge scale. It says [the people] were so scattered out that they couldn’t keep control of all the branches of the church. They became more and more independent, although the priests were sent out to them. There were all sorts of local troubles, and they couldn’t hold the church together. Soon [the apostates] far outnumbered the others. So what Alma and Mosiah had to fight against was a general defection—everybody falling away, getting disinterested and going their own way. People aren’t willing to live that strictly—that’s the whole point. We do not like the Law of Consecration, whether we covenant to keep it or not. Mosiah 27:7-10 is pretty good for this last example.



228,229 Mosiah 27:23,24 Then what happened? Alma's son was among the defectors and trouble-makers. You know how he was converted. Alma [the younger] made an escape from the bonds of hell actually. He talks about it in Mosiah 27:23 and following. He describes what he has been through. He has escaped, and he doesn't want anybody else to have to go through that. It is a matter of escaping. He said, "I've been delivered; I've been snatched; I've been saved." This was a spectacular escape. So what did he do?

229 Mosiah 29:16-34 Then the sons of Mosiah made an escape. They were nailed for political jobs, but none of them would take them. They all ran away on missions, which was the sensible thing to do. So what they were escaping from was the double burden of royalty. Remember, they were warned about it by their father. The double burden of royalty is the burden on the king himself, which can make an honest king suffer terribly, and the burden on the people if they get an unjust king. It's one way or the other. There's an unfair burden either way, and you can't escape it. The speech on that particular subject is Mosiah 29:16 and following, especially 33 and 34. This is that a just king has to suffer, and this is with an unjust king everybody suffers.

229 Alma 1:26,16-20 Then Mosiah put Alma in charge of everything. Now we come to this happy time. Everybody was crazy about the charismatic Alma. But now he had been thoroughly converted, and he was in charge not only of the church, but he was the chief judge in a sacral society. He was head of the church and the state. Anybody writing this would say, "We are in for a golden age—at least a new age dawns with Alma." And what happens? Before the year is out, the whole thing starts coming apart. Well, well! In Alma 1:26 is what he escaped to. The general corruption—or collapse was what it amounted to—is in Alma 1:16-20. See what was happening? So we come up to this point now. We will find plenty more escapes and collapses as we go on here.

229,230 Alma 29,30; Alma 4:6 We mentioned Alma 1:29 last time. They did not wear costly apparel or anything like that. “And now, because of the steadiness of the church they began to be exceedingly rich, having abundance of all things whatsoever they stood in need [but in that they were still righteous; this is the interesting point—they were righteous for a whole year]—an abundance of flocks and herds, and fallings of every kind, and also abundance of grain, and of gold, and of silver, and of precious things, and [even] abundance of silk [that’s an interesting thing, but we won’t go into silk now] and fine-twined linen, and all manner of good homely cloth. And thus, in their prosperous circumstances, they did not send away any who were naked, or that were hungry.” The question is how long could they resist the corroding effects of riches? Four years at the outside, as we learn—the last two years being years of war anyway. In Alma 4:6 it tells us what happened. But what is the problem here? We see this a great deal. Notice that the reason they were able to get along was that “they did not set their hearts upon riches; therefore they were liberal to all... whether out of the church or in the church, having no respect to persons as to those who stood in need.” There was no such thing as deserving poor. If you are in need, that’s that, and all there is to it.

230 Alma 1:29-31; Alma 4:6;10:4 These very popular verses with Latter-day Saints must be taken in full context with verses 26 and 30 and the rest. So why does God enrich the righteous then, as we see in Alma 1:29-31 here? Brigham Young gave the answer to that many times. One whose talent, initiative, dedication, and industry have been demonstrated is now in line for the next test, the next step. That’s why. So naturally he is given these riches to test him to see what he will do with them. That’s a totally different test of a different kind of character. Work itself doesn’t sanctify. We are told it is possible to work like the devil, or to work like demons. He works hard. Alma 4:6 and 10:4 say what you gain by your industry is not holy gain. As James said, because of your work you have received these riches. That’s fine; you should receive them. But it’s neutral; it’s not holy. It’s not one way or the other. The qualities for success in

business are required in a much higher degree in any other line. We have a hundred millionaires here. But how many first-class scientists or authors or painters or composers or poets—or even generals—has the country produced? Very, very few first-class people [in those professions], but almost anybody and his dog can become a millionaire, said Brigham Young. But it's what you do with it. If a man has been good and conscientious, we'll load the stuff on him and see what he does. This is the real test. There are far more important qualities than this. What is missing in our candidates and our big men today, for example? They seem to be a very shallow lot. Greatness is very rare. We clamor for it and slaver over it when we have it, even if we are not so sure if this person really is great or not. But there are very few.

231 1 Nephi 22,23; 3 Nephi 6:15 So everyone must pass the wealth test, and it's the hardest of all. Remember, Satan trys men and tempts them. How does he do it? You can have anything in this world for money. That's the way he is going to tempt you, of course. We are to be tested to see if we will be faithful and true in all things whatsoever the Lord commands. He is very experienced in this, and he knows what the number one temptation is. In 1 Nephi 22:23 he tells us the four things, and repeats them again in 3 Nephi 6:15. The things we can't resist are, in this order: power, gain, popularity, and lusts of the flesh. And they are all interrelated; they are all built around ego, pride, etc.

233 1 Nephi 22:23; 3 Nephi 6:15 The famous dictum of Lord Acton, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." So look out for power! So we have these things [to look out for]. 1 Nephi 22:23 calls them "gain, power, popularity, and the lusts of the flesh." And 3 Nephi 6:15 calls them "power, authority, riches, and the vain things of the world." Who can handle these things? If you are going into the eternities to rule and reign in the house of Israel forever, you can't go on with a defect like this. As a mortal, you are here to be tested. "This life is a time of probation." This is the hardest test of all—can you be trusted for infinity? This means, can you be left

completely alone for endless ages without doing infinite damage? Well, who can?

233 Alma 1:29-32 The people had the wealth and still were righteous, so the question arises: Are wealth and virtue compatible? We all like to think they are. Today we are actually preaching that sexual promiscuity and virtue are compatible; people are actually trying to believe that. They want that, too. Actually, this vice is less absorbing, less persistent, less demanding, less predatory, and less hypocritical than the pursuit of gain. Sex is way down the list compared with the other one, certainly in the Book of Mormon. But this problem here is treated by no one as well as Brigham Young, so here we go. I'm going to read you some passages from Brother Brigham, who was our greatest businessman and the greatest leader in American history. Nobody performed anything like what he did as a leader. George Washington is the only one within shouting distance of that. I just noticed this passage. I hadn't intended to read it, but this is thrown in at no extra charge. We often hear the strange perversion of that saying, "The idler shall not eat the bread of the laborer," which means that the idle rich shall not eat the bread of the laboring poor. That's the way it has been throughout history; the poor have been ground down supporting the rich. Brigham said, "Man has become so perverted as to debar his fellows as much as possible from these blessings, and constrain them by physical force or circumstances to contribute the proceeds of their labor to sustain the favored few." He discovered the conflict at an early age. Can you have them both? He said he "sought for riches [when he was nineteen], but in vain; there was always something that kept telling me that happiness originated in higher pursuits."

234 D & C 6:7 This was the Sunday School lesson for last Sunday, as a matter of fact: Doctrine and Covenants 6:7. This was the first specific commandment once the conditions were agreed on with the Lord and had been clearly explained and accepted by the brethren to carry on the work. He said they must have faith and all the other things. Then he gave the first specific rule, the first explicit

order in clear and ringing words: "Seek not for riches, but for wisdom . . ." They are clearly marked alternatives—not seek for wisdom more than riches, but seek for the one and not for the other. They are mutually exclusive. "You cannot serve God and mammon," the Lord says. You must necessarily hate the one and love the other, and you must "serve God with an eye which is single to his glory." This is a common rationalization, and Brigham has a lot to say about it. At the very beginning of the Church, Joseph Smith said, "God has often sealed up the heavens because of covetousness in the Church." You are not going to have covetousness and revelation.

234 This is more or less chronologically arranged. "In 1855 Brigham pointed out the way in which love of knowledge and love of wealth, like antipathetical sets of glands, render each other ineffective: \*It is possible for a man who loves the world [riches] to overcome that love, to get knowledge, to understand until he sees things as they really are; then he will not love the world, but will see it as it is. . . .' In 1859 [he said], 'I desire to see everybody on the track of improvement.... But when you so love your property ... as though your affections were placed upon the changing, fading things of earth, it is impossible to increase in knowledge of the truth.'"

234 "In 1860 [he said], There are hundreds in this community [he is talking about the little community in the valley; it was getting quite big then] who are more eager to become rich in the perishable things of this world than to adorn their minds ... with a knowledge of things as they were, as they are, and as they are to come.' In 1862: 'No man who possesses the wealth of wisdom would worship the wealth of mammon.' In 1863: If we go on 'lusting after the groveling things of this life which perish with the handling,' we shall surely 'remain fixed with a very limited amount of knowledge, and like a door upon its hinges, move to and fro one year after another without any visible advancement or improvement [until retirement comes, and then you die of ulcers].... Man is made in the image of God, but what do we know of him or ourselves when we suffer ourselves to love

and worship the god of this world—riches?’ “

235 Then twelve years later he said, “When you see the Latter-day Saints greedy and covetous for the things of this world, do you think their minds are in a fit condition to be written on by the pen of revelation? . . . We frequently hear our merchants say they cannot do business and then go into the pulpit to preach.” It doesn’t seem to bother them anymore. Some feel that you can have a balance of the one and the other. He says, no balance. “A man or a woman who places the wealth of this world and the things of time in the scales against the things of God and the wisdom of eternity has no eyes to see, no ears to hear, no heart to understand. . . . The covetous, those who are striving continually to build themselves up in the things of this life [which we call success] will be poor indeed; they will be poor in spirit and poor in heavenly things.”

235 Brigham Young said, “Let us not narrow ourselves up. . . . This same lack of comprehensiveness of mind is also very noticeable at times with some men who happen to accumulate property, and it leads them to forsake the spirit of the gospel. Does it not prove that there is a contractedness of mind in those who do so, which should not be? Business is by its very nature narrowing.

235 D & C 6:7 Finally, “Brigham told the well-heeled Saints [and there are lots more of these to the same effect] to ‘keep their riches, and with them I promise you leanness of soul, darkness of mind, narrow and contracted hearts, and the bowels of your compassion will be shut up. . . .’ Even so, Joseph Smith had warned against “those contracted feelings that influence the children of men’ who judge each other ‘according to the narrow, contracted notions of men’ while ‘the Great Parent of the universe looks upon the whole of the human family with a fatherly care and paternal regard.’ “ That reads like a paraphrase of King Benjamin, doesn’t it? This is the theme we have here then. It goes on in the [Doctrine and Covenants] and says, “Behold, he that hath eternal life is rich.” We mentioned the people who had everything and had nothing.

236 Alma 1:33; Alma 2:1 They “durst not commit any wickedness if it were known; therefore, there was much peace among the people of Nephi until the fifth year of the reign of the judges.” Then everything broke loose, so this lasted for only four years. Alma got them off to a good start, but right away they were acting like this. You see that these two societies were very different from each other. There was not much chance of compromise between them; they wouldn’t allow it. In the fifth year there was contention among the people. Then this Amlici took advantage of it. He was a shrewd person. He was able, effective, a born winner, and a member of the Nehor church, which will be the church from now on. Notice in Alma 2:1: “... He being a very cunning man, yea, a wise man [he was sharp] as to the wisdom of the world, he being after the order of the man that slew Gideon ...” He was a member of the Nehor church, and he drew away many people after him. When Alma got in [as chief judge] lots of people had to be excommunicated, and even more of them just left of their own free will. They just apostatized and joined the Nehors. This is what was happening, and it picked up speed with this man Amlici, who took advantage of the motion.

237 Alma 2:3,4 “Now this was alarming to the people of the church, and also to all those who had not been drawn away after the persuasions of Amlici; for they knew that according to their law that such things must be established by the voice of the people.” He had put it on a different level. It was not just religion, or not just a big shot like Nehor, the evangelist. He wanted to be king. Well, this was something else; they had just abolished a kingship. What was going to happen now? Naturally, it got them worried. He got a big party following him and went for the big one. Kingship was out of fashion for only five years here because he got followers. So it alarmed the people of the church and everybody else “for they knew that according to their law that such things must be established by the voice of the people.” Not by the voice of the church, but the voice of the people. They knew they would be shut out if that’s what happened. If Amlici won his victory, it would be legal because the church as such had no voice in the civil government.

They had said they would do all things by the voice of the people, and if the people choose the wrong thing, that's just too bad for them. They will be responsible. So he could legitimately be elected king by their constitution— doing things by the voice of the people. He had a real power base, and “it was his intent to destroy the church of God.” That was the immediate obstacle that he had to get rid of.

237 Alma 2:5,7 Notice that he polarized public opinion. “And it came to pass that the people assembled themselves together throughout all the land ... in separate bodies, having much dispute and wonderful contentions one with another.” Like everything going on at a political convention, splitting up etc. Verse 7: “The voice of the people came against Amlici, that he was not made king over the people.” So he didn't win, but he was like Satan in heaven. Satan wasn't cast out of heaven for voting the wrong way; most of the people did the first time. The second time Satan refused to accept the verdict. He was going to resort to violence with a third of the hosts of heaven; therefore, he was cast out in a twinkling. There was no war in heaven; the word that is used is *POLEMOS*. Joseph Smith explains that very well. Satan was cast out for refusing to accept the popular vote.

238 Alma 2:8,10 “Amlici did stir up those who were in his favor to anger against those who were not in his favor,” and they wouldn't accept the verdict. So they went ahead with their own program in contempt for the constitution, which they had adopted just five years before. Already they were in deep trouble. Verse 10: “Now when Amlici was made king over them he commanded them that they should take up arms against their brethren; and this he did that he might subject them to him.” The church is an obstacle now; you can see that. Like a society of social freaks, they had to get rid of them because they never would accept [the Amlicites]. So what would happen? They would have to. That was. Amlici's obstacle. They were called “Amlicites,” and the remainder were called “Nephites.” This was just what they called them; it was the matter of a name. The whole next chapter is on the subject of race. But this was just a political designation.



238 Alma 2:12 “Therefore the people of the Nephites were aware of the intent of the Amlicites, and therefore they did prepare to meet them.” Now we see what had happened; the whole thing had been planned out by Amlici beforehand. He had already made a secret arrangement to join forces with the Lamanites. He chose his strong point, not in the center or anywhere near the center of the kingdom, but right on the borders, right at the crossing of Sidon. The Lamanites were on the other side, so they immediately came to his aid. He took a strong point on a hill there, which was a classic point of defense on the border. If he was sore pressed, that’s where he expected the Lamanites would join, and that’s what happened. They [the Nephites] were going to have a rough time when this happened. This is what Amlici did; he was a very shrewd man.

238 Alma 2:15 “And it came to pass that the Amlicites came upon the hill Amnihu, which was east of the river Sidon, which ran by the land of Zarahemla [that was on the border; it was the boundary line], and there they began to make war with the Nephites.” That was their rallying point. They wanted to choose the time and place of meeting the enemy. That gives you a great advantage, so that’s what they did here. They took that position and waited for Alma to attack them—to draw them on as the aggressors. Then Alma, being the chief judge, went up with his captains at the head of the army. Now Alma had three jobs: He was head of the church, he was head of the government as chief judge, and he was also the head of the army. He was a man with a full-time job, and he attacked the base.

## Lecture 44 Alma 2-3

### **Alma and Amlici [A Mark is Cultural not Ethnic] [You Must Choose Which of Two Ways You Will Face]**

239 We are on this affair between [Amlici] and Alma, and it's a very important one. It's the second chapter of Alma. Now who is fighting whom here?

239 Things had been going very bad with the church because of Nehor, who had taken all the people away. They all thought they were the true church. Nehor did, and Alma did, too. A man by the name of Amlici thought he could "cash in" on the Nehor movement. He wanted to go all the way, become extreme right wing, and make himself king. So we have two factions facing each other. Here you don't have Nephites versus Lamanites at all. On both sides there are Nephites and Mulekites all mixed up. Already Amlici has planned to join up with the Lamanites. As far as the Nephites are concerned, it was not the good people and the bad people. It was not the church against the opponents of the church; they were both following Alma. Most of them didn't want to go as far right as Amlici went. All the church and most of the other people stuck with Alma, so we have a very mixed thing.

239,240 Alma 2:15 It's quite a complicated affair militarily, and a very interesting one, too. Amlici was a very shrewd strategist; he knew how to do it. He set up on a hill,

which seems to have been a fortified hill. It is referred to at other times. It was apparently on the shore of the river, which made it impossible to surround him. That would give him one advantage at least. It was on a hill which was east of the river Sidon, which was the boundary of the land. The war was fought on both sides of the river. We don't need to worry about these particulars, but it's an interesting one if you try to analyze what they were doing here. On the east side of the river Sidon, "they began to make war with the Nephites." They took that as their post. That's where they raised their banner, and they invited combat there. Remember, ancient war was formalized and ritualized. Notice that there they chose the time and the place of the war. It was on a hill, a strong point on the river. The river didn't divide the land, but it "ran by the land of Zarahemla." It was more like a boundary.

240 Alma 2:17-19 Then Alma went up with his people and his captains at the head of his army. Notice his three-fold function. He was chief judge, head of the army now, and head of the church. He was everything. He could have easily become a dictator, which was exactly what Amlici wanted to do. He wanted to make himself king. Verse 17: "And they began to slay the Amlicites upon the hill east of Sidon." So the hill was on the east side of the river, and they attacked the base there. Then the Amlicites began to flee, and the Nephites pursued them that day and "did slay them with much slaughter." So these were royalist Nehors versus a mixed group of Nephites. The political conflict was nastier than the war with their brethren, the Lamanites. Notice that the Nephite wars were always the dirtiest. They didn't have much trouble with the Lamanites actually.

240 Alma 2:20,21 "And it came to pass that when Alma could pursue the Amlicites no longer he caused that his people should pitch their tents in the valley of Gideon." Well, we could put a valley of Gideon [on the board]; that was going to be their base camp. Here's a reminder of the original trouble. It all goes back to "Gideon who was slain by Nehor with the sword." These things are all related; we go back to Nehor country again. It was the camp of Gideon

against Nehor; now it was their camp against Amlici. These places apparently had strategic value. “And Alma sent spies to follow the remnants of the Amlicites, that he might know of their plans and their plots.” The plot was a clever one. He had an agreement with the Lamanites to get their support; you can see that. It was a chance for the Lamanites to get some support and a chance for Amlici to win the battle. They watched the camp of the Amlicites, and the Amlicites watched their camp “in the foul womb of night,” as Shakespeare said—the two camps watching each other. The camps could have been very close together, too.

240,241 Alma 2:15,24-27 On the morrow they [the spies] returned to the camp and were “greatly astonished” to find that the Amlicites had made contact with the Lamanites. It was a complete surprise. They had gone “above the land of Zarahemla.” Where was that? Apparently to the north, because when they fall back it’s always going to be toward the north. That’s where their supplies were coming from. That’s where their strength was—in the north and the west. Verse 24: “And behold the Amlicites have joined them.” This was a planned operation, as we read in Alma 2:15, “upon the hill Amnihu, which was east of the river Sidon.” He took up that position with contact with the Lamanites in mind all the time—perhaps to fall back on it, drawing the Nephites away from Zarahemla, It was a very shrewd action. That’s why the hill Amnihu was not in a central position. We are told in verse 27 that it was the hill on the Lamanite side of the river. But there were Nephites living on both sides. They discovered not only that the Amlicites had joined up with the [Lamanites], but the people who had settled [were fleeing because] the armies were fighting.

242 Alma 2:26,27 The people began to run toward the city. Verse 26: “The people of Nephi took their tents and departed out of the valley of Gideon,” which was their camp. They left there and made a race for Zarahemla, too. So both the army and the civilians were going toward Zarahemla to get there before Amlici could get it. They had to cross the river Sidon to get there. It was on the border, we are

told, and this was the trap. It was there that [the Amlicites] “being as numerous almost, as it were, as the sands of the sea, came upon them to destroy them. They were waiting for them at the ford. It’s very clear that the Sidon could be forded there.

242 Alma 2:29; Alma 4:2-3 “And it came to pass that Alma fought with Amlici with the sword, face to face; and they did contend mightily, one with another.” Now here, you might say, you have a good case of Star Wars, the good guys versus the bad guys. The wicked destroy the wicked. Reflecting on this, we can go to Alma 4:2-3 after this war. If you think these people were the good guys, it says: “But the people were afflicted, yea, greatly afflicted for the loss of their brethren, and also for the loss of their flocks and herds, and also for the loss of their fields of grain, which were trodden under foot and destroyed by the Lamanites. And so great were their afflictions that every soul had cause to mourn; and they believed that it was the judgments of God sent upon them because of their wickedness and their abominations; therefore they were awakened to a remembrance of their duty.”

242 Mormon 4:5 That was the promise given to Nephi, that the Lord would always have the Lamanites breathing down their necks to stir them up to remembrance. This is another case where it happened when they were wicked. That’s what brought on the war. As Mormon tells us later on, don’t worry about the wicked. “But, behold, the judgments of God will overtake the wicked; and it is by the wicked that the wicked are punished” (Mormon 4:5). They are going to be punished, but make sure it isn’t by you, that you are not doing the punishing.

242,243 Alma 2:31-37 Then Alma “slew Amlici with the sword. And he also contended with the king of the Lamanites” and his guards. Then notice that they cleared the ground; they had to get over to the west bank for the big fighting. They had to clear the ground on the west bank “that thereby his people might have room to cross and contend with the Lamanites and the Amlicites on the west side of

the river Sidon [so a strong force was waiting for them on the west side of the river]. And it came to pass that when they had all crossed the river Sidon that the Lamanites and the Amlicites began to flee before them [so they didn't have the engagement after all when they got across]. And they fled before the Nephites towards the wilderness which was west and north, away beyond the borders of the land." Way up there. In fact it went so far that it went to Hermounts, which is a very interesting word. Verse 37: "Yea, they were met on every hand, and slain and driven, until they were scattered on the west, and on the north, until they reached the wilderness, which was called Hermounts; and it was that part of the wilderness which was infested by wild and ravenous beasts."

243 Alma 2:38 So we have a shattered host. They really were shattered, and they began to run. Alma's people could go home, and they did. But Amlici's people could not go home. Where were they to go? They all fled toward the north and the far west, as far as they could get—way up there to Hermounts. Amlici was dead, and naturally you would think the Lamanites would welcome in the poor Amlicites. They'd had an agreement with them. But no, the Lamanites said, we don't owe you a thing. Verse 38: "Many died in the wilderness of their wounds, and were devoured by those beasts and also the vultures of the air; and their bones have been found, and have been heaped up on the earth." They could not go home now. It was only an agreement of convenience with the Lamanites. The Lamanites didn't feel any responsibility for them; they just left them "hanging in the wind." The Amlicites had nowhere to go. They went up to the north woods and were not able to survive there, so they were destroyed.

244 Alma 3:1,2 We have been saying a lot about ethnology, and now we come to perhaps the most important ethnic chapter in the book. I must get out this book by Filmore S.C. Northrup. He has recently written an anthropology book on East and West, from which I am going to read in a minute. Verse 1: "They all returned to their lands, and to their houses, and their wives, and their children." All

back to where they started. It was a sad affair. “Now many women and children had been slain with the sword, and also many of their flocks and their herds; and also many of their fields of grain were destroyed, for they were trodden down by the hosts of men.” This is the perennial tragedy of Latin America, isn't it, this sad picture? Verse 1: “Now the number of the slain were not numbered, because of the greatness of their number—after they had finished burying their dead they all returned to their lands, and to their houses, and their wives, and their children.” Then it says that nothing was gained by this political brawl. That's what it was, you see.

244 Alma 3:3 Notice that this is interesting, too: “And now as many of the Lamanites and the Amlicites who had been slain upon the bank of the river Sidon were cast into the waters of Sidon; and behold their bones are in the depths of the sea, and they are many.” That was near the mouth of the river Sidon. It would be very unsanitary just to throw their bodies in the river, but it said they were swept out to sea. So it would be quite close. Remember, it's a narrow neck of land here. This puts it into some sort of scale that they were swept out to sea. It shows the river Sidon was not only fordable, but it emptied into the ocean not far away.

244 Alma 3:4 The Amlicites had marked themselves. Where do we get the ethnic mark? What makes a race here? Well, they decided to be Lamanites. They identified with the Lamanites. This happens again and again. “They had marked themselves with red in their foreheads after the manner of the Lamanites; nevertheless they had not shorn their heads like unto the Lamanites. [So there were different degrees; they looked like Lamanites because of that mark.] Now the heads of the Lamanites were shorn; and they were naked, save it were skin which was girded about their loins.” Well, people who went around like that all the time would certainly have darker skins than the people who didn't. This makes the blackness.

244,245 Notice he is going to tell us in this chapter

that the Lamanites put the marks on themselves. They marked themselves, not knowing that they were fulfilling the promise of the Lord that he would mark them. A way of life produces this darkening of the skin, and it's the same way all over the world. The people that live in the stone houses have white complexions, and the people that live in the tents (the houses of goat's hair) have dark complexions. Among the Arabs they always distinguished between these people. They are the same people, the same blood, but there is a great deal of difference between them. One is much lighter than the other.

245 Alma 3:6 : "And the skins of the Lamanites were dark, according to the mark which was set upon their fathers, which was a curse upon them because of their transgression." Well, who set it on them? Their fathers set it on them. It was a way of life and culture. Where do racial characteristics come from in the first place? They come from environment, don't they? Adaptation, segregation. Everybody agrees on that. People in the North want to get all the sun they can, so I have no pigmentation at all. If I lived in the South, I'd have to be protected from the sun, so I would be dark. This is the way it goes.

245,246 Question: So it was their fathers that placed the curse upon them, [because of] the way of life that they chose? Answer: Yes, their way of life. They chose it; they took to this way of life by their own free will. And notice that this adaptation is very fast; this is a most interesting thing. . . . Mosiah taught the people [the] Nephite [language] and it made them much more efficient in their business, etc

246,247 Alma 3:7,8; Ether 8:19 "And their brethren sought to destroy them, therefore they were cursed; and the Lord God set a mark upon them, yea, upon Laman and Lemuel, and also the sons of Ishmael, and Ishmaelitish women." They were also dark, you notice. Was it because they intermarried? We are told that Laman and Lemuel intermarried with the daughters of Ishmael. They all did for that matter. Remember, the Ishmaelites were Arabs of the desert. And, after all, Lehi was of Manasseh; he was



just as much of the desert as they were. They all got mixed up here. “And this was done that their seed might be distinguished from the seed of their brethren, that thereby the Lord God might preserve his people, that they might not mix and believe in incorrect traditions which would prove their destruction.” Notice that tradition has the priority here. And here again, there are the things that God does, but men may not do. He may give life; men may not. He may take life; men may not, as we are told in Ether 8:19. He may judge; men may not judge. God may smite; men may not smite. Mormon said, “Man shall not judge, neither shall he smite.”

247 Alma 3:9 Well, there are all sorts of things that God does, but he segregates them [the people] here and he segregates them in his own way. He has this way of doing it. But notice that the tradition has priority. He doesn't want them to mingle with incorrect traditions, so he puts a slight mark on them to keep them apart and distinguish them. And yet they are going to be joining together all the time here. Then this is what happens: “Whosoever did mingle his seed [that is, his people—one people with another] with that of the Lamanites did bring the same curse upon his seed.” They would share the same culture with them. They were not just Nephites, but anybody who did. Remember, there were more Mulekites than [Nephites], but anybody who mixed with the Lamanites “did bring the same curse upon his seed.”

247 Alma 3:10,11 You can call the curse the culture', it depends on how you want it. “Therefore, whosoever suffered himself to be led away by the Lamanites was called under that head, and there was a mark set upon him.” Marriage is not enough; you have to share their culture. It's not a physical thing; you have to be led away by them and join in their way of life, their culture. He was called by that name, and there was a mark set up on him. You set it on yourself actually. Verse 11: “And it came to pass that whosoever would not believe in the tradition of the Lamanites [notice it's the traditions that are being separated here—not the blood, not the people], but believed those records which

were brought out of the land of Jerusalem ... were called Nephites.” No matter what your family was or anything else, you were called a Nephite. A Nephite or a Lamanite was one who accepted a tradition—the Nephite or the Lamanite tradition. Verse 11 makes that very clear. “And it is they who have kept the records which are true of their people, and also of the people of the Lamanites.”

247,248 Alma 3:13 In verse 13 they start marking themselves: “Now we will return again to the Amlicites, for they also had a mark set upon them; yea, they set the mark upon themselves, yea, even a mark of red upon their foreheads.” Notice that the Amlicites were Nephites who joined the Lamanites, and they set a mark upon their foreheads in imitation of the Lamanites. They wanted to be Lamanites. “Thus the word of God is fulfilled, for these are the words which he said to Nephi: Behold, the Lamanites have I cursed, and I will set a mark on them.” Well, they were putting the mark on, and this fulfills the prophecy that the Lord said. When they did it themselves, then they fulfilled the prophecy.

249 Alma 3:14 “Thus the word of God is fulfilled ... [when he said], Behold, the Lamanites have I cursed, and I will set a mark on them [they were fulfilling the word of God] that they and their seed may be separated from thee and thy seed, from this time henceforth and forever [separated henceforth and forever, a permanent mark forever and ever? No, he puts a limit on it here], except they repent of their wickedness and turn to me that I may have mercy upon them.” It is a reversible process. It’s their choice; they control it. Can they even reverse it? Can they do this with race? We can also initiate change in appearance ourselves.

249,250 You see, we are all cooperating in this thing, and it is a cultural thing. It all goes together, which makes perfectly good sense. And this tells how it was done. When the Nephites joined the Lamanites, they lived like them, dressed like them, and looked like them. We are told elsewhere in the Book of Mormon that those who changed their way of life and went back and lived with the Nephites

became light again. So it's obviously a cultural thing. It's not a racial thing which is a permanent stamp or something like that because, after all, these people all had the same genes. Laman, Lemuel, Nephi, and Sam had the same genes, but certain ones were recessive. Certain ones will pop up at different times, etc. And they would be separated.

250 Alma 3:15-17 "And again: I will set a mark upon him that mingleth his seed with thy brethren, that they may be cursed also. And again: I will set a mark upon him that fighteth against thee and thy seed. [The marks he was setting were the marks they were setting on themselves.] And again, I say he that departeth from thee shall no more be called thy seed." It's the naming, the identification. The name is important, the way of life is important, the clothing is significant—everything about them and how they identify themselves. We would just call this culture, the single package. "And I will bless thee, and whomsoever shall be called thy seed [you are not his seed, but if you are called his seed, it is just the same as if you were; now we are dealing with the seed of Abraham], henceforth and forever; and these were the promises of the Lord unto Nephi and to his seed." There's that constant repeating of the word seed, and yet you can join in the seed and be called by that name forever after. Can you change your race back and forth? You don't want to; you don't need to. It's this you change back and forth; we're talking about the seed of Abraham.

250 Alma 3:18 "Now the Amlicites knew not that they were fulfilling the words of God when they began to mark themselves in their foreheads [this is it—they did not know that they actually were fulfilling the prophecy and the curse]; nevertheless they had come out in open rebellion against God; therefore it was expedient that the curse should fall upon them." You notice that it was not according to affiliation. In the same way people mark themselves today; there's a lot of that now. The SS all had tatoos on themselves. They would mark themselves as SS, and of course, it could never be taken off. They were scared to death. Don't ask them to take off their shirts because it would give them away.

250 Alma 3:19 Then it gives this as a general rule: "... they brought upon themselves the curse; and even so doth every man that is cursed bring upon himself his own condemnation." You need not fear the curse of the wicked; you need not fear the "evil eye." If you are to be cursed, you will bring on yourself your own condemnation. You will put the mark on; nobody can force you to sin.

250,251 Alma 3:20,25 "Now it came to pass that not many days after the battle which was fought in the land of Zarahemla, by the Lamanites and the Amlicites, that there was another army of the Lamanites came in upon the people of Nephi, in the same place where the first army met the Amlicites." Here it goes again! They [the Nephites] drove them out of the borders of their land, and there was peace for a time. "Now all these things were done, yea, all these wars and contentions were commenced and ended [all in just one year] in the fifth year of the reign of the judges." Remember, five years ago Alma had founded a model community. Everybody belonged to the church; everybody was happy. They had all sworn the covenant under King Benjamin, etc. That's how fast they had started to break up. Notice how many factions they had broken up into already. Here in the fifth year they were already engaging in these sordid wars, and here they had an echo war, a backup war, following through. The Lamanites thought they would come back again and take advantage of the Nephites' weakness. But they drove them out of their borders, and there was peace for a time. All these things happened in one year, and it was just five years from Alma's inauguration.

251 Alma 3:26,27 "And in one year were thousands and tens of thousands of souls sent to the eternal world, that they might reap their rewards according to their works." Not according to their affiliation, not according to their flag or their uniform, but according to their works. According to their works they are going to be judged, "according to the spirit which they listed to obey [when they were here], whether it be a good spirit or a bad one." It's given to every individual to know with a perfect knowledge which is which. "For every man receiveth wages of him whom he listeth to

obey.” With Nephite, Lamanite, and Amlicite it was all the same. The party, the nation, the church itself is not evil; it's what you choose to do and how you choose to behave, etc. You can behave very vilely in any party. You can break all the Ten Commandments without being a Communist; you don't have to belong to any particular faction or anything like that.

251,252 Alma 4 Now we get to chapter 4, and there is no glorious victory here. Some things I wrote down before class might be worth mentioning here. The royalist Amlicites were mixed; we saw that. The Nephites contained both those in the church and out of the church. These two mixed armies went against each other. You can't make any distinction there—Nephite or Lamanite, Nephites versus Nehors, the church versus the persecutors. We find these repeated confrontations, as we mentioned the last time. What is this confrontation? Nephites versus Lamanites. No, we just saw it wasn't that at all; you can't make a clear-cut case for that. It is the kingdom against the world. The kingdom is always running away and getting beaten. It's always losing the battle; this is the Rechabite principle. The righteous are always on the run in the Book of Mormon and everywhere else. As Paul said, here we run the race and get beaten, but we will get rewards on the other side, not here. So we have the escape mode; we talked about the Fuga Mundi and the Rechabites.

252 John 14:30; John 16:33 The Lord says, “Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me.” And they were not going to have it any better. He said, if they have called the Lord of the house “Beelzebub,” what will they call the servants? if they slay me, that's exactly what they will do to you. You have no better chance than I have. “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer [you are not going to get your reward here]; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). These two things are very clear.

252 John 1:11; 3 Nephi 14:13-14; 2 Nephi 4:34 Why this retreat? Why do we always retreat from the wicked into

the wilderness, etc.? The church did in their last moves out of Missouri and Illinois. Well, in the first place they are hopelessly outnumbered. “He came into the world, and the world received him not. He came to his own, and his own received him not.” Those that received him were very few—one of a city and two of a generation, or two of a tribe, as it goes. Very few. As he said, you have tribulation here. They won’t follow him. “Broad is the way, which leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat; because strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (3 Nephi 14:13-14). The multitude will all go in the other direction, so you are hopelessly outnumbered to begin with. It’s wise to withdraw, especially since you are not allowed to resort to violence. You are not supposed to fight back here. The Book of Mormon tells us a number of times, “Cursed is he who puts his trust in the arm of flesh,” who makes the arm of man his confidence. You’ll never win that way, and of course, they never did, even when they had great advantages, etc. It’s a great story; this is what the Book of Mormon deals with. The kingdom may not resort to violence; we are not allowed to do that. Then what do you do? Well, it was planned that way. We are going to be tried and tempted in this world.

252,253      Moroni 7:12 The situation is plainly stated in Moroni 7:12 when he talks about inviteth and enticeth. Here you have them balanced. Moroni is the most instructive book in the Book of Mormon. He tells us that Satan is always inviting and enticing us in one direction. But at the same time the Lord is doing exactly the same thing; he is inviting and enticing us in the opposite direction. Who decides which direction you go in? Well, you do. The enticing and inviting are equally balanced. We allow Satan, our common enemy, [to tempt us]. Does he make himself overpoweringly persuasive so that you can’t possibly resist him? In that case you haven’t sinned. He’s not given that power; you are given the power to resist. He can only deceive. All the power you give him, as the Book of Mormon tells us, is by deception. If you want to follow, that’s why you’ll do it—that’s all there is to it. It’s up to you to decide. We are being

pulled equally in two directions. Which orbit will you be drawn into? The one you prefer.

253 This is psychologically sound, too. Every moment of the day the mind must pick out and focus on one particular thing. All the rest becomes background. Who decides what the mind focuses on? You select it and it's up to you. The things you wish to focus on and dwell on are the things which you choose. Talk about this life becoming a time of probation! The choices you make every minute announce where your preferences are. They make clear where you stand, what your values are, and everything else. You give yourself away every hour of the day. It's marvelous because it goes on right to the end. As Nephi tells us, God prolongs our lives so we will have more chance to repent. That's the great blessing of it. You have to make a choice. It's not just the "two ways." The ancients used to talk about the "two ways." But the way of light and the way of darkness are before us at all times. You have the choice of the one or the other, and there is no middle way because they lead in opposite directions. As Heraclitus said, "The up road and the down road are one." They lead in opposite directions. Being on the up road depends on the way you are facing, whether you are doing up or whether you are going down. To be righteous is to be facing up. You may be right at the bottom of the road and a miserable rat. To be lost, to be wicked is to be facing down, no matter how high you may be. Jeremiah 38 tells us about that sort of thing.

253 So we have this choice to make all the time. Talk about a time of probation! It is in every motion you make. We talk about body language and things like that. Everything you do and everything you say gives away what you really want. You give yourself away all over the place. It doesn't take a trained psychologist [to see this] either. As time mounts up, the elements of what you have done all conform to a particular pattern, and you become a well-marked person. We can change it, too, and that's the nice thing—knowing that you can make a choice anytime. But you notice this idea of the one or the other. Can't we balance the two? No, it's an interesting thing that you can't. Remember, you

can't serve God and mammon; you can't have two masters.

254 What we were saying here that was so profound was this: Why the retreat? It was not the Nephites against the Lamanites then. The righteous Nephites willingly joined with the righteous Lamanites all through the book, especially later on. They willingly joined together, and there was no trouble at all between them; they became one in a community. Remember, it tells us that after the Lord came there were no more -ites. And when they were wicked, the Nephites joined with the Lamanites to gain support against the Nephites. They did that all the time. We get more dangerous people than [Amlici] coming along, like Amalickiah. He wanted to be king of both the Lamanites and the Nephites, and he nearly succeeded.

254 We have two rules, two economies which cannot compromise, the Law of Consecration (which they use) and the law of the marketplace. The Nehors must persecute, and the Nephites must withdraw. There are great temporary disadvantages to the economy that Nephi established, Law of Consecration. Of course, there are eternal advantages. On the other hand, there are great temporary advantages to the law of the marketplace and eternal disadvantages. You run into that. We've got to learn that—not to lay things up on earth. This is another thing that surprises us: Because the righteous withdraw, the two kingdoms never contend in war. When there is a war, it is always the bad guys against the bad guys. I don't think you can find one in which that isn't the case. As Mormon said, "The justice of God will overtake the wicked." War is made by common agreement. We agree that we will wear uniforms and have flags, etc. We agree that we will fight each other.



# Lecture 45 Alma 4-5

**From Prosperity and Peace to Pride and Power**  
**[Apostasy by Church Members]**  
**[Alma Gives Power to Nephiah]**  
**The Atonement**  
**[Old Testament Law of Consecration]**  
**[Yom Kippur—the Lords Release]**

257 Alma 4:2,3 Now we have two extremely important passages; they are worth years actually. We are in Alma 4. In the fifth year of the reign of the judges all that fighting and terrible stuff happened. Now we are in the sixth year, and everything is going pretty well. In the sixth year there were no contentions, for once. Of course there were no contentions; they were suffering too much from the setback in the wars. It says, “But the people were afflicted, yea, greatly afflicted for the loss of their brethren, and also for the loss of their flocks and herds, and also for the loss of their fields of grain.” The place was ruined; their crops were trampled and destroyed. The losses had been so heavy “that every soul had cause to mourn; and they believed that it was the judgments of God sent upon them because of their wickedness.”

257 Alma 4:4,5 : “And they began to establish the church more fully; yea, and many were baptized in the waters of Sidon.” Weren’t there any other rivers around except the Sidon? It looks as if there were not very many. Notice that it was shallow—it was forded. That’s where all the battles

took place, at the ford. They could pass back and forth over it; it was the border also, and it washed down into the sea. It was that kind of country; there were no big rivers around. “Yea, they were baptized by the hand of Alma, who had been consecrated the high priest over the people of the church.” He had his work cut out for him. Now another thing to notice: See how small this civilization was. He baptized not 35,000 but only 3,500 souls. Everybody was wanting to get baptized, but that’s how many he baptized in a year.

258 Alma 4:6 Then just two years pass, and it’s all over. In the eighth year they have gone sour again. Do things happen this fast really? You bet they do. “The people of the church began to wax proud, because of their exceeding riches, and their fine silks.”

259,260 Alma 4:6,7 And they had “costly apparel.” Notice they never call it “beautiful apparel.” It’s just costly. Usually it looks quite ugly, I suppose, but it’s costly. They overdo it, as you know if you’ve seen the vase paintings and the murals from Central America, Mexico, etc. They are all horribly overdressed; they look like walking Christmas trees—these grandees being carried around. It went to their heads again, and Alma took this very hard: “Now this was the cause of much affliction to Alma.” What’s wrong with this elegance? Note the sharp distance between the two lifestyles here; that’s what it is. Verse 7: “Yea, many of them were sorely grieved for the wickedness which they saw had begun to be among their people.” They were not compromising or anything. Alma was much afflicted, and the priests and elders were sorely grieved. They were coming down hard; they didn’t agree at all. We have a definite hostility here. The people went right on with it because they didn’t like how [Alma and the priests] were doing it. It was two diametrically opposed lifestyles. That’s what we’re up against. They saw what they called wickedness that had begun among the people.

260 Alma 4:8 : “For they saw and beheld with great sorrow that the people of the church [the church was the

main culprit here] began to be lifted up in the pride of their eyes, and to set their hearts upon riches and upon the vain things of the world [here's your equality], that they began to be scornful, one towards another, and they began to persecute those that did not believe according to their own will and pleasure." That's snobbery, contempt, intolerance, and meanness. But what about persecution? Do people actually go that far? Do we really act this way because we get rich? Well, we do, of course.

261 Alma 4:9 So what happens? Great contentions. Notice Alma 4:9: "There began to be great contentions among the people of the church; yea, there were envyings, and strife, and malice, and persecutions, and pride." You have all these things within the ward, etc. Note the nature of these crimes—the meanness and the pettiness of it. There's nothing that you can make a law against. You can't go to jail for being envious of someone. You can't go to jail for strife or competition. We believe in competition; ours is a competitive system. Or for malice—to catch up and get even with somebody. "Don't get mad, get even." That's the slogan. With persecutions you put the pressure on. And there are the takeovers, hostile and otherwise, and the pride, "... even to exceed the pride of those who did not belong to the church of God." The church members were worse than the nonmembers, in other words. Can it go that way? It does.

261 Alma 4:10 : "And thus ended the eighth year of the reign of the judges; and the wickedness of the church was a great stumbling-block to those who did not belong to the church." This is a thing to notice. Here in this eighth year we come to the fatal turning point; from now on it's all down hill. It seems rather early in the game for that to be happening, but notice we are going on to the time of Christ now. From now on things start getting serious when the church itself is the center of corruption. So this is what's going to happen.

261,262 Alma 4:11,12 It tells us here in verse 11 that the church was corrupting the entire nation: "Alma saw the

wickedness of the church, and he saw also that the example of the church began to lead those who were unbelievers on from one piece of iniquity to another, thus bringing on the destruction of the people. Yea, he saw great inequality among the people [there we are again; he always hits that], some lifting themselves up with their pride, despising others [DESPICIO means ‘to look down on others’], turning their backs upon the needy and the naked and those who were hungry.”

262 Alma 4:13-15 But there were the others; this is the other side. Notice that this is a tract for the times. There are no -isms here. We are not talking about socialism, capitalism, fascism, or anything else. It’s just human beings dealing with each other. “Others were abasing themselves, succoring those who stood in need of their succor, such as imparting their substance to the poor and the needy, feeding the hungry, and suffering all manner of afflictions, for Christ’s sake, who should come according to the spirit of prophecy. Looking forward to that day, thus retaining a remission of their sins; being filled with great joy because of the resurrection of the dead [that’s where it pays off], according to the will and power and deliverance of Jesus Christ from the bands of death.... Alma, having seen the afflictions of the humble followers of God, and the persecutions which were heaped upon them by the remainder of his people, and seeing all their inequality, began to be very sorrowful.”

262,263 Alma 4:16 Alma had all three offices, so “he selected a wise man . . . and gave him power according to the voice of the people, that he might have power to enact laws according to the laws which had been given [all he was doing was enforcing the laws which people were ignoring] and to put them in force according to the wickedness and the crimes of the people.” They committed crimes, so Nephihah had these emergency powers. This was to free Alma to put the pressure on where it would count most.

263 Alma 4:18,19 “Now Alma did not grant unto him the office of being high priest over the church, but he retained

the office of high priest unto himself; but he delivered the judgment-seat unto Nephihah. [This is what he wanted to do it for:] And this he did that he himself might go forth among this people, or among the people of Nephi, that he might preach the word of God unto them [it had reached the point that the only thing he could do was], to stir them up in remembrance of their duty, and that he might pull down, by the word of God, all the pride and craftiness, and all the contentions which were among his people." All he could do was preach, and it went over, as I said, like a lead balloon—as you might expect. Notice that Joseph Smith didn't invent this. You'd think a happy ending would come out, but happy endings don't come here. It's one calamity after another, "seeing no way that he might reclaim them save it were in bearing down in pure testimony against them."

263 Alma 4:20 What good does it do to appoint special officers, make special laws, etc., if people are acting that way? Alma had all the principal offices, as we have seen—head of the church, army, and state. Law courts, judgments, sentences, etc., weren't getting anywhere at all. There was only one way to do it, he said. He could see "no way that he might reclaim them save it were in bearing down in pure testimony against them," which is what Solon did, incidentally. And he was driven out of the city, of course. He left for ten years. Verse 20: "Alma delivered up the judgment-seat to Nephihah, and confined himself wholly to the high priesthood of the holy order of God, to the testimony of the word, according to the spirit of revelation and prophecy." Only revelation and prophecy can make the breakthrough. [People] just keep calling each other names and going around in circles. You have to break the circle somewhere, and it can only come by revelation.

263,264 Alma 5:2,3 Now we come to one of the most remarkable chapters in the Book of Mormon, this long chapter 5 that is over 60 verses long. The same thing is told in Nephi 1-2 and in Alma 42. This is an account of the Law of the Atonement—of Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. These are the ordinances performed at the temple in Israel

by the law of Moses on the Day of Atonement. And that's what we are told here. Alma went first to the people of Zarahemla. He was launching the movement there, and he did it this way throughout the land. "And these are the words which he spake to the people in the church which was established in the city of Zarahemla, according to his own record, saying:" These are formal words, and he repeated these wherever he went. That means the day of establishment, the day of founding which is Yom Kippur, the New Year, and Rosh ha-Shanah, etc. It has all those names. It is the day of the founding of the world in all ancient societies, when everything gets started. (I've written so many articles on this.) These are the words he spake when he established it. It tells us in verse 3: "I say unto you that he began to establish a church in the land which was in the borders of Nephi [following the same pattern]." This is an inauguration of the church, an initiation of the order. What we have presented here is the old law of Moses in its purity. Here you recognize the Day of Atonement—that's what it is. As we have mentioned before, atonement is literally at-one-ment. The word is not found in the new revised version of the Bible; they use reconciliation instead.

264,265      Zachariah      14:18;      Exodus      32:19;  
Deuteronomy 31:27-29      We can't emphasize too much this law of consecration. I'm going to tell you what it was. It was the old law. This is point one: There was only one law given to Israel at any time— only one law given to the human race, and this was it. Point two: It was the minimum requirement. Incidentally you will find all this in the Old Testament in Zachariah 14:18 and following. It's a minimum requirement. Anyone can be expected to keep it, like the Word of Wisdom which can be kept by the "weak and the weakest of all saints, who are or can be called saints." It was given complete to Moses, but the people would only accept it in part. It has always been that way. As we are told in Exodus 32:19, when he smashed the tablets, they did not get the higher priesthood because they were not worthy of it. They got only the lower priesthood. Moses prophesied at the end of Deuteronomy in his farewell, just before he was about to leave the people. (It's quite a

speech here.) He says, you're a stiffnecked people. If you are rebellious while I am still with you, what will you do when I'm gone [paraphrased]. Then he says, I "call heaven and earth to record against them. For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt yourselves, and turn aside from the way which I have commanded you" (Deuteronomy 31:27-29). And they did in record time. Therefore, he leaves upon them just what we have on the promised land. He says, Behold I set before you this day a blessing and a curse. They go together, and you understand why. If thou wilt not hearken, these curses are for you [paraphrased]. Then he lists the promises and blessings and the curses, which are the blessings in reverse in Deuteronomy 28:15. He says in short, "I have set before you [this day] life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live" (Deuteronomy 30:19). Well, the people accepted the conditions wholeheartedly, just as they did in the time of King Benjamin. They all voted and chose to go into it. In one voice they shouted, "Amen," for they were accepting the curse along with the blessing. It's the same in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

265 Deuteronomy 7:6 This is the reason they have to be different: They can't just go back and be like ordinary [people]. He really rubs this in, and you will find most of this in the book of Deuteronomy [Brother Nibley paraphrases most of it]. "Ye all stand this day before Jehovah your God that he may establish you this day for a people unto himself." There are to be no mental reservations as to what you are to be sworn to; God is not mocked. Don't say, "This won't bother me; I'll go just my way. I'll take the oath." The Lord will not spare him that does, but "all the curses written in the book shall be upon him." Because you are something different from the world, he says—holy, set apart, chosen, special, peculiar, AM S GULLAH (that's the word SEALED, A SEALED PEOPLE), not like any other people on the face of the earth. "God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deuteronomy 7:6). That's why you can't do just like other people. He says this will remain the law until God himself sees fit to change it. That's another point.

265,266 Then he told them what to do. This is what you do. First, you must establish the center, the temple, according to my instructions. This is the place which Jehovah, your God, has chosen out of all your tribes to put his name there for his dwelling. You shall seek that place out and go there. You shall bring your offerings there—your sacrifices, your heave offerings, your firstlings of your flocks. (Remember, they brought their firstlings at the beginning of Mosiah when Benjamin was going to speak to them.) There you hold your feasts before the Lord joyfully with your families. It follows the rule right throughout the Book of Mormon. And this is what you are supposed to do when you come there: The first thing you do in the new land when the holy place is established is to take all your first fruits in a basket and take them before the altar and recite this speech: “A Syrian was my father ready to perish from hunger.” This is Abraham, you see. Abraham was a Hebrew. The word AVAR means a person from the “beyond,” a homeless, an outcast, a bum—all sorts of disrespectful things. That’s what Abraham was, a wanderer. Remember, he never had a home or a place to settle. LEKH LKHA was the rule he lived by. “Keep going and don’t stop.” No one would put up with him very long. Then he says, and he went down into Egypt and there he became a nation. And the Egyptians treated us badly. The Lord brought us forth and brought us to this place and has given us this land. This is the Book of Mormon theme all the way through, too. The King James Version renders SIRION as AMORITE. The Hebrew word is AMORITE. He is a person from the beyond. And the word HEBREW means a displaced person, a tramp, an outcast, a homeless person.

266 You bring in your basket, etc. A tribute is a free-will offering of thine hand required at the feast of the weeks. The offering is required. You must bring it, but the amount is determined by yourself. So you are testing yourself here as to whether you will be willing. It’s a free-will offering, but it is required of you. It’s on the basis “of how much the Lord has given you.” The Septuagint has it better: “. . . to the limit of your ability.” The Hebrew says, “. . . according to that which he has given you, even with which your God hath



blessed you.” It’s the law of consecration. From everything with which he has blessed you, you are supposed to bring. But you give according to your own free will; nobody is going to twist your arm. He requires you to take the test, which is whether you will try to short-change him. Three times a year—at the [feasts of] the unleavened bread, the weeks, and the tabernacles—all males come together. Every man shall give as he is able according to the blessings which the Lord has given him. And how much is to be given, it asks. Exactly as much as the Lord has given you. All of that with which the Lord has blessed you and with which he may bless you. So they had the law of consecration.

266,267 He says this twice in Deuteronomy: When you have eaten and drunk and are full, and silver and gold has piled up, and you say to yourself, “My ability and hard work have made this fortune for me,” don’t get the idea that you are telling the truth. Bear in mind that God has given you the capacity to get what you have only for the sake of confirming the covenant which he made with your fathers. If you forget that in any degree, you will be destroyed just like the other nations. Don’t get the idea that all this is being done because of your righteousness. “Speak not in thy heart saying, For my righteousness, the Lord hath brought me to possess the land, but for the wickedness of the nations, the Lord doth drive them out,’ because you are not a righteous people but wicked. You are stiff-necked people.”

267 At this point, special pleading by Moses is all that saves the people from destruction, actually. There is to be no dickering or cheating. Above all, the Lord detests one who tries to bargain with him. “Thou shalt not sacrifice unto the Lord a bullock or sheep with any blemish or fault whatever, or any evil favor.” It’s your shearing time. You can’t use it or sell it anyway, so you might as well make a sacrifice of it. He says, don’t try to do that. Don’t try to cheat the Lord. It’s the type of tithe you bring. (Brigham Young said some very humorous things about a person who brings a horse or cow that is diseased and falling apart.) That is an abomination unto the Lord thy God to try to dicker with him.

267 Now this is the Yom Kippur; this is the Lord's release. At the end of every seven years, every creditor must cancel all debts, never to be paid again. It's quite a system! With all men either debtors or creditors, this is not a convenient arrangement, but it is the only way. Only God can draw the line and say, "Here, this business of exploiting each other must stop." The Lord guarantees to make up any losses to those who keep the law, for the Lord will greatly bless you if you do this. But only if you carefully hearken and observe and do these commandments. The important thing is the spirit in which you do it; this is a very important part of the law.

267 Deuteronomy 15:8,9 "If there be a poor man of your brethren anywhere within your knowledge, thou shalt not harden thy heart nor shut thy hand from thy poor brother, but thou shalt open thy hand wide to him, and shall surely lend him sufficiency of need of whatever he is in want. And since it is a loan, beware there is not a thought in thy wicked heart saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand. If I give it to him now, he will not have to repay it, and I'll never get it back,' and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother and thou givest him not, and he cry unto the Lord and it be a sin unto thee. [This is not to be regarded as a business operation.] Thou shalt surely give him, and thy heart shall not be grieved when thou givest."

268 Deuteronomy 15:11 Now comes the famous verse quoted by the Lord, "The poor you have always with you." This is taken as proof that we will never get rid of the poor so why bother about them— there's nothing you can do about it anyway. It was Judas who said, why don't we sell this ointment and get a lot of money and then we can give it to help the poor? Knowing that Judas was a hypocrite and really didn't mean it that way, the Lord said: Look, if you want to help the poor, you can do that anytime. The poor are always with you, but I'm only with you today and then I'll be gone. If you want to help the poor, you'll have plenty of opportunity to help the poor. That's what he was talking about, but we twist that around and say, "Well, you can't help the poor—no use trying because they are always

there.” We love to play games, don’t we? There’s nothing like an economist going around and around the bush.

268 Deuteronomy 15:12-15 “After six years of service any and all servants must go absolutely free no matter what is paid for them and thou shalt not let him go empty. Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, out of thy winepress, out of whatsoever the Lord God has blessed thee thou shalt give unto him. [Why?] And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondsman in Egypt, and Jehovah, thy God, redeemed thee.” God saved you and gave you eternal life, and in return the least you can do is remember that you were a bondsman in Egypt.

269 Alma 5:5,6 So that’s what we find here [in Alma 5]. We are going to get the law of Moses here, and we are also going to get the rituals and ordinances carried out in the Day of Atonement, which he refers to here. He tells us he is establishing it, and he tells us how his father, Alma Sr., began the whole thing by baptizing in the Waters of Mormon. It began with the baptizing in his community; then he organized the community. Verse 5: “And behold, after that, they were brought into bondage by the hands of the Lamanites in the wilderness [there must be a stirring below before there can be a stirring above; this gives us some vivid images here and eloquent passages], yea, I say unto you they were in captivity, and again the Lord did deliver them out of bondage by the power of his word [notice he is giving them the same introduction that Moses gave the people—my father Abraham was brought out of Egypt to a land of promise]; and they were brought into this land, and here we began to establish the church of God throughout this land also.” Now, he has used the word establish three or four times in a row here.

270 Alma 5:6 It is just like reading from Deuteronomy when he says in verse 6: “Have you sufficiently retained in remembrance the captivity of your fathers? [We are going to rehearse that all over again.] ... Have you sufficiently retained in remembrance that he delivered their souls from hell? [That’s a much better thing than delivering them from

Egypt.] Behold, he changed their hearts; yea, he awakened them out of a deep sleep, and they awoke unto God. Behold, they were in the midst of darkness; nevertheless, their souls were illuminated by the light of the everlasting word; yea, they were encircled about by the bands of death, and the chains of hell, and an everlasting destruction did await them.”

## Lecture 46 Alma 5

### **[Festivals Give a Look at the Other World] Rededication and Restitution The Atonement**

275 Now here's the situation we have in Alma 5. Both Alma and his father had been having a constant struggle, as you know, to keep the Nephites in the path of duty. They were always drifting away, as Israel does. Could they [the two Almas] be to blame? Were they too severe? You notice both of them are overstrict. In the first place, Alma Senior [may have] made his own son rebellious, and the same thing with Mosiah. Perhaps they were being too strict because the kids went off and went overboard.

275 Remember when he ran away from King Noah and went out and founded the church on the teachings of Abinadi (and you know what kind of a fire-eater Abinadi was), it was very strict. It was the strict, austere brotherhood of Qumran, or it was nothing. He always insisted that that's the way the church would be. And he no sooner got the church started in cooperation with Mosiah than what happened? People started drifting away in large numbers, as a matter of fact. First it was in the outskirts of different settlements with which he wasn't too often in contact. He didn't even know what was going on. What kind of a leader is this? And people, as I say, were becoming disaffected in large numbers and it got worse and worse. They started walking out in droves. Then Nehor put himself at the head of this movement. He took advantage of it for a more easygoing,

a more relaxed, a more permissive church. That's what he wanted. It became popular and remained the more popular church. But must the church be that strict? It probably must.

275,276 Then we see next that Amlici capitalized on that. He wanted to go to the other extreme and with a disaffected group formed a party to make him king. It wasn't quite strong enough, but it was a very serious threat; you see that. Alma was able to check it and overcome him in a hand-to-hand combat, but did it go back to normal? No, they didn't go back to normal. That's what we get here. In this chapter he decides on a general reformation; this is a long chapter. He goes out to the outskirts in the next two chapters after that. He goes to the people of Gideon, and then he goes to the people of Melek and Ammonihah and tries to do the same thing. He is refounding the order of things to establish it exactly in the pattern as was done in the first. It's the law of Moses he's following very strictly, as we read later on. It was strictly the law of Moses.

276 So he celebrated the covenant, just exactly as Benjamin did in a great renewal at the coronation rite—renewing the covenant, renewing the state, the society, and the creation of the world. This is one of the best-known phenomena of ancient history now. It wasn't a few years ago, but I've been yelling about it for years. As is well known, this is a stock theme. It's a rehearsing of the creation, the refounding, the rebirth of the human race. It's the NATALIA, it is the refounding of the kingdom, it's universal. Everybody is reborn and receives a new name on a particular day, which is the new year—it's gauged by the sun. And it [this ceremony] is very conspicuous in the documents, and only within the last three or four years, the anthropologists have latched onto it. Finally when they catch up to it, it has become very obvious. You can see that. And this is a very basic theme.

277 Aristotle's point of view is that the observer is always superior to the observed. If I'm looking at a bug or a leaf or something like that, I'm superior. If I study you as an

anthropologist, then I am the superior mind. I'm viewing an inferior object because I have you in my power. You are whatever I say you are. It is enormous vanity. We won't go into that.

278 The Egyptians put it very nicely: Their word for everything is NTTIWT.T—all that which is and all that which is not. All that which is all that I know about; but if I'm going to include everything, it has to include a lot of things I don't know. It's just possible there's something I don't know that exists. And of course the IWT.T, the part you don't know about, is vastly greater than the other. Now the world that God knows about, and the world that you know about are two totally different things. You know that.

278 The purpose of these festivals is [to give you a look at the other world]. [The ancient world] all have these festivals, and this is true in Islam, too. That's what our temple does, you see. You get a peek behind the veil; you go into the other world. You try to make yourself intimate. You ease yourself into a vaster life and nearer to reality.

279 We're all in the same boat, and it's a very interesting thing. The Koran expresses it well. So this is what you have in Alma 4, 5, 6, and 7 here. They have to do with the Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. The kippur means "the covering of your sins, the day of covering." But Yom Kippur is a rededication, the Day of Atonement, at-one-ment, becoming one with God again. We've been separated from God, we've been cast out, we have sinned (the Fall in the Garden). We must get back again into the presence of God, and that is at-one-ment, which you write atonement. It surprises people to know that atonement is not a Latin or Greek word. It is a genuine Old English word, and it means just what it says, at-one-ment. It's been replaced now in the Bible by reconciliation, as mentioned before, which means "come back to a person and sit down with him again."

279,280 The oldest Egyptian document that we have is the Shabako Stone. The twenty-fifth dynasty was founded either by Shabako or Kashta, but Shabako is responsible

for the stone. He renovated the Temple of Menes which was built to celebrate the founding of the first dynasty of Egypt, which represented the founding of the world and the creation. It was the creation story, the drama of Adam and Eve in the Garden, the outcasting, the processes, the ordinances by which you return to the presence of God, and finally the veil. Well, this is in the Shabako Stone. We often refer to it in classes because it's come in for a lot of recent study. Shabako was an Ethiopian who founded the twenty-fifth dynasty, and he wanted to set off his dynasty in style. There were thirty-one dynasties, and every one of them had to be a refounding of the world. This is necessary to show the universality of these things, so forgive me. When they were renovating the temple, it was like when they were renovating the Nauvoo House. They found the Oliver Cowdery text of the Book of Mormon in the cornerstone. And this was found in the cornerstone of the Temple of Menes going way back 5,000 years ago. What would be better than to use this for the temple drama, the creation story? This is what they wanted, so at the top he [Shabako] says he caused it to be copied, etc. But everything now was going to be done exactly as it was then, but better than it was before. So they went through and rehearsed all this stuff.

280 Alma 5:2,3 The Yule is where you complete the circle and you come back again. That's what it means. So you get this completion of the circle, etc. That's what we're going to have here [in Alma], a refounding—every Day of Atonement is supposed to be this. Notice how it starts out. He emphasizes that it is the first. Verse 2: “And these are the words which he spake to the people in the church which was established.” It is a formal rite he's talking about. These are the words with which he established it. In the next verse he says “he began to establish the church in the land” beginning with an ordinance, baptism, it says here. Before you enter the temple you're washed.

281 Alma 5:4,5 “And behold, I say unto you, they were delivered out of the hands of the people of king Noah, by the mercy and power of God [and he gives them a history



of their bondage], ... brought into this land, and here we began to establish the church of God throughout this land also." He was introducing everything anew here, and he was reestablishing—there must be a stirring below. Do you remember the captivity of your fathers? This is so very interesting because the first Dead Sea Scroll discovered was the Serekh Scroll, the Manual of Discipline, their Doctrine and Covenants, which told exactly why they were out there and what they were doing. It begins right like this: On the first day all the candidates for the ordinance will meet together in a meeting. The first thing they were told was how their fathers were led out of Egypt and their sufferings and all they went through and how they'd been delivered. It's exactly this speech that he gives us here in the Serekh Scroll. So I'll write in the margin "1QS" here, the Serekh Scroll.

281 Alma 5:6 "Have you sufficiently retained in remembrance the captivity of your fathers? . . . [and how] he has delivered their souls from hell? Behold, he changed their hearts [see, we're going into a new life here; it's going to be a rebirth].... They were in the midst of darkness; nevertheless, their souls were illuminated by the light of the everlasting word." I said before that goes back to the mysteries, but the mysteries are very secondary here. This is always the festival of light; it's always held at sunrise. It's the rising of the sun in the new year; you date it by that. When the sun comes up, you're in a new age, a new cycle has begun, and the sun has come again.

281 Alma 5:7 : "Their souls were illuminated by the light of the everlasting word; yea, they were encircled about by the bands of death, and the chains of hell, and an everlasting destruction did await them." Instead they're going to be encircled, as we said, by the KAPPORET, by the arms of God when he welcomes them into the tent after he has parted the veil. The priest says they have passed the test, they have purified themselves, they have repented, etc. Then he says, "Let Israel enter my presence," and they come into the tent. The KAPPORET is the veil that he parts in the tent.

281,282 Alma 5:9 “And again I ask, were the bands of death broken and the chains of hell which encircled them about, were they loosed? [Notice, he keeps talking about this encircling—to be encircled by the bands of death, encircled by the chains of hell.] ... Their souls did expand, and they did sing redeeming love.” Now here we have the song of redeeming love, which is a very interesting thing. Remember, these rites were last performed in Lehi’s generation. After that, Jerusalem was destroyed. Well, it was rebuilt again, but they [the Jews] never restored these rites again. This is where you have to go (to the Book of Mormon) for the old rites the way they were performed. And this is the way we find them in the law of Moses, too. So he says here the soul did sing, and he’s going to mention the song of redeeming love a little later here. It’s an interesting thing.

282 Alma 5:10,12 “And now I ask of you on what conditions are they saved?” Are you ready to enter? This parallels Benjamin’s speech which was given at the new year. The people had all come to the temple. They were camping, as they should, with their tents facing the temple. We don’t get this from the Bible; we get this from Nathan the Babylonian who was present at a coronation of the prince of the captivity many years after the destruction of Jerusalem. But he described exactly how it used to be carried out, and of course that’s what we find in Mosiah. Now here’s another repetition. He’s refounding. Alma was desperate, and he was going to establish everything all over again. The Jews are used to this business of getting a new start. “And now I ask of you on what conditions are they saved? Yea, what grounds had they to hope for salvation? What is the cause of their being loosed from the bands of death and also the chains of hell?” There he goes again. We’re in the darkness. It’s this: First you have to believe in the words, and he asks them, “Did not my father Alma believe in the words which were delivered by the mouth of Abinadi?” The whole movement began when Alma started to believe the words of Abinadi. Verse 12: “And according to his faith there was a mighty change wrought in his heart. [And thirdly:] ... he preached the word unto your fathers,

and a mighty change was also wrought in their hearts.” His heart was changed, and then he changed others. He’s giving a lot of credit to his father here.

282,283 Alma 5:14-18 “Have ye spiritually been born of God? [See, this is your birthday, you have now been spiritually born.] Have ye received his image in your countenances?” Now you’ll notice that this chapter and the next, but especially this one, is extremely rich in the most powerful imagery of the atonement rites. They’re full of vivid imagery. He mixes them very freely, and the people understand what he means. This is very characteristic. So he starts out with this image here, and see what happens now. Verse 15: “Do you look forward with an eye of faith [see, there’s an image] ... to stand before God to be judged ... [another image].” But it’s more than an image; it’s a reality in the future, because now he starts talking about imagination. Notice verse 16: “I say unto you, can you imagine to yourselves that ye hear the voice of the Lord ...?” In verse 17 he says “Or do ye imagine to yourselves that ye can lie unto the Lord in that day ...?” In verse 18: “Or otherwise, can ye imagine yourselves brought before the tribunal of God?”

283 Notice each verse begins with the word imagine. Can you imagine this? Progressively, you imagine. Well, is it legitimate to imagine? Are you cheating if you imagine too much? Is all that we have of the gospel just imagination? Are we just making it up? We think it’s very real to us. These are the stations. You can imagine you hear the voice of the Lord. Before you can carry out any operation, you must visualize it. You must imagine it, no matter what it’s going to be. So there’s nothing wrong with imagining things—you have to. Where does history exist? One hundred percent in imagination.

283 Alma 5:16-18 “Can you imagine to yourselves that ye hear the voice of the Lord, saying unto you, in that day: Come unto me ye blessed, for behold, your works have been the works of righteousness upon the face of the earth?” That would be wonderful. “Or do ye imagine to yourselves

that ye can lie unto the Lord in that day, and say—Lord, our works have been righteous works upon the face of the earth—and that he will save you?” He’ll believe you? No, you can’t do that. The first alternative is to be righteous, the second is to try to bluff it and say you were righteous. Then third, “... can ye imagine yourselves brought before the tribunal of God with your souls filled with guilt and remorse, having a remembrance of all your guilt, yea, a perfect remembrance of all your wickedness?” Very vivid. You can imagine that. You can imagine it right now, he says. You do have a remembrance of your guilt, as far as that goes, and it will come back more quickly, of course, in the presence of God.

283,284 Alma 5:19 “I say unto you, can ye look up to God at that day with a pure heart and clean hands? ... Can you look up, having the image of God [notice he started out, ‘have you received the image in your countenance?'] engraven upon your countenance?” It’s the same thing you began with. In other words, this is a real at-one-ment, when you’re united with God and, like the Father and Son, are exactly alike, a perfect correspondence.

285 Alma 5:21 But we go on; [Alma] is talking about this. As I said, this is very rich imagery. You can imagine these things, and then he says [verse 21]: “There can no man be saved except his garments are washed white; yea, his garments must be purified until they are cleansed from all stain, through the blood of him of whom it has been spoken by our fathers.” Now there is a strange paradox: Washed in the blood of the lamb. Have your garments been washed white in his blood? Well, how can blood wash garments white is the point? If you have ever attended a kosher slaughter, you know that the priest has to wear his priestly robes, the rabbi, though he does not have authority. No Cohen or Levite can establish his priesthood today; they don’t have the genealogy. But still he puts on the robes, and when he cuts the throat of the beast he becomes completely spattered with blood. There’s no way of avoiding it because it has to be hung upside down. All the blood has to run out. When he makes that first cut, there’s

a terrific spurt of blood, and he gets splattered.

285 Alma 5:21,22 After they have performed this rite and slain the pascal lamb, then Aaron and his sons appear before the people with their garments splattered with blood, which shows that the atonement has been made. The blood has been shed, after the similitude. That means that the people's own blood has been washed white. This is explained here, how blood can wash you clean. He's going to tell us. Notice that your garments are stained with filth; they're bloody. That's the blood that's washed out. Notice the difference here: "... cleansed from all stain, through the blood of [the lamb]." And the next verse says, "And now I ask of you, my brethren, how will any of you feel, if ye shall stand before the bar of God, having your garments [not cleansed] stained with blood and all manner of filthiness?" So we have two kinds of stained garments; the one is the blood and filthiness that stains your own garment. He says the blood will testify against you. We are guilty of what we assent to. We may not have shed very much blood, but we are all guilty of what we assent to. We all pay the same half shekel. It's a very interesting that everybody must pay a sin tax, a tax for sin, on the Day of Atonement. But the interesting point is you don't know how to value sin. Who is more guilty than the other? There's no way of knowing that, how guilty a person really is. So everybody must pay, whether it's a woman, child, rich, poor; it makes no difference. Everyone must pay exactly the same amount, because only God knows who the real sinners are. So everybody pays the half shekel. Everybody has sinned some, so everyone must pay a half shekel, not more and not less. That puts us on an equal footing.. But he says here, "washed white through the blood of the lamb," and this is it.

285,286 Alma 5:21 This reminds you of the two serpents. Remember, in the wilderness the people were bitten by serpents and were dying. They were stinging serpents. So Moses raised a bronze serpent on a staff, and all who looked upon the serpent lived. Well, the serpent healed [the bite of] the serpent. Have you noticed on the

staff of a physician, on the caduceus, the medical staff has two serpents intertwined. The Greeks tell us that Hermes was the founder of the medical profession. That was of Egypt, the Egyptian Hermes Thoth. The two serpents are both copulating serpents because they beget, but they are also opposing each other. The one kills, the other heals. The two must be intertwined because it must be the COINCIDENTIA OPPOSITORWN that brings things to a balance. So you have the two serpents. [As for] the serpents in the wilderness—as they were killed by the serpents, so they were healed by the serpents. We're told the same thing about the HYSSOP, and here's the same thing. As they got the bloody filth on their garments, so by the blood on the priest's garments [they were atoned]. Notice it says the blood on our garments testifies. We're told in Leviticus and Deuteronomy that when the priest and his sons come out, having performed the sacrifice, their garments are spattered with this blood. That blood testifies that the sacrifice has been made, and the other garments are washed clean. The other blood is off then. So there's no contradiction in having garments washed clean by the blood of the Lamb. It testifies that they have been cleansed. Of course, we say this is all symbolic, but these symbols were very real to these people. Alma 5:21: It's the Lamb's blood on the garment of the high priest that makes your garment white. So that's what he's talking about here. Notice this rich symbolism. It will testify against you. We can't apportion guilt, because we're all guilty. We must all be purified. All our lives we have to repent.

286,287      Alma 5:23,24    “Behold will they not testify that ye are murderers [remember, carnal, sensual, and devilish], yea, and also that ye are guilty of all manner of wickedness? [Well, we are]. Now we come to the TESHUVAH and the YESHIVAh. Here is the YESHIVAH. See, you have to have your garments cleansed before you can come into the tent and sit down. That's what the priest testifies, that they've done the rites. Then he says you can come in. But you have to be cleansed, and notice that's what he talks about here [in verse 24]: “Behold, my brethren, do ye suppose that such an one can have a place to sit down in

the kingdom of God, with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob . . . whose garments are cleansed and are spotless, pure and white?" You have to cleanse your garments before you can come into the tent and sit down. As I say, it's called the YESHIVAH, a very important part of the Yom Kippur, the sitting down by the side of God. That's why it's translated now in the new Revised Version [of the Bible] as reconciliation. In the Latin, RECONCILIOS was spelled originally with s. Re means again, con means with, sedere means to sit down again with. RECONCILIO means "sitting down as in a council, conciliate and giving counsel." Then you can come in the tent and sit down with them. Nephi used that expression. He went into the tent of the Lord when he was fleeing from his enemies and asked for the Lord to protect him and put his garment over his shoulder. That's what happened there.

287 Alma 5:25 Then he goes on here in verse 25: "I say unto you, Nay: except ye make our Creator a liar from the beginning, or suppose that he is a liar from the beginning, ye cannot suppose that such can have place in the kingdom of heaven." That's the other expression. You will sit down, which is AHLAN WA-SAHLAN, and you will have place; MARHABAN is the wide place. No, the opposite of atonement is to be cast out, to be rejected, "but they shall be cast out for they are the children of the kingdom of the devil." You are cast out into that other kingdom here. Remember, this "have place" [idea]. When Nephi grabbed Zoram and held him tight, he said down to him, come down to my father's tent and you can have place with us. You can be members of the family, and you're in [paraphrased]. But if you're rejected, this is what happens. You're cast out into the outer darkness, into the desert night, because you're children of the kingdom of the devil.

290 Alma 5:26 We have Alma asking here in Alma 5:26: "If ye have experienced a change of heart, and if ye have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, I would ask, can ye feel so now?" And here we're told in the Apostolic Constitutions, "it behooves every man to feel in his heart to send up a song to thee [to feel to sing the song of redeeming

love] through Christ for the sake of all; for thou art kind in thy benefactions and generous in thy compassions.” And that’s the way Alma describes it. “My brethren, if ye have experienced a change of heart, and if ye have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, I would ask, can ye feel so now?”

290 Alma 5:27,28 And John tells us [about it] in Revelation [14:3]; he’s the closest, you see, “And they sung as it were a new song before the throne . . . and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.” You have to be qualified. And so he goes on, and we have the song of redeeming love. Then [Alma] says again in the next verse that it is necessary to be humble for this and to have your garments cleansed and made white. Verse 28: “Behold, are you stripped of pride?” This is very important, you see. This is the metaphor. Notice that the white garments signify humility, because they don’t put on any display or anything like that, and purity because they’re white. “Are you stripped of pride?” means you put your pride off; that’s another metaphor. Pride is [displayed in] costly apparel, as we read a little later on. In verses 54 and 55 of this chapter it tells us that’s what pride is. We’re stripped of pride here with that garment.

290,291 Alma 5:29 “Behold, I say, is there one among you who is not stripped of envy [this idea of taking off your old finery]? Again I say unto you, is there one among you that doth make a mock of his brother?” This is equality. Mock no one. We say, “No one is perfect.” We like to say that. That’s an easy thing; it lets everybody off the hook. But remember, that means that everybody has something seriously lacking. We’re all seriously faulted, you see, when you say no one is perfect. And we’re all short of it in every case. In fact, that is the theme of that marvelous writing, The Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It’s been years since they used that in priesthood, but it’s the best manual in the world. That’s the theme Joseph is always hitting at—how far we are from perfection, and he’s as far as anybody else. He says we’ve got to get that through our thick heads, that we’re all seriously defective. That’s why we have the



gospel, that's why it has to be so strict. That's what Alma was talking about. If a person is pompous and pretentious, tries to be a ballet dancer or something like that when he can't, he deserves mockery. He mocks himself; you don't have to mock him. He'll take care of that. He'll make a fool of himself. You don't have to go into that. And so nobody can make a mock of his brother; don't do that whatever you do.

291 Alma 5:33 : "Behold, he sendeth an invitation unto all men ..." [here we are, the arms extending; here's the embracing. Remember, that's what Yom Kippur means, to cover with the arms first of all. That's the basic meaning—KAFARA, CAPTO, and all those words that go with cover], for the arms of mercy are extended towards them, and he saith: Repent, and I will receive you [that's what it is, remember, the ten days of repentance]. Yea, he saith: Come unto me, and ye shall partake of the fruit of the tree of life [here's another image], yea, ye shall eat and drink of the bread and waters of life freely [it's not enough to have the tree of life; it's the bread and waters of life, using Lehi's allegory here]. Yea, come unto me and bring forth works of righteousness, and ye shall not be hewn down and cast into the fire." Now he's using the vineyard image again. Notice that the vineyard is the most conspicuous thing; it's both the good and the bad. It's whatever Israel brings forth as the vineyard. In Jacob 5 is the long story of the vineyard.

291 Alma 5:36-39 And then again, "Whosoever bringeth forth not good fruit [there's another image] ... the same have cause to wail and mourn. ... Ye that have professed to have known the ways of righteousness nevertheless have gone astray, as sheep." There's another image; now it's sheep he's talking about. What is their claim? They claim that they have been righteous, but it won't work at all. They have "gone astray as sheep." That's why he's bringing them together again. So according to that in the next verse, he brings another image. Christ is the good shepherd. "Behold, I say unto you, that the good shepherd doth call you; yea, and in his own name he doth call you, which is the name of Christ;... and now if ye are not the sheep of the good

shepherd, of what fold are ye [using another one]?" The devil has his fold, too. It's yours.

291 There's no alternative ever mentioned between these two. When Alma speaks, or anybody else in the Book of Mormon, it's the one or the other. That's what we have here. It's the CALAM AL-SHAHIDA, the world which you see and know, your world, or the CALAM AL-GHAYB, the world which is the real world, the world which God knows and sees. We only see a little bit of it. When we adapt ourselves to this world, naturally it's the only world, and we're making ourselves very small.

# Lecture 47 Alma 5-10

**Good and Evil**  
**Foretelling Christ's Birth**  
**[Land of Jerusalem]**  
**[Guardian Angel Visits Alma]**  
**[Amulek's Lineage]**  
**[Amulek Sees an Angel]**

293 Alma 5:40,53 Now we're on that long fifth chapter of Alma. In verse 53 he gets specific on something. You'll notice in verses 40 to 43 he talks in general terms about evil and good. Verse 40: "For I say unto you that whatsoever is good cometh from God, and whatsoever is evil cometh from the devil [well, what is he talking about?]. ... I speak in the energy of my soul." Here he's specific; he tells what he's talking about in verse 53: "Can ye lay aside these things, and trample the Holy One under your feet; yea, can ye be puffed up in the pride of your hearts [now this is when he talks specifically about being evil]; yea, will ye still persist in the wearing of costly apparel and setting your hearts upon the vain things of the world, upon your riches?"

293,294 Alma 5:54-56 And the next verse, of course, is equality again: "Yea, will ye persist in supposing that ye are better one than another." And then you get a reflection of this persistent tension. As long as Alma's around, you're going to get this tension. You'll notice this tension and this extreme contrast. "Yea, will ye persist in the persecution of your brethren, who humble themselves and do walk after

the holy order of God, wherewith they have been brought into this church, having been sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and they do bring forth works which are meet for repentance [two totally different worlds we have here, as we mentioned before]. Yea, and will you persist in turning your backs upon the poor, and the needy, and in withholding your substance from them? [again, the distribution-of-wealth business]. And finally, all ye that will persist in your wickedness, I say unto you that these are they who shall be hewn down and cast into the fire except they speedily repent.” It’s not a stable situation at all.

294 Alma 5:57 “Come ye out from the wicked and be ye separate, and touch not their unclean things.” He wants to keep them separated. We [don’t] come out in our society anymore. We used to. The Saints got into trouble doing it; they don’t do it anymore. “The names of the wicked shall not be mingled with the names of my people.” When one is called (as many are called) to any office or calling, it’s an invitation to change your ways completely. Do we take it completely? We do for a while as missionaries. They will change, and then they go completely back again.

294 Alma 5:58 Notice he’s talking about being sanctified, being HAGIOS, being set apart, being SEGULLAH— people sealed and set apart. He’s still talking in terms of the rites of atonement here. “For the names of the righteous shall be written in the book of life, and unto them will I grant an inheritance at my right hand.” Part of the rite, of course, as we’ve mentioned before, is that everyone is registered in the book at that time. And if your name was not registered in a book, you were out of the kingdom for three years. That’s all there is to it. You had no rights whatever; you were outlawed.

294 Alma 5:59 Then he compares them with sheep. Sheep in the New World? Well, sheep is like silk, if you’ll look it up in the dictionary. There are scores of varieties of sheep. Some no more resemble sheep than other [animals] do. The llamas and the vicunas, or anything like that, are all classified as sheep. They’re grazing animals.

294,295 Alma 5:60-62 “And he commandeth you that

ye suffer no ravenous wolf to enter among you, that ye may not be destroyed.” You notice the ravenous wolf, which means acquisitive, greedy, predatory, exploitative—the ravenous wolves. We talk a lot about greed today in the front pages of journals and everything else. “And now I, Alma, do command you ...” He can command those who belong to the church; the others he simply invites, as he says here. The covenant people not only separate themselves from the world, they’re necessarily bound. They’re commanded here. “I speak by way of command unto you that belong to the church; and unto those who do not belong to the church I speak by way of invitation.” Of course, we invite the world to enter the covenants which we are commanded to obey. Or do we follow the lead of the corporate world?

295 Alma 6:3 Now we come to the sixth chapter, which is a very short chapter and simply implements just what he has said. This is how he went about doing it, he says. Alma ordained priests and elders. He went about setting up the official structure of the church, the ordinances, the priesthood, and the rites. The people who repented were duly baptized. Notice there was a cleansing of the church, straightening things out. If people wanted to join and repented, then they were baptized. On the other hand there were members of the church, who had been members all their lives. If they didn’t repent, they were cut off. See, he is straightening things out again. Alma’s strict as ever.

295 Alma 6:3 “Whosoever did belong to the church [he was cut off and rejected] that did not repent of their wickedness and humble themselves before God—I mean those who were lifted up in the pride of their hearts—the same were rejected [they were not in the records then], and their names were blotted out, that their names were not numbered among those of the righteous.” So they took the repenters in and they threw nonrepenters out.

295 Alma 6:4-6 “And thus they began to establish the order of the church in the city of Zarahemla.” That’s what it’s about. That’s how you set it up; you implement what you’ve done. And the usual routine was followed; the law

of the gospel was followed here. Notice, they're commanded to gather themselves together often and join in fasting and prayer "in behalf of the welfare of the souls of those who knew not God." So they held their meetings and their fasts as well as their ordinances.

295 Alma 7:1 Then Alma, having set things up here, departed to the city of Gideon. He came to a neighboring city, and was going to do the same thing there. He started out by telling the people of Gideon in chapter 7, "I attempt to address you in my language," which shows that they were speaking dialects. Dialects very easily spring up, as I said. These people had been here hundreds of years, and these out-settlements had become quite aloof. You can be sure they had different dialects.

295,296 Alma 7:5,6 He said, I've given up everything else. I gave up the judgment seat; it has been given to another. I've done that deliberately so that I could come and preach to you. He had left Zarahemla, and he was pleased with them. Verse 5 "My joy cometh over them after wading through much affliction and sorrow." [Now I trust it's going as well with you, he says.] But behold, I trust that ye are not in a state of so much unbelief as were your brethren." Zarahemla he had to work with. What did he mean? What is the state of unbelief? What's the wickedness? Back to the old song again: "I trust that ye have not set your hearts on riches and the vain things of the world; yea, I trust that you do not worship idols, but that ye do worship the true and the living God, and that ye look forward for the remission of your sins, with an everlasting faith, which is to come." See, if you're saved, you're looking forward to a remission of your sins; you haven't got it yet. You have them remitted, but as long as we're here in this world, we're under the troubles of our proud and angry dust. They won't fail here. Unbelief necessarily leads to setting one's heart on riches, since you must put your trust in something. Satan's doctrine, of course, is that you put your trust in them. And these things all go together. But we're not in the clear here. One's sins have not yet been remitted, as we learn in 2 Nephi 2:21 where he tells us that right up to the last day of our life we

must repent. And that's why our lives have been extended, so it gives a better opportunity.

296 Alma 7:9 Then he says an interesting thing. He talks about the Lord who's going to come. Verse 9: "Prepare the way of the Lord. ... He shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers, she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel." He talks familiarly, as if they already knew about Mary. Well, IMRA A means a human being, but it also means a woman. The regular Mary and Martha are both the same word, and they both mean woman. He shall be born of a woman, of Mary or of Miriam, at Jerusalem. They are all just words for woman. She's a special woman, and her name is Mary. He gives them the benefit of that; but they shouldn't be surprised at that.

296 And again, "born of Mary, at Jerusalem" has been a great charge against the Book of Mormon, He was born in Bethlehem. He wasn't born in Jerusalem, was he? They constantly refer in the Amarna Letters to "the land of Jerusalem" and various towns— to Bethlehem, which is in the land of Jerusalem. They always refer to "the land of Jerusalem" as city/state.

297 Alma 7:10 "She being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel, who shall be overshadowed and conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost, and bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God.... He will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people [now, this is the mission, the atoning sacrifice]. And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities." This is his task. But notice here. He could have done all this spiritually. After all, anyone with a sufficiently vivid imagination could have such an experience and go through with it, but here he must descend below all things. He would know exactly what it would be like, but that wasn't it. He must perform the thing himself, he says—must go through it himself. "And he will take upon

him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people.”

297 Alma 7:13 “Now the Spirit knoweth all things [he didn’t need to do that, he could have handled that easily]; nevertheless the Son of God suffereth according to the flesh that he might take upon him the sins of the people, that he might blot out their transgressions according to the power of his deliverance; and now behold, this is the testimony which is in me.” This is the power. He [Jesus Christ] has the power given him to do this. Because of sin, everything goes wrong. It cannot be corrected, because we go right on sinning. You can’t pull yourself up by your own bootstraps. We’re in quicksand, as far as that goes. The more you struggle, the deeper you’ll get. You’re not going to get out of it.

297 We’re not going to be able to redeem ourselves or anything like that. It’s our nature to be carnal, sensual, and devilish, and that’s all there is to it. This is [Alma’s] testimony.

297,298 Alma 7:14,15 Now, what we do is repent. Remember how Benjamin describes repentance: knowing who you are and what you are. When you know what you are, you will repent, and you’ll become humble enough. And [Alma’s] going to talk about what goes right along with this, the two rules. The two rules from Delphi were “know thyself and “nothing to the right, nothing to the left—nothing in excess.” These two rules are given right in these verses here. Verses 14: “Repent and be born again.... Be baptized unto repentance, that ye may be washed from your sins, that ye may have faith on the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world [going through the same imagery again].... Lay aside every sin ... and show unto your God that ye are willing to repent of your sins and enter into a covenant with him to keep his commandments, and witness it unto him this day by going into the waters of baptism.” Of course, they witness after that that they are willing to take upon them the name of the Son and keep his commandments which he has given them. When we



partake of the sacrament, we witness the same thing we witness at baptism. When we partake of it we renew it each time. You enter into a covenant and witness it and refresh it that way. They use almost the same words here: Witnessing unto him by water, but here it's by the sacrament.

298 Alma 7:16,17 “And whosoever doeth this, and keepeth the commandments of God ... shall have eternal life.” This is the object; this is what we're after. We're going to find out that everybody's going to have eternal life anyway. They cannot die, we learn later on. The resurrection has been taken care of. So why are we so worried about eternal life? Well, if it's going to be eternal, the quality's going to be rather important, isn't it? Where you spend it and how you spend it has a great deal to say if it's going to be eternal. The [point] is not to go on living in the sewer. That's the difference “And now my beloved brethren, do you believe these things?” he asks you. As I said before, there's never been any dispute about the atonement. It's a very interesting thing; even among the doctors of the church, that word has never been debated. “Do you believe these things?” I know them by the spirit, he says.

298 Alma 78:19 “I perceive that ye are in the path which leads to the kingdom of God.” Now he comes to the other one. Repent is to know yourself, and the other is “nothing in excess.” As I've said before, this is not just a rule for behavior—don't eat too much or drink too much or eat too little or drink too little.

299 Alma 7:20 As he says here (verse 20): “He cannot walk in crooked paths; neither doth he vary from that which he had said; neither hath he a shadow of turning from the right to the left [stay on the path; you don't go too far to the right, you don't go too far to the left], or from that which is right to that which is wrong; therefore, his course is one eternal round.” It's one round, and it's eternal. How can it be straight and round at the same time? Well, straight meaning strict, staying on the course. “The time shall come, yea, and it shall be at the last day, that he who is filthy shall remain in his filthiness.” We must break with it while

we can, he says, because this offer is not permanent. This will be changed. You reach a point of no return. Then you have to settle for something lower, and you're going to have another kind of life after that. [People] do reach those crisis points. They either go to the right or left—go too far to one side or the other. They'll stay there and stick there.

299,300 Alma 7:22,23 Now the main thing: "I have said these things unto you that I might awaken you to a sense of your duty to God, that ye may walk blameless before him, that ye may walk after the holy order of God, after which ye have been received." Again, he talks about the specific sins and names them—we just had them. But what about these virtues? What does doing right consist of? Now he makes a specific list of them. This is helpful here in verse 23: "And now I would that ye should be humble, and be submissive and gentle." Notice these aren't acts; these are states of mind. What makes a sin a sin is not what you do; what may be a virtue one day can be a vice the next. It's the state of mind that makes the difference.. Well, of course, "to the pure all things are pure," as Paul says. But to be humble is a condition, a state of mind. To "be submissive and gentle; easy to be entreated; full of patience and long-suffering; being temperate in all things; being diligent in keeping the commandments of God at all times." Here is a thing you must do: you are commanded to ask. We hesitate to ask because we're too proud to ask, as if you go as a beggar. It takes more pride to give than it does to ask. It takes more humility to ask. A proud man can give, but a proud man won't ask. It makes a difference, "asking for whatsoever things ye stand in need, both spiritual and temporal."

300 Alma 7:23,24 You have a perfect right to ask the Lord for what you need. Don't hesitate. Of course, in doing so, you look into yourself and ask yourself whether you deserve it or not. It will make you feel guilty. It will bring you around to these other things, "always returning thanks unto God for whatsoever things ye do receive. And see that ye have faith, hope, and charity." Now these are the big three. You say, "Well, here's the Book of Mormon being lifted from the New Testament." No, it isn't. Richard Reitzenstein

showed many years ago that the formula—faith, hope, and charity—is a very ancient one. It's found in Hebrew writings, and it's a formula found in the Hermetic writings quite commonly. It's not limited to the New Testament at all. It's very ancient. These three go together.

300 Alma 7:27 But notice what I notice here. I don't see in this list of virtues hard work, thrift, drive, ambition, prudence, smarts. I don't see any of that at all. You find the same thing in Isaiah. The sins Isaiah lists are the things we consider virtues. The virtues Isaiah lists are the things we consider weaknesses and wimpishness. Only a wimp would have all these things—being diligent and asking for whatever you want. Notice you're always submissive. You do the asking of what you stand in need—always returning thanks, temperate. Diligent in keeping the commandments, patient, gentle, etc. and so forth. This is what God demands of us, and what we don't give. This is a very important theme in the Book of Mormon, always having faith and charity. Verse 27: "And now, may the peace of God rest upon you, and upon your houses and lands [all things are blessed where the Saints settle, as Brigham Young says] and upon your flocks and herds, and all that you possess, your women and your children."

300,301 Alma 8:1 So he left them and went to another city. Next he went to the city of Melek. This was a very interesting mission he had in the city of Melek. What he was doing was going around establishing the order of the church in all these places. It says here [Alma 8:1]: "having established the order of the church, according as he had before done in the land of Zarahemla." Zarahemla is the model; it is just like the center stake of Zion. They're all organized on the pattern of Zarahemla here. "Yea, he returned to his own house at Zarahemla to rest himself from the labors which he had performed."

301 Alma 8:4,7 Then he decided to go to the land of Melek and look that one over, west of the river Sidon. We're told that Sidon bounded Zarahemla on the east, so he went west to Melek on the Pacific Coast side, which was

the wilderness side, too. It has always been the wilderness side, and still is. The wildest parts of Central America are all down the western side. The eastern side is where all the populations are, the cities, and this is so in the Book of Mormon. Verse 4: “And he began to teach the people in the land of Melek according to the holy order of God, by which he had been called.” [See, the west of the Sidon was by the wilderness side.] “And they were baptized throughout all the land; So that when he had finished his work at Melek he departed thence, and traveled three days’ journey on the north of the land of Melek.” He was getting up there now, and he came to Ammonihah, which was the wickedest city, perhaps, in the Book of Mormon. They were really wicked. They were worse than the Zoramites, and the people in Ammonihah were the ones that were utterly wiped out when the destruction came. They were Nephites, notice. Verse 7: “Now it was the custom of the people of Nephi to call their lands, and their cities, and their villages, yea, even all their small villages, after the name of him who first possessed them,” just as we have Brigham City, and we have Provo here. Etienne Provost, a French trapper, was the first man to settle and camp here. The man who settles it usually gets it named after him.

301 Alma 8:9 The people of Ammonihah were rough. Verse 9: “Now Satan had gotten great hold upon the hearts of the people of the city of Ammonihah; therefore they would not hearken unto the words of Alma. Nevertheless Alma labored much in the spirit, wrestling with God in mighty prayer.” Wrestling with God? Does God resist you? Do you have to resist him? No, you have to put yourself into position, in the right state of mind. Remember, in our daily walks of life as we go around doing things, we’re far removed. If you’re bowling, or if you’re in business, or if you’re jogging or something like that, doing the things you usually do, and then you have to go from there to prayer, it’s quite a transition. It’s like a culture shock if you really take it seriously. You have to get yourself in form, like a wrestler having to look around for a hold or get a grip, as Jacob did when he wrestled with the Lord. You have to size yourself up, take your stance, circle the ring, and try to find

out how you're going to deal with this particular problem. You're not wrestling with the Lord; you're wrestling with yourself. Remember, Enos is the one who really wrestled. And he told us what he meant when he was wrestling; he was wrestling with himself, his own inadequacies. How can I possibly face the Lord in my condition, is what he says. So this is what we're doing.

302 Alma 8:11,12 But they wouldn't have anything to do with him. These weren't dissenters. See, these were people who had been living alone by themselves. They broke off at an early time, and they'd had their own religion for a long time. And what's more, there's evidence later in the Book of Mormon that they had been adopting some of the earlier religions that had been there, too. We know who you are, all right, they said, no matter how hard he worked. Verse 11: "Nevertheless, they hardened their hearts saying unto him: Behold, we know that thou art Alma; and we know that thou art high priest over the church which thou hast established in many parts of the land, according to your tradition; and we are not of thy church, and we do not believe in such foolish traditions." No thank you. They were very frank about it—very rude, as a matter of fact. [There is a saying that] nothing is worse than a great man who has lost his clout, and here he had. "Thou hast no power over us." They leaned over backwards to insult him because they knew he had no power, by the constitution he himself agreed on. He could not use any religious compulsion on anyone. "And thou hast delivered up the judgment seat unto Nephihah [and you're not chief of the army anymore]; therefore thou art not the chief judge over us." He had lost his clout, and what did they do? They reviled him. They spat on him "and caused that he should be cast out of their city." They threw him out. The same thing happened to Samson, King Alfred, Ammon, and King Lear after they lost their office. It wasn't that they were just retired to nothing—they were kicked around after that. [It's as if] the people have been waiting for the time when you would retire, and they could tell you what they think of you. And this is what happened here. He had a rough time.

303 Alma 8:14,15 He was very upset. His mission had

failed. He had a “terrible anguish of soul,” as he said in verse 14. He was weighed down, and his heart was broken. He was going to leave and go home. He was met by an angel, and the angel told him to rejoice. I’m the one from whom you received your first message, he said. Verse 15: “Behold, I am he that delivered it unto you.” That’s an interesting thing. Remember in Luke when the gospel was first being established, an angel went around and visited various people, namely Mary, the shepherds in the field, and Zacharias in the temple. It was the same angel; it was Gabriel. He said, I’m Gabriel. That was his particular mission, to introduce that dispensation of time. Obviously this angel was assigned to Alma. He said, I’m the same one who visited you before, and now here I am again. He was watching over Alma. We used to say much more about guardian angels in the Church. We used to teach much more of that doctrine, always taught it to our kids. We don’t do it anymore. I don’t know why not, because it’s a very real thing, the presence of another world.

298 Alma 8:16 Well, anyway, the angel said, I’m the same one that visited you when you were a naughty boy—remember me? Now I’m visiting you in another condition. You’re the one who’s sorry now. It’s their wickedness that afflicts you now. I brought the first message: “I am he that delivered it unto you.” Now you just return to the city of Ammonihah, just go right back, and tell them they will repent or the Lord will destroy it—and he certainly did destroy it. He entered the city, and he was hungry, “and he said to a man: Will ye give an humble servant of God something to eat? And the man said unto him: I am a Nephite.” Notice that they were mixed races, mixed blood all over the place. He introduced himself as a Nephite. Although Ammonihah was a Nephite city, they were not all Nephites in it.

304 Alma 8:20 We’ll get along here now, because an interesting thing is going to happen here in the city. This man said (verse 20): “I am a Nephite [which points out some racial difference here], and I know that thou art a holy prophet of God,” because he’s been visited by the same angel. Gabriel got around in the New Testament. This

angel gets around here. Sorry he didn't leave his name. "Therefore go with me into my house and I will impart unto thee of my food." [Alma] told him about the situation, so he took him to his house. The man was called Amulek, and notice they go very strong for the mulek words. Its basic root meaning is property or possession. But it also means "king, to rule, to have power"—all sorts of things. Like the word ALEXANDER and the word MICHAEL, it means that you have power and force.

304,305 Alma 8:21-31 "And he brought forth bread and meat and set before Alma. . . . [And Alma introduced himself and said] I am Alma, and am the high priest over the church of God throughout the land. And behold, I have been called to preach the word of God among this people." And Alma tarried many days at Amulek's house. And the people got worse and worse and didn't repent. They [Alma and Amulek] went around preaching, but it didn't do any good. In verse 30 Alma and Amulek joined forces: "And Alma went forth, and also Amulek, among the people to declare the words of God unto them, and they were filled with the Holy Ghost. And they had power given unto them, insomuch that they could not be confined in dungeons; neither was it possible that any man could slay them; nevertheless they did not exercise their power until they were bound in bands and cast into prison."

305 Alma 9:1 Now, Alma preached to the people of Ammonihah. This is what he preached to them. But Amulek's story is in the chapter after that; that's the amusing story. But first Alma was preaching to them. Was it the same old thing here? Well, it was different because they put up a fight. They argued back. They shouted back and forth. It turned out to be a shouting match. Alma began to preach to the people, and he said (chapter 9, verse 1): "As I began to preach unto them, they began to contend with me, saying ..." This is Alma's own record here; before it was Moroni's record. They said, you have no clout—we don't know who you are.

305,306 Alma 9:2 "Who art thou? Suppose ye that we

shall believe the testimony of one man, although he should preach unto us that the earth should pass away?" We can't take it on your word alone. [Similarly] at the beginning of Oedipus, the prophet comes in and prophesies what's going to happen. Then he [Oedipus] says, He's only a single man; what's his prophecy worth? See, he has to have a whole college of prophets.

306 Alma 9:5 "Now they knew not that God could do such marvelous works." For them, things just happened. If marvels do happen, are they without cause? When something remarkable happens, and everything is remarkable that happens, we should consult the causes and what is behind it. It does help us. Shouldn't we ask questions? Shouldn't we be curious about things? People aren't today.

306 Alma 89:6-12-8 "And they said: Who is God, that sendeth no more authority than one man among this people, to declare unto them the truth of such great and marvelous things?" The lone dissenter is the main theme in the Book of Mormon, whether it's Lehi, Nephi, Alma, Ammon, or Enos or whoever it is. What they want is big authority, as if truth couldn't stand alone. He says, "Have ye forgotten the tradition of your fathers? ... Do ye not remember that our father, Lehi, was brought out of Jerusalem by the hand of God?" If you want to know one man alone, [remember] what he did. This is in answer to that question: Why should we believe just one man? Well, he gives them the case of Lehi. Verse 12: "He [God] has commanded you to repent, or he will utterly destroy you from off the face of the earth." Now this was to be a test case and a model, this city here. And here is the rule that's given again. "Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper in the land. . . . Inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord." Now all the promises are given with the curse in the Book of Mormon, as in the Dead Sea Scrolls. There's the BERAKAH, the blessing, but never without the QELALAH. The QELALAH is the cursing; THE BERAKATIS the blessing. The two fit right together, and they do all through the Book of Mormon. It's the condition. You don't enter a very profitable contract without a penalty



clause. If you flout the contract and break the rules, are you released then because you broke the contract? Oh, no, you have to pay a penalty for that. You go to jail for that or something else [happens].

307 Alma 9:14,18 “Inasmuch as the Lamanites have not kept the commandments of God, they have been cut off from the presence of the Lord.” Then he talks about the Lamanites here. He says, there’s still a chance for you. If there’s a chance for the Lamanites, there’ll be one for you, too. “For there are many promises which are extended to the Lamanites; for it is because of the traditions of their fathers that caused them to remain in their state of ignorance; therefore the Lord will be merciful unto them and prolong their existence in the land [they’re not the same]. And at some period of time they will be brought to believe in his word, ... and many of them will be saved.” This is the prophecy for the Lamanites, because their fathers are to blame more than anything. But, not with you, he says in verse 18: “Your days shall not be prolonged in the land, for the Lamanites shall be sent upon you [he’s going to turn the tables; these are supposedly the good Nephites he was talking to]; and if ye repent not, they shall come in a time when you know not, and ye shall be visited with utter destruction [because you’ve had the greater privilege].... He would rather suffer that the Lamanites might destroy all his people who are called the people of Nephi [remember, this is just a designation], if it were possible that they could fall into sins and transgressions, after having had so much light and so much knowledge.” He would prefer to have the Lamanites destroy them utterly if they don’t remain true and faithful. “Yea, after having been such a highly favored people of the Lord; yea, after having been favored above every other nation, kindred, tongue, or people; after having had all things made known unto them . . .” If that happens, you’re much worse off than anybody else.

307,308 Alma 9:21-23 “Having been visited by the Spirit of God; having conversed with angels, and having been spoken unto by the voice of the Lord; and having the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and also

many gifts, the gift of speaking with tongues, and the gift of preaching, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the gift of translation.” [He keeps repeating after. Notice how very powerful an orator is Alma.] Yea, and after having been delivered of God out of the land of Jerusalem [there it is again, the land of Jerusalem, not the city of Jerusalem; remember, their county house, the land of their inheritance, was in the land of Jerusalem, too], by the hand of the Lord; having been saved from famine, and from sickness, and all manner of diseases of every kind [all the things they have gone through].... And now behold I say unto you, that if this people, who have received so many blessings from the hand of the Lord, should transgress contrary to the light and knowledge which they do have, I say unto you that if this be the case, that if they should fall into transgression, it would be far more tolerable for the Lamanites than for them.” The Book of Mormon rubs this in so much; it must have something for us. It must be saying something to us. I can’t get away from that.

308 Alma 9:24,25 “For behold, the promises of the Lord are extended to the Lamanites, but they are not unto you if ye transgress [notice they’re extended to the Lamanites unconditionally, but they’re not extended to you if you transgress]; for has not the Lord expressly promised and firmly decreed, that if ye will rebel against him that ye shall utterly be destroyed from off the face of the earth?” [He can’t make it strong enough. This is the promise on the land.] And now for this cause, that ye may not be destroyed, the Lord has sent his angel to visit many of his people [see here again, an angel always comes in a great crisis to turn things around; this city is in decay and out of control; the only thing that can turn things around is the appearance of an angel, just as he turned Alma around when he was a young man] declaring unto them that they must go forth and cry mightily unto this people, saying: Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is nigh at hand.”

308 This is a mighty angel flying. This is what the angel Moroni had to preach, was this. Moroni is the man who wrote this book. What is he doing? He’s warning us all over

the place. He's the one on the Salt Lake Temple, you know; you may have seen him. And they're threatened with this. Well, would we welcome this?

308,309 Alma 9:26-30 “And not many days hence the Son of God shall come in his glory; and his glory shall be the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace, equity, and truth, full of patience, mercy, and long-suffering, quick to hear the cries of his people and to answer their prayers. And behold, he cometh to redeem those who will be baptized unto repentance, through faith on his name [and membership levels are not the decisive factors]. . . . The time is at hand that all men shall reap a reward of their works ... [whether you belong to the church or not]. ... If they have been righteous they shall reap the salvation of their souls, according to the power and deliverance of Jesus Christ.” Notice, there are just two conditions, and he told us what righteousness is. He just said, as the Lord: grace, equity, truth, patience, mercy, long-suffering. These are the characteristics the Lord has shown us, and if they're righteous, they'll reap salvation to their souls. But if they've been evil—no. Verse 30: “... bring forth works which are meet for repentance [he says] ye are a lost and a fallen people.” This is the last call, and we don't like it either. Were the people satisfied with this? This made them mad as hornets, as the next verse tells us. When he tells them frankly, he ends up by saying, “ye are a lost and a fallen people. Now it came to pass that when I, Alma, had spoken these words, behold the people were wroth with me because I said unto them that they were a hard-hearted and a stiffnecked people.”

309 Alma 10:2,3 So then Amulek stood forth and began to preach to them. Amulek introduced himself, and he is a very striking character. These vignettes, these character sketches in the Book of Mormon, are very clearly marked. He was the most respected citizen you could possibly imagine. He was a blueblood. Alma 10:2: “I am Amulek, ... a descendant of Aminadi, ... and Aminadi was a descendant of Nephi, who was the son of Lehi.” He was proud of his genealogy. And here we have an extremely important genealogical note. Lehi

was a descendant of Manasseh, who was half Egyptian. His mother was Asenath, who was of the blood of Ham, a pure Egyptian. She had to be—her father was a high priest of Heliopolis. [Lehi] was a descendant of Manasseh whose twin brother was Ephraim. We claim that we are descended from him. He was also a son of Asenath, the Egyptian woman. Verse 3: “. . . and who was the son of Joseph who was sold into Egypt by the hands of his brethren.”

309 Alma 10:4 They have the blood of Egypt in them, and they have the blood of all the Twelve Tribes from Joseph and Manasseh. And they have about everything you can imagine in the mixed blood of Egypt. We’ve seen that before. And notice he says, besides his distinguished birth and background, “I am also a man of no small reputation among all those who know me [he had a great reputation, was well known and highly respected]; ... I have also acquired much riches by the hand of my industry.” He had been a successful businessman, and made himself very rich. He had been very successful and very respected. He was la creme de la creme.

309,310 Alma 10:5,6 “Nevertheless, after all this, I never have known much of the ways of the Lord.” He said he was born in the church and knew about the gospel. How come, what’s happening here? Well, of course, here we have the parable of the sowers. The seed falls and the cares of the world make them so busy after they’ve accepted the gospel, they get lost and drop it. So he says, “I never have known much of the ways of the Lord, and his mysteries and marvelous power. ... I have seen much of his mysteries and his marvelous power; yea, even in the preservation of the lives of this people. Nevertheless, I did harden my heart [he was too busy getting rich, apparently; he wouldn’t listen to it], for I was called many times, and I would not hear [obviously, something was distracting him; he said he had gained much riches by his industry; well, his industry was distracting him].... I knew concerning these things, yet I would not know [this is the case of so many people]; therefore, I went on rebelling against God in the wickedness of my heart,” until he was journeying along and this angel

came and stopped him. See, he would have gone all the way, too. In the Book of Mormon the gap is crossed by the angel again. It's the angel that gets us off dead center when we're stuck that way, but only on great occasions.

310 Alma 10:9-13; Alma 15:16 "And the angel said unto me he is a holy man; wherefore I know he is a holy man because it was said by an angel of God" This is how he was introduced to Alma. Verse 12: "And now, when Amulek had spoken these words the people began to be astonished." Well, we may ask, incidentally, about this role model. We'll see what they do. They all turn against him. Of course they do. They began to be astonished, seeing that he was such a respectable person. The people turned against him as they had turned against Alma and insulted him. Notice that they're going to rough him up here. They try to trip him up with the cunning of their words, "that they might deliver them to their judges that they might be judged according to the law ... cast into prison, according to the crime which they could make appear or witness against them." They're going to frame them and send them to jail. Everybody turned against him. But you say, "Ah, a rich man of good family—surely his relatives and family would not turn against him." Well, come again. If you turn to Alma 15:16, you'll read: "And it came to pass that Alma and Amulek, Amulek having forsaken all his gold [he's not rich any more—just as Alma wasn't powerful any more, so they said you've lost your clout and made fun of him], and silver, and his precious things, which were in the land of Ammonihah, for the word of God [as soon as he got rid of his money, what happened then? It's the story of Timon of Athens], he being rejected by those who were once his friends and also by his father and his kindred."

310 Not only his friends rejected him, but he lost his money and his own family. His father, and his kindred will have nothing to do with him, because he lost his money—not because he was preaching the gospel. There are some marvelous psychological insights in the Book of Mormon, but I see that time is up now, and we'll continue with this scandal.

# Lecture 48 Alma 10-12

## **Zeezrom and Lawyers** **[Equity and Justice of Judges]** **[Atonement & Resurrection]** **[We are Tested in This World]**

311 I trust that you have all read Alma to the end. It's long, as you know. I'm just going to point out some things you may have overlooked. That isn't being patronizing because I have overlooked them myself for years and years, and they are important, too. Alma 10 is the legalistic chapter. It's on legalism and lawyers. It packs a real wallop and shows immense insight. This was [translated] in 1829 before Joseph Smith had had any of his experience with lawyers. He was hauled into court and went through the routine 42 times. They were always bringing him to court. Americans were just as legalistic [then] as they are today. But remember that this was written before he had any of that experience at all. He knew nothing about lawyers or anything else; he had just lived on the farm all his life. This chapter is really something, and we're on verse 13 now. They began to question Amulek using "cunning devices [that] they might catch them in their words, that they might find witness against them, that they might deliver them to their judges that they might be judged according to the law, and that they might be slain or cast into prison, according to the crime [they would make it all legal] which they could make appear or witness against them."

311 Alma 10:14 "Now it was those men who sought to

destroy them, who were lawyers.” It’s frightening because these people make the rules as they go. They’re the lawyers and they’re free to move the goal post anytime they want, so they always win

312 Alma 10:16,17; Mosiah 29:27 “They began to question Amulek, that thereby they might make him cross his words, or contradict the words which he should speak.” [That’s exactly what the lawyer is supposed to do, make you contradict yourself. But he was onto them, of course.] ... “O ye wicked and perverse generation, ye lawyers and hypocrites, for ye are laying the foundations of the devil; for ye are laying traps and snares to catch the holy ones of God.” That’s what a lawyer does; he lays traps and snares. Remember that Mosiah gave them their constitution. “Yea, well did Mosiah say ... if the time should come that the voice of this people should choose iniquity ... they would be ripe for destruction.” In Mosiah’s constitution the people chose the local judges in local elections, and it was the local judges that decided everything, after all, because they chose the chief judge and could remove him if they wanted to. So the people were responsible, and they will be responsible; that’s the whole idea of it. Not that they will always do right. He says, the voice of the people does right more often than not, but if they don’t—if you should choose iniquity—then it’s your own fault. You’ve made your own choice. If that time should come, then you would be ripe for destruction. These are the ground rules of the promise in the land.

312 Mosiah 10: 27,20 This is a very interesting thing, you’ll notice. He tells them in verse 27 that it is going to be destroyed “by the unrighteousness of your lawyers and your judges.” And notice in the next verse [verse 20] how he contrasts it here. The Lord is the judge. When the Lord judges, he judges “by the voice of his angels.” This is a different thing. The one is by the voice of the people, and the other is by the voice of angels when the Lord judges. You are going to be judged by that. “Well doth he cry unto this people, by the voice of his angels: Repent ye, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Yea, well doth he cry,

by the voice of his angels that: I will come down among my people, with equity and justice in my hands.” That’s the theme of the whole chapter; everything is on the theme of “equity and justice,” a very good study for a law review or something like that.

313 Alma 10:22 “If it were not for the prayers of the righteous ...” Then what would happen? He says, it would be as it was in the days of Noah. Remember, in the days of Noah the Lord says they bought and sold, married and gave in marriage, ate and drank. They did normal things—business as usual right up until the last minute. In one day it hit them like that. But he said this is different; this will be by “famine, and by pestilence, and the sword.” Of course, they all go together.

314 Alma 10:23 “But it is by the prayers of the righteous that ye are spared.” Remember that—there won’t be many of them around for long. This just made the people mad. Now the people were really angry with him.

314 Alma 10:24 What’s the best defense when you feel guilty as hell? Then you become offensive and indignant. Then you are self-righteous. How dare you say such things to us? Verse 24: “This man doth revile against our laws which are just, and our wise lawyers whom we have selected.” There’s your Oedipus irony again. They admit that it is their responsibility; they are taking it on themselves. Remember, at the trial of Jesus they said, “We have no other king but Caesar. Crucify him!” They brought it [the destruction] on themselves, and it’s the same thing here. We have selected the lawyers, and we’ll be responsible.

314 Alma 10:25 Then he came back to them, “O ye wicked and perverse generation, why hath Satan got such great hold upon your hearts?” . Are the poor people just victimized by Satan? Satan is a ravening lion who goes along seeking those whom he may destroy, and they become his helpless victims. Don’t fool yourself; look at this verse here. “Why will ye yield yourselves unto him that he may have power over you, to blind your eyes, that ye will not understand the words which are spoken, according to their



truth?" .

315 Alma 10:26 He won't have power unless you yield yourself up to him, and that's what they have done here. As Joseph Smith said, Satan cannot force us to sin, and God will not force our free will. So we are responsible. It is by deception that he blinds you. He uses all the correct answers to make us blind by telling us lies—lies like truth. “. . . that ye will not understand the words which are spoken, according to their truth?” You'll understand the words, but not according to their truth. You can twist them—twisting words, as he says, is the lawyer's business. He has outraged their defense; they are the untouchables. Verse 26: “For behold, have I testified against your law?” They said he had. He said, no, you are breaking the law; that's what we are testifying about. “I say unto you that the foundation of the destruction of this people is beginning to be laid by the unrighteousness of your lawyers and your judges.” This is exactly what Socrates said to his friend Gorgias long before this.

315,316 Alma 10:28-32 : “When Amulek had spoken these words the people cried out against him, saying: Now we know that this man is a child of the devil, for he hath lied unto us; for he hath spoken against our law. And now he says that he has not spoken against it.” This is the idea. This is typical legal sophistry here. He criticized the lawyers for their lawlessness, but to criticize the lawyers is to revile the law. They are the wise lawyers that [the people] had chosen. Amulek said he had not criticized the law but the lawyers. Ah, so he had lied when he said he didn't criticize the law, because he did criticize the lawyers. So they had him in a trap now. This is typical. Verse 29: “And again, he has reviled against our lawyers, and our judges. And it came to pass that the lawyers put it into their hearts that they should remember these things against him.” Joseph Smith's insight into lawyers is very good here. And verse 32 is the bottom line: “Now the object of these lawyers was to get gain [are you surprised? The bottom line was money, and here it is]; and they got gain according to their employ.”

317 Alma 11:20; Alma 10:31 “Now, it was for the sole purpose to get gain, because they received their wages according to their employ, therefore, they did stir up the people to riotings [a very profitable business]; ... therefore they did stir up the people against Alma and Amulek. (I was so anxious to get to that last verse in chapter 10 that I forgot Brother Zeezrom here.) “Now he was the foremost to accuse Amulek and Alma [he was the leader], he being one of the most expert among them, having much business to do among the people.” There it is. He had associations, he had connections, he was making a lot of money, etc.—the typical lawyer. Now we refer to him again here [in Alma 11:21].

318 Alma 11:21 He begins to argue here, and he puts up the best argument he can. “Now Zeezrom was a man who was expert in the devices of the devil, that he might destroy that which was good [he set him up perfectly].... Will ye answer the questions which I shall put unto you?” He has it all set up. He asks a very crude question here. I mean if he is trying to be subtle, isn’t this about as crude as you can get? He says, “Behold, here are six onties of silver, and all these will I give thee if thou wilt deny the existence of a Supreme Being?” In front of all those people there, you see. Would he accept a bribe as conspicuously as that after his moral tirades, etc.? Well, of course he wouldn’t. What is the guy planning to do? It lets us know what he’s planning to do. As Amulek tells him, I know you had no intention to pay. What he was going to do was to up the ante.. But Amulek said, I know you weren’t going to pay it anyway, but I’m not going to accept it whatever it is. It seems like a rather crude approach, but you can see what he was doing. He had these people in the palms of his hands. It said he had much business with the people, and he was the most skillful lawyer in the place. He was the top man.

318,319 Alma 11:23,24 “Now Amulek said: O thou child of hell, why tempt ye me? Knowest thou that the righteous yieldeth to no such temptations? [even in a prize show here] ... Nay, thou knowest that there is a God, but thou lovest that lucre more than him [it’s the money that

has spoiled him, he says]. And now thou hast lied before God unto me. Thou saidst unto me—Behold these six onties, which are of great worth, I will give unto thee—when thou hadst it in thy heart to retain them from me.” He said, of course you weren’t going to pay me that. He knew he wasn’t.

319 Alma 11:34-37 Then he starts setting forth the gospel plan. Chapters 11, 12, 13, and 14 are a very important part of the Book of Mormon. If you say the Book of Mormon contains the fullness of the everlasting gospel, this is it. This is the gospel plan, and a perfect epitome of the whole thing is given by Alma all through here. You’ll see that it goes back to the old law of Moses. It has everything in it after verse 35, following this question/answer [episode]. He starts cross examining, and Amulek is more than a match for him. Verse 34: “Shall he save his people in their sins? And Amulek answered and said unto him: I say unto you he shall not, for it is impossible for him to deny his word. Now Zeezrom said unto the people: See that ye remember these things [watch that—we’ll catch him on that]; for he said there is but one God; yet he saith that the Son of God shall come, but he shall not save his people—as though he had authority to command God.” Notice that he omits the part, “in their sins.” He just leaves that out. He says don’t say “in their sins” is a typical lawyer question. Answer yes or no; will he save his people? Well, he won’t save them in their sins. I didn’t say “in their sins”; leave that out. I’m just asking you a question. Answer me yes or no—will he save his people? Of course, it’s a conditioned answer. This is a very favorite trick of lawyers. Their tricks are all easy, foolish, and transparent. They always work though, more or less.

319 Alma 11:36 Then Amulek says you’re the one that lies “for thou sayest that I spake as though I had authority to command God because I said he shall not save his people in their sins. And I say unto you again that he cannot save them in their sins [that’s the thing he hadn’t mentioned]; for I cannot deny his word. ... Now Zeezrom saith again unto him: Is the Son of God the very Eternal Father?” This is the

crux of the Christological controversy— how can he be the Son and the Father again? He tells us here in the next verse what he is the father of. It doesn't mention the Son here— just as Joseph Fielding Smith used to teach that Jesus Christ is our father because he made possible our physical bodies here and he made possible the Resurrection. It's through him that the Resurrection is possible. Who is it that begets a person's body? Well, it's your father. He doesn't beget your spirit, but he brings forth your body. Well, Jesus Christ by his work made the Resurrection possible— the literal bringing forth of the flesh. Not flesh and blood, but of the flesh to live eternally after the Resurrection. The one that makes that possible is your real father. He is the father who makes the Resurrection possible. We are not resurrected just as spirits or ghosts; we are resurrected with a real body. In that case he is truly the father, but not of our spirits. He is never referred to as that.

320 Alma 11:39,40 “And Amulek said unto him: Yea, he is the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth, and all things which in them are.” He made the whole thing possible. And Hebrews 1:2 says the same thing. He made possible the physical resurrection. “And he shall come into the world to redeem his people.” To redeem something, as we said before, is to bring back somebody who had been there before—to bring him home again. REDEMPTIO is to buy back again. It's to buy back something that was yours before and got lost; now you buy it back again. Well, we were with Him in the eternities before this. Now we have been separated, and then we go back again. “And he shall take upon him the transgressions of those who believe on his name; and these are they that shall have eternal life, and salvation cometh to none else.”

320 Alma 11:41,42 The Atonement is limited, you notice—but everybody is going to get resurrected. This is an important thing, and he brings this out. “Therefore the wicked remain as though there had been no redemption made, except it be the loosing of the bands of death.” He couldn't buy us back if we didn't belong to him at some former time. But were we damned here? Did we separate

ourselves from him? Yes, by the Fall we were separated to learn what we have to learn. How can we be brought back? Nevertheless, whether you have been good or bad, “all shall rise from the dead and stand before God, and be judged according to their works . . . and the death of Christ shall loose the bands of this temporal death, that all shall be raised from this temporal death.” That makes him truly the Father as well as the Son. The temporal death is the death here, so there will be a physical resurrection.

320,321 Alma 11:43 “The spirit and the body shall be reunited again,” as they were here during this life. Of course, this is the ultimate question—this is the big one. These two verses here are the best answer, the best definition you will get anywhere, of what resurrection is: “The spirit and the body shall be reunited again in its perfect form; both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame, even as we now are at this time.” This is the interesting thing where he says, “The spirit and the body shall be reunited again in its perfect form.” What does this mean by “perfect form”? They would say, “Yes, the body could be restored again, but it must have all its limbs and all its joints and all in working order.” That’s what he says here, “both limb and joint,” as if they didn’t belong to the body. Well, the Egyptians, the Hebrews, and the Greeks before Homer [didn’t have a word for body]. Homer had no word for body, he used *GUIA*, which means *MEMBERS*. Then there’s the other word for *TORSO*, the *SOMA*, but the [Greek word for] body comes after Homer. It’s a very interesting thing that the ancients didn’t think of the body as one particular unit. Surprising isn’t it? They divided it up.

321 Alma 11:43 “Both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame, even as we now are at this time [notice he is making it very vivid what’s going to happen]; and we shall be brought to stand before God, knowing even as we know now, and have a bright recollection of all our guilt.” We will be right back to square one, right back where we are now. But we’ll have a bright recollection; it will all come back to us. We will take up exactly where we left off before, so nothing will be lost. [You’ll remember] everything you

experienced here, in other words. No experience and no detail of this life is wasted here. It will always be either for you or against you, even if you are guilty of wasting time, etc. It will all be with you then. It will all return, so nothing is lost here—everything is recorded. A good psychologist can get most of it out of you now just by hypnotizing you or cross-examining you, etc. So it happens.

321 Alma 11:44 “Now, this restoration shall come to all.” To everybody. Well, doesn’t that solve the question? That’s the big one. What do the Buddhists and the Moslems, etc., have to worry about? They are going to get just as much resurrected as we are. They are going to have as much eternal life as we do. Ah yes, but it’s the level. The idea, as he tells us here, is whether we have gained anything while we were here. But they are good people, too. There are righteous people among them, just as there are wicked Christians and Jews, etc. Being resurrected is the only thing that worries most people. Alma 12:9 puts them into the picture (the mysteries of God), but let’s go on and see what happens here.

321,322 Alma 11:44,45 “And even there shall not so much as a hair of their heads be lost.” That’s the expression, but that doesn’t mean we’ll have all the hair that was ever cut off. That would be something. But you recognize how these expressions are—that everything will be as it should be in its proper and perfect form, which means we’ll be very different. I won’t suffer from malnutrition there, so I won’t be so short, or something like that. “But every thing shall be restored [restored again] to its perfect frame, as it is now, or in the body, and shall be brought and be arraigned before the bar of Christ the Son, and God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, which is one Eternal God [there you go again; this is what atonement is: when you are made at-one, you are one in that case], to be judged according to their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil.” They are going to be at-one. Not one person, but one office and calling, which requires one comprehension. They comprehend the same things, etc. As our knowledge becomes more perfect, the knowledge of all of us becomes more alike. As we become

more perfect physically, we also become more alike. But the external is not what our true nature is; nevertheless, we have to have this to carry on at another level. "I say unto you that this mortal body is raised to an immortal body, that is from death, even from the first death unto life, that they can die no more." This goes for everybody here. This is really at-one-ment, coming together. In at-one-ment of the body and spirit, you bring them together to be one again. They had been separated before. That's redemption, bringing them back again. And they are at-one with each other.

322 Well, that's putting us on a different stage all right, and in that stage you are going to go on forever. So it's of enormous importance that you get started on the right foot while you are here because this is where we choose our direction. This is where you get going. That's why it pays to have the gospel. It makes all the difference in the world that people hear the gospel to know how to prepare for this. As he is going to tell us, this is the time to prepare. Now when Zeezrom heard this, he began to tremble because it was the question he thought couldn't be answered.

322,323 Alma 12:1 "Now Alma, seeing that the words of Amulek had silenced Zeezrom,... He opened his mouth and began to speak unto him." Alma gets into the picture now and goes to the heart of the matter, which Zeezrom had been avoiding. He wouldn't touch that. "He began to tremble under a consciousness of his guilt." It had all come back to him. The resurrection stops everybody cold after going through all the expository stuff. The clergy of the Catholics, Protestants, and Jews always talk around it and talk around it. They will never come right back to it and make a clear specific statement like this. You can believe this or reject it, but if there is a resurrection this is what it is. So stop messing around about it. This being Easter week, they will talk a lot about the Resurrection. "Well, it's a spiritual resurrection," etc. St. Augustine said he believed in an afterlife, but the idea of a resurrection is utterly absurd—we couldn't have flesh resurrected. Even Augustine said that.

323 Alma 12:1-5 He had an opening now, so Alma followed up “to explain things beyond, or to unfold the scriptures beyond that which Amulek had done. Now the words that Alma spake unto Zeezrom were heard by the people round about.” They were in on the discussion, too. Now as to the subtlety of the devil: “And thou seest that we know that thy plan was a very subtle plan, as to the subtlety of the devil, for to lie and to deceive this people that thou mightest set them against us, to revile us and to cast us out [not having the answers, the only excuse for religious people is to be very offended, and touchy, and dangerous]. Now this was a plan of thine adversary, and he hath exercised his power in thee.” Notice that the adversary is the adversary to Zeezrom as well as he is to us; he’s not the friend of those that follow him. It’s interesting that we “cozy up” to our adversary, the one who is really our enemy. He is our adversary, and yet we seek to make friends with him and follow him all over the place. He leads us around by the nose because we allow it.

323,324 Alma 12:6-9 “And behold I say unto you all that this was a snare of the adversary ... that he might bring you into subjection unto him, that he might encircle you about with his chains, that he might chain you down to everlasting destruction, according to the power of his captivity.” His great ego asserts itself over others—he wants to get you in. Then Zeezrom began to tremble when Alma spoke, “for power was given unto them that they might know of these things according to the spirit of prophecy. And Zeezrom began to inquire of them diligently, that he might know more concerning the kingdom of God.” Well, now there’s been a turning point; he has changed his mind. They could see through him and he knew it. So now he is going to ask some interesting questions, and he becomes a different man. It’s very interesting that this top man, this most depraved person, is going to become a zealous missionary. It’s surprising what goes on, you see. “And Zeezrom began to inquire of them diligently.” Once they start asking the questions, that’s exactly what we want. The usual thing is to ask the question and then leave before they answer it. They always do that. They ask very



shrewd and pointed questions about the Book of Mormon, etc., but do not wait for an answer. That's the thing to do [they think]. Those are the questions we want, but we want to have a chance to answer them, and want to go into the mysteries of God. He calls them "the mysteries of God." Verse 9: "It is given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him." That's true of all learning. You learn your math, or whatever it is, only according to the heed and diligence you give to it. The Lord is not going to give you something that you haven't paid attention to with heed and diligence. In section 10 of the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord "bawls out" Oliver Cowdery and tells him to think it out in his own mind. You solve the problem and then ask me if the answer is correct.

324,325 Alma 12:10,13 "And therefore, he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word." Now it keeps using the word harden all throughout here; it's a very interesting thing. Notice, "harden his heart" in verse 10 and "harden their hearts" at the beginning of verse 11. Verse 13: "Then if our hearts have been hardened, yea, if we have hardened our hearts against the word." What is this "hardening of the heart" that's used even more in the rest of the chapter? I know at my age things start hardening, and that's the point. They become less effective, less workable, etc. That's why he uses this word hardening; it's very effective. That is what happens when you get things hardened. You harden into a mold is what you do. If you've made up your mind and you won't change it at all, that's hardness of heart. You become doctrinaire; you become an ideologue, etc. This is an interesting thing to note here; notice the nice contrast between these verses: "And he that will not harden his heart, to him is given [progressively, you see] the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full." That's progressive knowledge, and notice that the next verse reverses that exactly: "And they that will harden

their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning his mysteries.” In the first one, if they don’t harden their hearts, they will progress until they know the mysteries in full. In the next one, they will get harder and harder and know less and less until finally they know nothing at all. It works in the opposite direction. You can’t be static. You can’t just stay between them; you must make your choice. As Heraclitus says, the road upward and the road downward are the same. It depends entirely on the way you are facing. You can’t compromise between them; you take the up road or the down road. You can’t go off at an angle, or anything like that. It’s the same thing here. You harden or you keep open. “Now this is what is meant by the chains of hell.” He has been using “chains of hell” just as an image here. They aren’t real chains, but this is what is meant by the “chains of hell.” It refers to them again in Alma 13:30; that’s a very common statement here.

325,326 Alma 12:13,14 “Then if our hearts have been hardened, yea, if we have hardened our hearts against the word,. . . then will our state be awful.” Then it happens. Notice in verse 14 the three things we can do that all condemn us if we harden our hearts. We have no idea of changing; we’ve made up our minds what it is. See, I may be completely wrong in everything I say. Well, all right, I’m still open. I’ll still change. I find that I’m way behind in certain things. “For our words will condemn us, yea, all our works will condemn us; ... and our thoughts will also condemn us.” These are the three things we can produce: words, works, and thoughts. The others go back to thoughts. They are the three things that motivate us, and they can all become hardened and conventionalized and in a groove. In that case “we shall not dare to look up to our God.” You can see why. “And we would fain be glad if we could command the rocks and the mountains to fall upon us to hide us from his presence.” That’s how guilty we would feel. We don’t want to face up to it. We don’t want to get out and get mobile again. Once you have been frozen in the mold, once you change the custom, the thought of having to get out and move around in the open is terrifying. We have an

awareness of our own responsibility and potential. When we haven't taken advantage of it, we feel very guilty. We do not want to look upon Him; we would prefer the rocks and the mountains to fall on us.

326 Alma 12:15 But sorry! We are ongoing creatures. You are going to live forever, he says. You can die no more. Verse 15: "But this cannot be; we must come forth and stand before him [we are not going to get out of it, so we might as well get used to it now; that's why we need to hear the gospel now] in his glory, and in his power . . . and acknowledge to our everlasting shame [we can't avoid it; we can't deny that it's all true] that all his judgments are just.... He has all power to save every man that believeth on his name and bringeth forth fruit meet for repentance." He wants to save us, and if we don't take advantage of it we are going to be very much ashamed of ourselves. So therefore the subject is repentance; we preach nothing but repentance.

326,327 Alma 12:17,18 Then he talks about the second death. The second death is on a different level, just like the morning of the first resurrection is on another level of existence permanently hereafter. The second death is when you die as to things pertaining to righteousness. You reach a point when it's easier just to go ahead with it than go back and try to reform and change things. You reach that point of no return. That's what happens here. Then you are stuck with it. You are in the second death until you don't want to change. It's the sort of thing that paranoids get. You die as to things pertaining to righteousness. When you are paranoid you go on living, but you go on living at another level. It won't be such a happy one. Eventually, you are going to have to come around anyway, so [we should] get that into our thick heads. Verse 17: "Then is the time when their torments shall be as a lake of fire and brimstone [it doesn't mean literally]; ... they shall be chained down to an everlasting destruction, according to the power and captivity of Satan, he having subjected them according to his will." He just told us what he meant by being "chained down." That is what is meant by the "chains of hell," when

you go on until you know nothing. You become completely committed [to evil], and you can't get out of the hole that you have dug yourself into. Notice how strongly he puts it in verse 18: "Then . . . they shall be as though there had been no redemption made." That's a terrible doom on you. There are people like that now, of course, as though there had been no redemption made. But they are stuck with it. In the same verse he says, "And they cannot die, seeing there is no more corruption." This is the real stroke of doom here. It's not death or destruction that's the stroke of doom. It's the fact that they can't die, and yet they are living as if there had been no redemption. They are going to have to go through an awful hell before they can get out of that.

327 Alma 12:20,21 "But there was one Antionah, who was a chief ruler among them, came forth and said unto him ..." He's indignant. He's had all he can take here, and he says, what is this stuff you are talking about here, "that the soul can never die?" Then he tells [Alma] about the cherubim and the flaming sword that guarded the tree of life. Adam was not supposed to touch the tree of life, lest he partake of it and live forever in his sins. So, [Antionah] said we can die—we are not supposed to eat of the tree of life; we are forbidden to touch it at all, so that settles that. "... lest our first parents should enter and partake of the fruit of the tree of life, and live forever? [no] And thus we see that there was no possible chance that we should live forever." The tree was set up there, but we couldn't eat from it. If we had eaten from it, then we would live forever. But he said, no, there's to be no tree. He thought that was a good argument. Alma said, ah, that's all right for now. "All mankind became a lost and fallen people." They did; that's true. They couldn't go on living that way; that's the whole point—living in the sewer.

327,328 Alma 12:24 "And we see that death comes upon mankind ... which is the temporal death [that's real]; nevertheless, there was a space granted unto man in which he might repent [that's what we are here for; this is a very important verse here]; therefore this life became a probationary state." We are being tested every minute of

the day by the choices we make, by the reactions we have, by the things we say, by the things we think about. It's like the ancient Christian doctrine of the two ways, the way to the right and the way to left, whichever they are. You must make the choice, and you may have made the wrong choice every day of your life up until now, but as long as you are here it is still not too late. You can still make the right choice—every minute you can make the right choice. It's never too late to make the right one, but you can make the wrong one—that happens, too. We have a time to repent; “therefore this life became a probationary state.” Well, it can't be anything else; it's a time to prepare to meet God. That's why we need the gospel here. We are assured of our resurrection. That's all very well taken care of, but how do we prepare for the long stretch ahead? That's what we are doing here. This is “a time to prepare to meet God; a time to prepare for that endless state which has been spoken of by us, which is after the resurrection of the dead.

328 Alma 12:25 “Now, if it had not been for the plan of redemption, which was laid from the foundation of the world, there could have been no resurrection of the dead.” This is the doctrine of the preexistence. The only alternative to preexistence is predestination. We will talk about that next time. [This verse] goes right back to the preexistence. The plan was set for redemption and for resurrection. It was already arranged before the foundation of the world that we should come back again, that we should be redeemed and raised up again. Resurrection means raised up again. “But there was a plan of redemption laid, which shall bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, of which has been spoken.”

328,329 See, that whole thing was planned ahead of time. This is the picture. He says this whole life is nothing but a preparation for the next stage—for the long haul ahead. You did pretty well on the one before. This was the teaching of the ancient Christians. Origen was the best of [ancient] Christian theologians. He says they didn't know what to make of these doctrines, but the brethren in the early church used to teach that before we came into this

world we had to pass an examination, just as we do when we leave this world. In the hereafter we will be tested in the judgment. Well, there was a judgment before we came here. That's why the various conditions in which we are born here, says Origen, are not unfair and unjust. Some people are born into a miserable condition; other people are born with great advantages and blessings. In the end we are all very much alike, though; nevertheless, this great difference has to do with what we did before. Some people are born, for example, in the Church. He said that means they had good marks before they came here. Others got pretty bad marks, so they start at a disadvantage. It's going to be the same after this [life]. If you behave yourself here in this time of probation, then you will begin with an advantage in the next world. That's why we preach the gospel.

329 Alma 12:26 "And now behold, if it were possible that our first parents could have gone forth and partaken of the tree of life they would have been forever miserable, having no preparatory state." It's too late now. You've partaken of the tree of life; you're going to live forever now, whether you like it or not, in the state you are in now. They would have lived forever in their sins; they would have been stuck as we are now. Well, that was not to happen. They mustn't touch the tree of life; it is too soon. We will come to that later when we get to the tree of life, but this has become a preparatory state. Well, it all makes very good sense, and it's the only answer, the only scenario, that anyone has ever come up with. The Christians don't have any. They say it's a mystery and a contradiction they just don't understand. They won't accept the physical resurrection or the judgment that way. They say it's a spiritual thing, etc. The great center of Easter for them is the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem; that's where they all go at Easter. That's where the Crusaders went and where everybody goes—to the Holy Sepulcher. Why go to the sepulcher? Remember, when the ladies went to the sepulcher with John there was an angel there. He said why are you looking for him here? "Why are you looking for the living among the dead? He is not here; he has risen."

# Lecture 49 Alma 12-14

**The Plan of Salvation**  
**[Adam, The First Transgression]**  
**[Predestination & Pre-existence]**  
**[Melchizedek]**  
**[Angels May Prepare the Way]**  
**[Alma & Amulek Driven Out—Later Put in Jail]**  
**[Wives & Children Cast into the Fire]**

330 Alma 12:25,26 This is the hardest chapter in the Book of Mormon. It's the one that separates us farthest from the world. It's the [twelfth] chapter of Alma, where the gospel plan is given. We are talking about free will, Adam's fall, etc. We will start with verse 25: "Now, if it had not been for the plan of redemption, which was laid from the foundation, there could have been no resurrection of the dead." So there was a plan to bring us back again. Well, why let us leave in the first place? This is the thing the Christians can't understand—to go away and fall, and then have to go through all that routine and suffering to come back again. Well, this is the only explanation you will find of it. We have it, and it's not only perfectly logical, but we can see that the ancient Christians were firmly converted to it, too. It was laid from the foundation of the world, so it goes back to the preexistence. The whole thing was planned. The word plan doesn't appear in the Bible, but everybody is using it today. They never used it before, but you notice that all the TV ministers use plan. Even the pope uses the word plan now, though it had never been used before. Here

it is here. The whole thing was planned ahead of time to prepare us for the long haul. If we are going to live through another phase of existence that goes on and on and on beyond imagination, there must be something big, some general shakeup, a big preparation, and something very new now. We come to it here. “If it were possible that our first parents could have gone forth and partaken of the tree of life they would have been forever miserable, having no preparatory state.” Remember, he [Antionah] was arguing about the tree of life being kept from us. [Alma] said yes, the tree of life was kept from us for this purpose. They would have been utterly miserable because they hadn’t had a chance to prepare yet. They would have been lost forever because they had sinned, etc.

330,331 Alma 12:27,30 : “But behold, it was not so; but it was appointed unto men that they must die [they must pass through that]; and after death, they must come to judgment, even that same judgment of which we have spoken, which is the end.” He said that men should know these things. “Therefore he sent angels to converse with them, who caused men to behold of his glory.” Without this we would never know. The angels have to intervene; you’d never [figure] this out yourself. You see where this is going to take us. Verse 30: “And they began from that time forth to call on his name; therefore God conversed with men [there have been these contacts with angels; they don’t happen all the time; they are rare, but at the great turning points they always take place] and made known unto them the plan of redemption, which had been prepared from the foundation of the world.” As we mentioned before, Origen was teaching the same thing—that we prepared to come here, just as we are preparing now to go there. That’s why we have our different ratings here, as we will have there.

331 Now the first transgression. The Lord said to Adam, I don’t want you to do this. Adam later said, but I want to do it. He had to do that to assert his will. He had a good reason to do it because he had to keep his first commandment, which was not to get away from Eve. She had been commanded to stick with him like glue. He had to do that.



Eve had [partaken], so he willingly said, well, I want to do it this way. So he did it that way. Had he sinned greatly? No, at this time we are told here that he didn't know anything about the plan. He was just doing the best he could, so to speak. After many days an angel came and explained it to him, and then Eve said, wasn't it a good thing after all? Then the Lord said to him, your transgression in the Garden of Eden has been forgiven you. We don't hold that against you at all, but you had to make that independent step. That's a very important thing, you see.

331,332 This is the ancient law of liberty. I don't know whether I should refer to that. What's the alternative to going through this? Well, it's that men are either damned from the beginning by the will of God or blessed from the beginning. That's predestination, and this is the basic doctrine of Catholics, Protestants, Moslems, and everybody else. [Writes predestination on the board.] You can leave the n off if you want. St. Augustine in the fifth century gave it its official FORM PRAEDESTINATIO AD DAMNATIONEM OR PRAEDESTINATIO AD SALVATIONEM. You are predestined to be saved or to be damned, and there is nothing you can do about it. That sounds rather rigorous, and Gottschalk of Fulda in the eighth century tried to soften it. Many attempts were made. For example, St. Augustine didn't like it. Nobody liked this doctrine of predestination. It was too hard, but there was no alternative. If they hadn't been baptized, they would be damned. If they didn't know the doctrine, they hadn't been saved. That means infant damnation, because babies haven't accepted the gospel—or been baptized is what they really mean.

333 We get away from predestination this way, and we don't find any contradictions here [in Alma] either. But notice this paradox. It looks as if we had a Catch [22] too, doesn't it? Having first transgressed, they placed "themselves in a state to act." That's why he transgressed. Why can't you act without transgressing? Well, in the presence of God are you going to sin? Are you going to misbehave yourself with God looking on? Remember when the heavenly visitors say, "We will leave you now, but we will return later on." Then

Satan steps onto the stage and says, “Now, is the great day of my power. Adam is on his own now.” It’s the same in the opening lines of the book of Moses. Remember, Moses is smitten and helpless on the ground. He can’t stir his bones for many hours, and he finally begins to move. When he is in this weakest, most helpless condition, then Satan strikes, because Moses is absolutely alone. But [Moses] can remember something of his former existence, and he begins to taunt Satan about being short on glory. He is not the real thing, and Moses recognizes him as a fake.

333 We had to be made independent this way with this act of defiance, didn’t we? But it wasn’t an act of defiance; Adam chose to go his way was all. He was independent, and he was willing to pay the price for it, too. He did, too—death was the price. That’s the wages he paid. Death came into the world. Remember: “In the day ye eat thereof, ye shall surely die.” He had been told that much, so he was willing to take the chance in that case. We have to give Adam credit for that. He went out on his own, but he had to do that. He had to be cut loose that way.

Alma 12:32 “Therefore God gave unto them commandments, after having made known unto them the plan of redemption, that they should not do evil, the penalty thereof being a second death.” The price [for that] is a second death. Once you’ve known the plan, the price is the second death. Adam didn’t know the plan when he sinned, we are told here; therefore, he was eligible for redemption. He was innocent. He was not defiant; he was being independent. But, as it says in verse 32, after you’ve known the plan then it’s the second death, which is on a different level. “For on such the plan of redemption could have no power.” They sinned in ignorance the first time, but you are not sinning in ignorance this time.

333,334 Alma 12:33,36 Then we get the word HARDEN again; every verse for the rest of the chapter has a HARDEN in it. Verse 33: “If ye will repent and harden not your hearts, then will I have mercy upon you, through mine Only Begotten Son [every verse now has mounting

severity in it here; once you know the plan, you are in the game]. Therefore, whosoever repenteth and hardeneth not his heart, he shall have claim on mercy through mine Only Begotten Son, unto a remission of his sins [it's a law of nature]. ... And now, my brethren, behold I say unto you, that if ye will harden your hearts ye shall not enter into the rest of the Lord.... He sendeth down his wrath upon you as in the first provocation ... to the everlasting destruction of your souls."

334 Alma 12:36; Jacob 6-8 Well, is this too strong: "the everlasting destruction of your souls" just for this? Notice how beautifully it's put in Jacob 6:8. This is how the Lord treats us here, which means that we deserve what we get. "Behold, will ye reject these words? Will ye reject the words of the prophets; and will ye reject all the words which have been spoken concerning Christ, after so many have spoken concerning him; and deny the good word of Christ, and the power of God, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and quench the Holy Spirit, and make a mock of the great plan of redemption, which hath been laid for you?" You've had all these chances, you see. The Lord appeals to you when he calls on you at different times. Here it is again in [Jacob 6:6-7]: "Yea, today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts; for why will ye die? For behold, after ye have been nourished by the good word of God all the day long, will ye bring forth evil fruit, that ye must be hewn down and cast into the fire?" So you reject, you despise, you deny, you quench, you mock. You'll have nothing to do with it, and it's entirely up to you. The power of redemption, of course, can have no power upon you because you don't want it.

334,335 Alma 12:37; Alma 13:1-7 We're back here [in Alma], and he is saying the same thing. Verse 37: "And now, my brethren, seeing we know these things, and they are true, let us repent, and harden not our hearts." He keeps repeating that theme—don't get hardened in your ways. That means be changeable, break the mold, get back where you should be. Alma 13:1: "And again, my brethren, I would cite your minds forward to the time when the Lord God gave these commandments unto his children [this

goes way back to the preexistence, the whole plan having been made there]. . . The Lord God ordained priests . . . to teach these things unto the people. And those priests were ordained after the order of his Son, in a manner that thereby the people might know in what manner to look forward to his Son for redemption.” Now concerning this ordaining of priests, notice that the next verse says “in the first place.” Then it says in verse 5 again “in the first place they were on the same standing with their brethren.” What is “in the first place”? Is this in the preexistent state here? These priests were ordained in the first place for that particular purpose. And what does it mean “after the order”? Notice in verse 7 it says, “This high priesthood being after the order of his Son, which order was from the foundation of the world; or in other words [we are not talking about a time sequence at all], being without beginning of days or end of years, being prepared [for how long?] from eternity to all eternity, according to his foreknowledge of all things.”

335 This is the timeless, ongoing plan of which the priesthood is a conductor of power or energy. But “after the order of something” is to share in its nature, to share in its basic qualities, etc. We’re all after the particular order of man, as Aristotle would say, but we are all individuals, too. What is it that makes you individual? John Eccles is the great authority on the brain, and he gave some talks here. He said it’s that great mystery, the ultimate awareness of self, the ultimate consciousness. It’s the absolute mystery of consciousness. If you could share that with somebody, then there would be a real atonement. Then you would be at-one, wouldn’t you? Then you would be one. To all effects and purposes, you would be one person because you would be of one mind. Well, we are told that the people in Zion are “of one heart and one mind.” Well, your mind is what you are; it’s all you are. If you were of one mind with somebody else, [you would be one]. You have to read 3 Nephi 19 and the Gospel of John, chapters 13-17. He devotes all those chapters just to show how the Father and Son are one, how we become one with them in time, and what it means by “becoming one.” That’s it. If you become of one heart and one mind, how can you become more one than that, as

the Father and the Son are? You can be separate persons at the same time. He is talking about that here in verse 2: "... thereby the people might know in what manner to look forward to his Son for redemption [the priesthood represents the Son here]. And this is the manner after which they were ordained—being called and prepared from the foundation of the world [eternity to eternity—this is the way it has always been] according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works; in the first place being left to choose good or evil."

335,336 Alma 13:3 They had earned a place in the priesthood here because of something righteous they had done in the first place. That's very interesting because SP TPY is a very favorite expression with the Egyptians—at the time of the PW T or the SP TPY. It means "the first place, in the preexistence, at the time of the Great Council of the PSD T Verse 3: "... in the first place being left to choose good or evil." Notice "being left." When God leaves you, then you can choose good or evil. Leave me alone if I'm going to choose [between] good and evil. These people way back there were left to choose good or evil, and they chose good. You are the one that makes the decision. When you are pulled equally in two directions, who decides which direction you go? You receive countless impulses and impressions all day long, but you can only focus on one at a time. Which do you choose to focus on, to make all the others just side issues or something behind you? The other becomes incidental, just a framework for that. You'll concentrate on the thing that you want to. That decides what you will do. Your mind flits around with tremendous speed, like your eyes, and decides what you like to look at and what you are going to do. That's why anything like drugs [are so harmful]. That's why the Word of Wisdom is so important—that we be absolutely cold sober. That's why in the temple we have no kind of narcotics—I mean no music, no colored lights, no processions, no gorgeous costumes, no incense. John Chrysostom wrote on that in the fifth century when he opposed introducing images and big pictures into the churches, etc. He said that people in church start getting interested in the arts and so forth.

336 Alma 13:4 “And thus they have been called to this holy calling on account of their faith [they had faith at that time], while others would reject the Spirit of God on account of the hardness of their hearts and blindness of their minds.” Well, why were they hard and blind? I don’t know; ask them. It’s the mystery of iniquity. Why do we choose good or bad? You have it in yourself—you know.

337,338 Remember, the return of the gospel in every dispensation has always come as a surprise because men have been so far off. There has been a great cultural shock. The angel always has to say, “Don’t be afraid—this is all right. I’ve come to give a message.” It’s a great culture shock; they were not used to anything like this. This is what Joseph Smith went through, and Oliver Cowdery had a taste of it here where he said, “On a sudden, as from the midst of eternity, the voice of the Redeemer spake peace to us, while the veil was parted and the angel of God came down clothed with glory, and delivered the anxiously looked for message, and the keys of the Gospel of repentance. What joy! what wonder! what amazement! While the world was racked and distracted—while millions were groping as the blind for the wall, and while all men were resting upon uncertainty, as a general mass, our eyes beheld, our ears heard, as in the ‘blaze of day’; yes, more—above the glitter of the May sunbeam, which then shed its brilliancy over the face of nature! Then his voice, though mild, pierced to the center, and his words, ‘I am thy fellow-servant,’ dispelled every fear [there’s always that, you see]. We listened, we gazed, we admired! Twas the voice of an angel from glory, ‘twas a message from the Most High! And as we heard we rejoiced, while His love enkindled upon our souls, and we were wrapped in the vision of the Almighty! Where was room for doubt? Nowhere; uncertainty had fled, doubt had sunk no more to rise, while fiction and deception had fled forever! [He apostatized later, but he came back and always testified to this.]

338 Alma 13:10-12 Now he’s going to tell about Melchizedek here. Alma 13:10: “... they choosing to repent and work righteousness rather than to perish.” You must

make this choice, you see. So they were “washed white through the blood of the Lamb [that’s the Atonement we were talking about]. Now they, after being sanctified by the Holy Ghost, having their garments made white, being pure and spotless before God, could not look upon sin save it were with abhorrence.”

339 Alma 13:14 This is what you must do, he says in verse 14: “Yea, humble yourselves even as the people in the days of Melchizedek.” Then he tells about Melchizedek and his people. These people were as bad as they could be, yet they were saved. What this shows us is that it is possible, making all eligible for judgment. If it is possible for the most wicked to become righteous, as Jeremiah says, then we are all responsible for not becoming righteous. Don’t say you “have stepped in too far, that wade no more would be as tedious as go o’er.”

339,340 Alma 13:17 “And his people had waxed strong in iniquity and abomination; yea, they had all gone astray; they were full of all manner of wickedness; But Melchizedek having exercised mighty faith, and received the office of the high priesthood according to the holy order of God, did preach repentance unto his people. And behold, they did repent.” Notice that this world doesn’t have to be an evil place. It certainly is that, but it doesn’t have to be. We are capable of much better things, all of us all the time. It took Abraham and Melchizedek to get the world off dead center, because once you get in your habits, once you get rooted in, these things become institutionalized, etc. What can shake them? They had to make the first move though, and then God spoke to them. Remember, there must be a stirring below before there can be a stirring above. Abraham prayed for a long time, as we read in [Abraham 2:12], “Thy servant has sought thee diligently; now I have found thee.” You seek before you find, you knock before it is opened, and you ask before you receive. But you make the first move; the miracle of Abraham was that he did. Melchizedek did the same thing. One person makes a difference. That’s a very strong theme in the Book of Mormon—the lone man against the system—whether it’s Alma, or Lehi, or Nephi, or

the brother of Jared, or Ammon. It's all what one man can do.

340 Alma 13:19 "Now, there were many before him, and also there were many afterwards, but none were greater." That's an interesting thing. Isn't that rather a vague term? What do they mean by great! [Great Leaders] had this obligation to act. Success is not the test. They were generous, liberal, and noble characters. Yet they were able to accomplish great things that other people weren't able to [accomplish] because they wouldn't make the concessions.

340 He [Mormon] talks about this greatness. There were none greater than Melchizedek. What did he do? He saved his people; he worked his head off for them. He preached repentance and they repented. With the wickedest people on earth, he must have done an awfully good job. It was the same thing with Enoch. The Lord told Enoch that there is no end to the workmanship of His hands; He has created worlds without end. "And among all the workmanship of mine hands there has not been so great wickedness as among thy brethren (Moses 7:36)." There's only a glimmer of decency anywhere anymore. Of course, there are people that mean well, etc., but as far as the world as a whole goes, "darkness covereth the earth and gross darkness the minds of the people" (D&C 112:23).

341 Alma 13:20 "Behold, the scriptures are before you; if ye will wrest them it shall be to your own destruction." It can be done, just as it can be done with the Constitution or anything else—you can wrest them. How can you avoid that natural tendency to wrest them in your own interest? Of course, take them in their full context and with prayer.

341 Alma 13:22 Jacob 7:26 "Yea, and the voice of the Lord, by the mouth of angels, doth declare it unto all nations; yea, doth declare it, that they may have glad tidings of great joy." Well, that is what the angels declare in Luke 2:10. This is a case of biblical parallelism; this is not taken out of the New Testament. Biblical parallelism requires that you reinforce every verb. The Arabs must do it with a MASDAR it's a rule. You wouldn't say, "He rejoiced



greatly.” You would say, “He rejoiced a great rejoicing.” You wouldn’t say, “He brought very joyful tidings.” You would say, “He brought tidings of great joy.” This is in form, as I said. He is not lifting anything from Luke. “Yea, and he doth sound these glad tidings among all his people, yea, even to them that are scattered abroad upon the face of the earth; wherefore they have come unto us [the Book of Mormon is not provincial, you notice]. And they are made known unto us in plain terms [this gospel he has been talking about is not so difficult], that we may understand, that we cannot err; and this because of our being wanderers in a strange land.” After five hundred years are they still wanderers in a strange land, as Jacob [7:26] said, “a lonesome and a solemn people”? They could still be nomads. The two civilizations mix all the time; they are both nomadic. They have their flocks, and we will read a lot about flocks pretty soon.

341,342 Alma 13:23,26 “Therefore, we are thus highly favored, for we have these glad tidings declared unto us in all parts of our vineyard. For behold, angels are declaring it unto many at this time in our land.” They are preparing the people for his [the Savior’s] coming. You see that angels are always for special events. Alma refers often to angels because he has seen them and conversed with them. “And it shall be made known unto just and holy men, by the mouth of angels [only just men who can be trusted], at the time of his coining.... I wish from the inmost part of my heart... that ye would hearken unto my words, and cast off your sins, and not procrastinate the day of your repentance.” Of course, it’s important that you never procrastinate when you are given a commandment. Should Nephi have waited before going back to Jerusalem? He might have said, well, I’ll wait until things calm down and the coast is clear. Then it will be safer to go back to Jerusalem. No, he said, if the Lord commanded me to do that, he will give me a way of doing it, so I’ll do it—and he did it. That’s the way we should do. We must not procrastinate keeping the commandments, whether they are the covenants we have made or anything else.

342 Alma 13:28,30 : “Becoming humble, meek, submissive, patient, full of love and all long-suffering.” Here are these traits again that we regard as so wimpish. Is that the way you claw your way to the top? No, you don’t. “Having faith on the Lord” and hope and love. Notice he uses love in the place of charity here, which is the way they now translate it in the New Testament. In the new Revised Translation they say, “faith, hope and CARITAS, which is love. He has it here as “faith, hope, and love,” showing the words can be used interchangeably. Then he talks about being “bound down by the chains of hell” and suffering the second death. This is the ultimate condition of being immobilized, petrified, mummified, hardened, institutionalized, and all those things. That’s the alternative.

343,344 Alma 14:2-7 Some of them began to search the scriptures, but, of course, the more part of them didn’t like Alma at all. That’s not what they were looking for—not in the least. They said he “had reviled against their lawyers and judges. And they were also angry with Alma and Amulek; and because they had testified so plainly against their wickedness, they sought to put them away privily”—with as little trouble as possible. That’s the stock solution, without any fuss—just get rid of them privily, you see. So they took them before the chief judge and said they “had reviled against the law,” etc. They said what he [Alma] had been teaching: “that there was but one God, and that he should send his Son among the people, but he should not save them.” They misunderstood, but Zeezrom knew what was going on. He had already had the discussion, and he knew how the brethren were being framed here. Verse 6: “And he also knew concerning the blindness of the minds, which he had caused among the people by his lying words; and his soul began to be harrowed up under a consciousness of his own guilt.” He said, “Behold, I am guilty, and these men are spotless before God [as Judas did]. And he began to plead for them from that time forth; but they reviled him, saying: Art thou also possessed with the devil?” If they admit he was wrong, they would admit they were wrong because he was their leader. They were following him all the way. So they stoned him, and he got

out of the place.

344 Alma 14:8 Now we have the most painful episode from the Book of Mormon. You think this is painful, inhuman, and unnatural. Well, look at it! Verse 8: “And they brought their wives and children together, and whosoever believed ... in the word of God they caused that they should be cast into the fire; and they also brought forth their records which contained the holy scriptures, and cast them into the fire also, that they might be burned and destroyed by fire.” They had a typical auto-da-fe. That’s happened a hundred times in history. Our enlightened race has done that sort of thing. This reads like some of the events of the Conquistadors when they would pile them all together in the fire. That’s what happened to the Waldenses. They [the persecutors] would get the whole town—men, women, and children—especially the women and children. (The men were out fighting in the hills; they were the Vaudois.) They would burn them all with all their scriptures and everything else, because you weren’t supposed to read the Bible.

345 Alma 14:11 God has always permitted the great religious persecutions. Religion has been the main cause of persecution. He intervenes at times. He [isn’t] going to intervene here. But he explains why this is. Verse 11: But Alma said unto him [this is why] .. . and he doth suffer that they may do this thing, or that the people may do this thing unto them, according to the hardness of their hearts, that the judgments which he shall exercise upon them in his wrath may be just; and the blood of the innocent shall stand as a witness against them, yea, and cry mightily against them at the last day.” If it had been their intention to do that and they hadn’t been able to carry it out, it would have been the same thing. Then they put them [Alma and Amulek] in jail.

## Lecture 50 Alma 14-17

**Alma, Amulek, and Zeezrom**  
**[Alma, Amulek Broke the Bonds]**  
**[Earthquake Kills the Guards]**  
**Ammon among the Lamanites**  
**[Zeezrom Healed by Alma]**  
**[Preaching Against Meanness or Inhumanity]**  
**[Lamanite Civilization Compared to Egyptians]**  
**[Sons of Mosiah & Ammon preach**  
**to the Lamanites]**  
**[Waters of Sebus Organized Game]**

348 Alma 14:8,14 Alma and Amulek had witnessed that auto-da-fe, that horrible thing which I assure you is quite routine in religious history. Irony, isn't it? They are all religious, these auto-da-fes— the burning of women and children and books in big piles. It has happened not once but hundreds of times. It happened anciently, too. Anyway, they [Alma and Amulek] found themselves in the jail, and they got some rough treatment there. It was a sort of SS prison. The judge came to Alma and Amulek and kept hitting them in the face, which is the usual procedure to get a person to talk—they slap them, you know. Verse 14: “After what ye have seen, will ye preach again unto this people that they shall be cast into a lake of fire and brimstone?”

349 Alma 14:15-18 The hardest test of all is holding back. It's not blowing up or doing violence. This is the

test to which they are being subjected now in any action. This is where the Latter-day Saints historically have been repeatedly tested and stood up to the test very well. The times they didn't go to war were the times they always won. Then the other times when they blew their tops, it was not so good. Alma is being tested here to the breaking point. The judge said, "Behold, ye see that ye had not power to save those who had been cast into the fire; neither has God saved them because they were of thy faith." You saw what happened, etc. This judge was after the manner of Nehor. Notice, the [order of] Nehors is a permanent establishment which begins way back in the first chapter of Alma. But Alma and Amulek "answered them nothing." That was a severe test. After they had been cast into prison three days, the lawyers and judges came to work on them in the manner of the SS. We do this in police states, etc. And they were all professors of Nehor, too. It was a religious persecution because the priests came along, "many lawyers, and judges, and priests, and teachers, who were of the profession of Nehor." This is religious persecution by the establishment. The burning was an auto-da-fe. But they answered nothing, and that's infuriating. Then they came again on the morrow and still worked on them. "How shall we look when we are damned?" they say. They are losing control now and getting funny. This is Galgenhumor so to speak. This thing went on for many days.

350 Alma 14:24-27 Well, here's the old chestnut [in verse 24]: "If ye have the power of God deliver yourselves from these bands." They asked Jesus to bring himself down from the cross if he could. And, of course, they asked for a sign. They all went forth and smote them again, and this routine went on until Alma and Amulek had had about enough. Then they rose and stood on their feet. Verse 26: "And Alma cried, saying: How long shall we suffer these great afflictions, O Lord?" They broke the bonds, which they could not have done by their own strength. When the people saw that they were terrified and tried to put as much distance as they could between them and Alma and Amulek. So what did they do? They all made for the gate. There was a rush and there was an earthquake. You

notice that miracles are in the timing, not in the event. This was earthquake country. It's not surprising that there was an earthquake, but just at that moment was when it was helpful. They all made a rush for the gate, so naturally they crowded the exit. They jammed the exit, nobody could get out, the gate collapsed, and they were all killed there. The only safe people were Alma and Amulek who stayed behind. [The people] tried to get as far from them as they could.

350,351 Alma 14:28 As I said, it's the timing not the event. We can think of the thundering legion and the Red Sea, the flooding of the Jordan River, and the quail at Sugar Creek. All these miracles are ordinary events that happened, but at a very convenient time. That's the way it goes. This was a very convenient one, too. Of course, the miraculous part is that the Lord can foresee it. He arranges our affairs and manages that we will be there when it happens. Verse 28: "And the prison had fallen to the earth, and every soul within the walls thereof, save it were Alma and Amulek, was slain," because they were by themselves in the dungeon. They had been left there alone. Well, when there was a great crash and the prison came down, the people all came running together to see what was going on. When they saw Alma and Amulek emerging, they ran, too. They were terrified at the sight. So they [Alma and Amulek] proceeded calmly to the land of Sidom in the next chapter.

351 Alma 15:1 You notice we get these forced separations of people, which are very important, especially in religious history. Ammonihah was going to be completely destroyed, but all the people who wanted to follow Alma and Amulek were driven out. They were forced to go out and settle elsewhere, and they did. Alma 15:1: "And behold, there they found all the people who had departed out of the land of Ammonihah, who had been cast out and stoned, because they believed in the words of Alma." They were in another city, the city of Sidom. They had settled there. It was a forced separation.

351,352 Alma 15:3-5 Well, Zeezrom was there in

Sidom; it was a safe place for these people. Sidom was a tolerant city, apparently. Zeezrom was there sick of a burning fever. He was obsessed with guilt, which drove him out of his mind. His fever was actually an escape because he wanted to die. Verse 3: "And this great sin, and his many other sins, did harrow up his mind until it did become exceedingly sore, having no deliverance [he couldn't stand it]; therefore he began to be scorched with a burning heat." The fever was part of his sickness which he brought upon himself. The brethren went to the house of Zeezrom and found him on his bed. When he saw them he felt there was a chance for life, and he asked to be healed by them. "And his mind also was exceedingly sore because of his iniquities." See, he was out of his mind. He was having terrible mental anguish because of the things he had done. This was the cause of his sickness; this will bring it on every time. When he saw the brethren, he asked them to heal him.

352 Alma 15:6,8 "Alma said unto him, taking him by the hand: Believest thou in the power of Christ unto salvation?" And verse 8 says, "If thou Believest in the redemption of Christ thou canst be healed." He is sick to the point of death and destruction, but salvation is to be saved from any dire condition you are in. From any desperate end to which you might come the power of Christ will save you. Here he is right in the depths, and [Alma] is saying, do you believe in the power of Christ to save you? "And he answered and said: Yea, I believe all the words that thou hast taught." This means if you believe it, you can come back, they say. Verse 8: "And Alma said: If thou believest in the redemption of Christ thou canst be healed." REDEMPTIO means "to buy back, to let you in again, to take you back home again" like the prodigal son. He [the Savior] will do it as long as you repent. As long as you are here, you can do it. It's redemption, he says, according to the faith. Is faith the power that does that, or is it Jesus Christ or what? Well, faith is the power that plugs us in; it's not the power [that heals]. It plugs us into the circuit, so to speak. The power is always there; we are surrounded by an enormous amount of power all the time. By applying faith we make it accessible to us; we make it useful for us. We are able to

plug in, to use a vulgar expression, but that's the sort of thing you do. You open your mind to faith, and then you are able to do it, remembering this.

352 Alma 15:11 “And when Alma had said these words, Zeezrom leaped upon his feet, and began to walk; and this was done to the great astonishment of all the people; and the knowledge of this went forth throughout all the land of Sidom.” He arose on his feet and began to walk. But remember, Alma was just as guilty as Zeezrom was. Alma, who saved him, had been just as guilty. He had done just as dirty things, and he had less reason to, as a matter of fact, because his father was the head of the church. Zeezrom's father wasn't. So Zeezrom decided to walk.

But remember this tremendous power that surrounds us.

353 Alma 15:12 “And Alma baptized Zeezrom unto the Lord; and he began from that time forth to preach unto the people.” Then he established a church there “for they did flock in from all the region round about Sidom, and were baptized [they were very successful]. But as to the people that were in the land of Ammonihah [the city these people had left], they yet remained a hard-hearted and a stiffnecked people.” You couldn't move them at all. They were rooted in the profession of Nehor. What was it that made this Nehor business so appealing anyway? Well, we saw it back there in Alma 1:3 and following. In the first chapter of Alma it tells us that it was ceremonial, it was soothing, it was undemanding, it was flattering. That's the kind of religion you want. You can rationalize anything you want with that, and these people were also very pious like the Zoramites.

353 Alma 15:16 Here's this very pointed passage in verse 16. Remember it telling what a rich, important man Amulek was, and how everybody envied him, like Oedipus? He was the blue blood of the city, a direct descendant of Nephi, highly respected for his labor. He had made himself rich, and everybody thought a lot of him. But to go out with Alma he got rid of all his swag, and this is what happened. “Amulek having forsaken all his gold, and silver, and his



precious things, which were in the land of Ammonihah, for the word of God, he being rejected by those who were once his friends and also by his father and his kindred.” Not only his friends cut him off cold when he didn’t have any more money, his family cut him off cold when he didn’t have any more money. Well, he had gotten his money by hard work, etc. They were doing the right thing [in their eyes]. I guess they all clamored to get the dough. Then they all went to court.

353,354 Alma 15:17 Exodus 30 They established the church in Sidom. The people assembled themselves together to worship in sanctuaries before the altar. Notice, this is the kind of cult they have here. In the law of Moses the altar is not necessary for sacrifice, but it is necessary. It’s very interesting. Exodus 30, for example, tells us that the primary purpose of that altar isn’t for sacrifice. But, as we use it in the temple, it is a centering for activities. In the temple an altar is where you bring things and receive things. It is a table; a table is where you share things—a table to which you bring things and from which you take things. It’s around the table, and that’s what an altar is. They “began to assemble themselves together at their sanctuaries to worship God before the altar, watching and praying continually, that they might be delivered from Satan, and from death, and from destruction.” So the church was established and running in this place.

354 Alma 15:18; Alma 16:1,5 Then Alma took Amulek back home to his own house. They are going to take a rest now. You notice that they are not back very long when suddenly war comes. On the “fifth day of the second month in the eleventh year, there was a cry of war heard throughout the land.” This is interesting because Clausewitz assures us that war can never start suddenly like this. This started all of a sudden, but what it was is a typical Lamanite war. It was a GHAZA. Our word raid comes from the Arabic word GHAZA. It’s a raid for slaves. This was a slave raid, so surprise was everything here. The whole purpose was that. Look, for example, in verse 5. “They went unto him and desired of him to know whither the Lord would that they

should go into the wilderness in search of their brethren, who had been taken captive by the Lamanites.” They [the Lamanites] didn’t stay and fight. They went off with the brethren. Now Alma is going to pursue them in search of the captives to bring them back again.

354 Alma 16:5-8,3 Then in the next verse it says the same thing: “And there the Lord will deliver unto thee thy brethren who have been taken captive by the Lamanites.” So it was a slave raid, which is the main purpose of barbaric wars most of the time. And again when it is completed, we have here in verse 8: “And they came upon the armies of the Lamanites, and the Lamanites were scattered and driven into the wilderness; and they took their brethren who had been taken captive by the Lamanites, and there was not one soul of them had been lost that were taken captive.” So it was a slave raid. They got the slaves back, but they had the help of the Lord in doing it so it wouldn’t grow to a large, nasty war. The Lamanites swept down on the city of Ammonihah and wiped that out. Verse 3: “And now it came to pass, before the Nephites could raise a sufficient army to drive them out of the land, they had destroyed the people who were in the city of Ammonihah, and also some around the borders of Noah, and taken others captive into the wilderness. Now it came to pass that the Nephites were desirous to obtain those who had been carried away captive into the wilderness.” That was the issue; it was slaves.

354,355 Alma 16:5 They appointed a captain, and his name was Zoram. That name means “refreshing rain.” After a dry winter or drought when you have a strong rain, it is called a zoram. As you would expect, it’s a popular name with these people. And he had two sons, Lehi and Aha. They were warriors, too, Lehi and Aha. It was a very common name. Zoram went to Alma “to know whither the Lord would that they should go into the wilderness in search of their brethren.” You consult the Lord if you do, and he does that here. He consults the high priest to ask where they should go in search of their brethren. That’s what the operation is to be. It’s to be a search and rescue, not a search and destroy. That’s what they did. They inquired of the Lord

and found where they were. He told them what the plan [of the Lamanites] was; they nipped the plan in the bud. "And Alma returned and said unto them: Behold, the Lamanites will cross the river Sidon in the south wilderness [where they were least expected], away up beyond the borders of the land of Manti. And behold there shall ye meet them, on the east of the river Sidon, and there the Lord will deliver unto thee thy brethren who have been taken captive by the Lamanites."

355,356 Alma 16:9,11 In verse 9 we have the cursed town of the Ammonihah, where all the people were destroyed. "But behold, in one day it was left desolate." Here's an interesting thing. They are going to give it a name; they are going to call it desolation. Verse 11: "Nevertheless, after many days their dead bodies were heaped up upon the face of the earth.... And now so great was the scent thereof that the people did not go in to possess the land of Ammonihah for many years. And it was called Desolation of Nehors; for they were of the profession of Nehor, who were slain; and their lands remained desolate." This is a Book of Mormon custom—"the land desolation." There is lots of desolation and lots of land Bountiful here. "And their lands remained desolate."

356 Alma 16:13 "And Alma and Amulek went forth preaching repentance to the people in their temples, and in their sanctuaries, and also in their synagogues." This is an interesting reference to synagogues. A Jew might ask you, "Well, isn't that premature? The synagogue didn't exist until after the fall of the temple. The temple is where the Jews met. After that they met in the synagogues. Synagogue is the Greek name for it, which simply means "the place where you assemble, a QAHAL, a church."

356,357 Alma 16:15,16 Alma and Amulek went forth, and also many more went forth to preach. So they started a motion going. In verse 15 many went forth to preach after their example. So they established the church throughout all the land, and it "became general throughout the land, in all the region round about, among all the people of the

Nephites [this is wonderful; this movement spread] And there was no inequality among [all the people].” Whoever thought it would end up that way? But there was still preparation, and we are still being prepared. “The Lord did pour out his Spirit on all the face of the land to prepare the minds of the children of men, or to prepare their hearts to receive the word which should be taught among them at the time of his coming.” That was to be seventy-eight years later. (We are still being prepared; we haven’t gone all the way.) “... and as a branch be grafted into the true vine, that they might enter into the rest of the Lord their God. Now those priests who did go forth among the people did preach against all lyings, and deceivings, and envyings [What is wickedness? This sort of thing], and strifes, and malice.”

357 What one word would you use to cover all this? I would say meanness or inhumanity. Remember, the Lord told the Apostles that there are two commandments on which all the law and the prophets hang. If you keep them, you don’t need to worry about the others. The first is “thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself (Matthew 22:37-39). If you do that you will have not the slightest desire or inclination to break any of the other commandments. You won’t commit murder or you won’t steal or you won’t lie if you love your neighbor as yourself. That goes for everybody. This is what they were preaching [against], this meanness. Notice that very few of these things are against the law. You can’t put a person in prison for these things, and yet these are the real sins.

357 Alma 16:20 “And many of the people did inquire concerning the place where the Son of God should come.” They naturally wanted to know since the coming of Christ was the big thing. Where would he come and when would he come? Will we get to see him? “And they were taught that he would appear unto them after his resurrection.” Well, that satisfied them. He wouldn’t appear to them here, but after the resurrection he would, they were told. “And now after the church had been established throughout all

the land—having got the victory over the devil [that's the ideal], and the word of God being preached in its purity in all the land, and the Lord pouring out his blessings upon the people—thus ended the fourteenth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi. This is a good time to send out missionaries to the Lamanites, so that's what they are going to do. Everybody at home was sort of getting brought into line.

358,359 Alma 17:2,4 Alma journeyed and met his old brethren. Notice what they were. Verse 2: "And they were men of a sound understanding and they had searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God." Notice that "sound understanding." They were not hysterical, theatrical, fanatical, or evangelical types at all. They were men of sound understanding, and they searched the scriptures. That's what you go by. And they fasted and prayed; "therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation. This does not supersede the scriptures, you notice. They searched the scriptures, and therefore had the spirit of revelation. The two always go together, as we mentioned last time. Here's how long they had been away. Verse 4: "And they had been teaching the word of God for the space of fourteen years among the Lamanites [they were really dedicated; when they went on their missions, they went]... For they had many afflictions; they did suffer much, both in body and in mind."

359 Alma 17:8 They had refused the kingdom. Remember, they were the king's sons. They were eligible and in line for the throne, but it's a republic now. How did they support themselves? Well, they took spears and bows and provided food for themselves. They went without purse or script. Naturally, they visited towns and villages and were fed by the people because they made many contacts, etc. This happens, too. Verse 8: "And thus they departed into the wilderness with their numbers which they had selected, to go up to the land of Nephi, to preach the word of God unto the Lamanites." They departed and a troupe went up to the land of Nephi. Now they are going to convert the Lamanites, and this is going to be a hard thing. The people

of Ammonihah were bad enough. “And they fasted much and prayed much that the Lord would grant unto them a portion of his Spirit to go with them ... that they might be an instrument in the hands of God to bring, if it were possible, their brethren, the Lamanites, to the knowledge of the truth, to the knowledge of the baseness of the traditions of their fathers, which were not correct.”

359 Alma 17:12 Now what are the chances of convincing them of that? In chapters 27 and 28 it talks about those traditions. The Lord visited them with his Spirit. What about these traditions? In Alma 18:4 it says, “And now, when the king heard these words, he said unto them: Now I know that it is the Great Spirit; and he has come down at this time to preserve your lives, that I might not slay you as I did your brethren. Now this is the Great Spirit of whom our fathers have spoken.” They talk about the Great Spirit later on. We’ll see that there is going to be a lot of talk about the Great Spirit, which is very important for us today. Well, the Spirit of the Lord visited them, and they went to the Lamanites. They had some success, but it took a lot of patience and suffering and good example. It says in verse 12 that they “took courage to go forth unto the Lamanites to declare unto them the word of God.” Then they decided they could be more effective if they could spread out because they would cover more ground. So they separated themselves and went alone.

359,360 Alma 17:14 This is about as good a description of Lamanite civilization as you can get, here in verse 14, the combination of qualities. We have come to regard the acquisition of riches and finery as a mark of civilization. On the contrary, they are a mark of barbarism, as you read in Beowulf, etc. They are not a gauge of civilization, but the opposite. What a difference between an Egyptian and a Mayan procession! With the Egyptians everyone, including the king, was very simply dressed. A simple basic white slip would do for the nobility. But have you seen the way the Mayan and the Aztec nobility got themselves up? I mean a walking Christmas tree is no exaggeration. They put it in gold and the women wear it around their necks. They wear

as many as 10-13 strings of gold coins around their necks. That's the way they have to do it if they are on the move all the time. They love gold and jewels because they are portable. The sedentary arts include architecture and literature. But they have their highly developed arts that require the use of the mind, because you can carry that with you. They get to be very good at mathematics and star-watching and very good at poetry. They memorize enormous poems. They are the authors of epic poetry. People who have to keep on the move all the time take their treasures with them where they can carry them, in their heads and their hearts. So there is something to be said for both civilizations. The sedentary civilization stews after a while and becomes rotten, soft and decayed like the Babylonian. Then the others overrun it, supplant it, and then start decaying the same way. It's a routine that has been followed forever and ever.

360 Alma 17:14 It says here in verse 14: "For they had undertaken to preach the word of God to a wild and a hardened and a ferocious people; a people who delighted in murdering the Nephites, and robbing and plundering them; and their hearts were set upon riches [just like the Nephites themselves], or upon gold and silver, and precious stones [exactly what these people would covet, the wealthy display; elegance, you know]; yet they sought to obtain these things by murdering and plundering that they might not labor for them with their own hands."

360,361 Alma 17:15-17 "Thus they were a very indolent people, many of whom did worship idols, and the curse of God had fallen upon them because of the traditions of their fathers [they had inherited it; they were barbarians and had a variety of cults who worshipped idols]; notwithstanding the promises of the Lord were extended unto them on the conditions of repentance." Now the sons of Mosiah went to preach to these people, and that was going to be a job, "that they might bring them to know of the plan of redemption. Therefore, they separated themselves one from another, and went forth among them, every man alone." Well, that's a risky thing, but on my mission I never had a companion. I got President Tadge's permission to go alone.

Nobody else would go with a bicycle. Nobody would go to the Black Forest. Nobody would go to these places, so I had to go alone. It was very interesting. After I distributed the tracts and rented the beer hall, then I would bring in Brother Loscher, one of our high powered German orators. He would come in and preach at the meeting and convert them. I just got them out to the meeting. Brother Loscher was a great speaker. He came to Salt Lake and became a photographer some years ago.

361 Alma 17:19 Being the chief among them, Ammon blessed them and sent them on their ways. Then Ammon went to the land of Ishmael. Here's another nice little insight we have here. Remember that the daughters of Ishmael were the first to break away and join the Lamanites. That certainly indicates that they were of the tribe of Ishmael—the Ishmaelites were the Arab tribes. Lehi himself was half Manasseh, and Manasseh was the desert tribe. Half Egyptian and half Arab is what it amounts to. They were east of the Jordan River. They went out to pick up Ishmael and [his family] came down and joined them. When they were still in the desert, it was Laman and Lemuel and the daughters of Ishmael that revolted against Lehi. Now later on in the Book of Mormon we find that the Ishmaelites are a people separate by themselves; they have kept their identity. As I said, the race problem in the Book of Mormon is very complex. Verse 19: "And Ammon went to the land of Ishmael, the land being called after the sons of Ishmael, who also became Lamanites [they were the first to defect from Lehi and Nephi]. And as Ammon entered the land of Ishmael, the Lamanites took him and bound him." Their established custom was to bind any Nephite who came along and to retain them in captivity.

361,362 Alma 17:21 "And thus Ammon was carried before the king who was over the land of Ishmael; and his name was Lamoni; and he was a descendant of Ishmael." So it was Ishmaelite blood that bonded them together here; it was a family thing. Probably he was the chief of the family because he was a literal descendant. They would have gathered many others. Remember, this is a very



fluid society this way. He asked him what he wanted, and Ammon said, "Yea, I desire to dwell among this people for a time; yea, and perhaps until the day I die." The king said, you are welcome to take one of my daughters to wife. But Ammon said unto him, "Nay, but I will be thy servant." I want to watch the flocks of Lamoni.

362 Alma 17:26-30 Now we come to the story of the waters of Sebus, a very interesting thing. The idea is this. They have the funniest battle you can imagine. It's absolutely crazy. Well, let's see what happens here. He is going to watch the flocks at a place "which was called the water of Sebus, and all the Lamanites drive their flocks hither, that they may have water." This must have been dry country. This was the main watering place, and they all drove their flocks together there. Then they would do a funny thing; they would have the strangest sort of fight there. Verse 27: "A certain number of the Lamanites [it may have been a limited number that was required by the game because it's a game they are going to play], who had been with their flocks to water, stood and scattered the flocks of Ammon and the servants of the king." Well, that's a funny thing! They brought their flocks, and then they scattered the flocks of Ammon and the servants of the king. "Now the servants of the king began to murmur, saying: Now the king will slay us, as he has our brethren." This would happen. They would take the flocks away. Then the servants would go back and get executed for that. Then these people come out and it happens again. Doesn't the king have enough servants to protect his flocks? Do they have to do this and then have them [the servants] all killed? Verse 28: "Now the king will slay us, as he has our brethren because their flocks were scattered by the wickedness of these men. And they began to weep exceedingly [they didn't want to be executed because they had lost the game]. ... Now they wept because of the fear of being slain. Now when Ammon saw this his heart was swollen within him with joy [he wasn't going to have this sort of thing]; for said he, I will show forth my power unto these my fellow-servants," which he did. He was going to restore the flocks.

362,363 Alma 17:31- He gave them a pep talk. He cheered them up and “flattered them by his words [come on, boys, let’s get ‘em], saying: My brethren, be of good cheer and let us go in search of the flocks, and we will gather them together and bring them back unto the place of water; and thus we will preserve the flocks unto the king,” and he won’t kill us after all. So he talked to them like the coach, you see. Then they had the contest, and they followed Ammon. Verse 32: “They rushed forth with much swiftness and did head the flocks of the king, and did gather them together again to the place of water. And then those men again stood to scatter their flocks [they lined up and were going to scatter the flocks again]; but Ammon said unto his brethren: [you take care of the flocks] Encircle the flocks round about that they flee not.” They won’t run away this time, and I’ll go and take care of these people. So he does. He calls a new play. He has a new game plan now.

363 Alma 17: 34,35 “Therefore, they did as Ammon commanded them, and he went forth and stood to contend with those who stood by the waters of Sebus.” This is a separate game now. The sheep are out of it, and there’s going to be a combat here. They liked to play this game, and they played it for fun. The next verse tells us that. “Neither did they know anything concerning the Lord; therefore they delighted in the destruction of their brethren; and for this cause they stood to scatter the flocks of the king.” To have the fun of killing a lot of Lamanites. That was a fun game to play, wasn’t it? They delighted in this; that’s the reason they stood there to scatter the flocks. Now we are going to see that all of this is a perfectly legitimate game. You can find at least a hundred parallels to it if you look for them. This is the way it used to be done. (But don’t get ahead of the game here.)

363,364 Alma 17:36 But Ammon isn’t going to play fair. “But Ammon stood forth and began to cast stones at them with his sling.” This is what happened here. He went out and started throwing rocks at them, and he was deadly with his sling. Slingers are deadly people. Ammon

spent about fourteen years on a mission, and they took the weapons with them to hunt game. Shepherds in Greece or Spain have nothing to do all day but practice with slings, so they become deadly accurate. The most effective troops in any ancient army were the slingers because they would sling pellets. These pellets are found by the thousands throughout the ancient world. They are lead pellets with very little air resistance, and they really go. They are more deadly than a .22, I think. They could hit anything. No wonder little David, who was not so little after all and had been tending flocks all his days, was awfully good with the sling and knew just where to knock Goliath out. So the same thing happened here; this man was deadly. He began to cast his stones at them, and “he slew a certain number of them [by slingery] insomuch that they began to be astonished at his power [this wasn't according to the game; they hadn't expected that];... seeing that they could not hit him with their stones [he was out of range; he was a good slinger], they came forth with clubs to slay him.” It was a stone throwing contest, which was fair enough, because they had stones, too, it says here. But after the stone-throwing, they came after him with their clubs.

364 Alma 17:37 “But behold, every man that lifted his club to smite Ammon, he smote off their arms with his sword.” There's only one way you can do damage with a club. You can't poke with it and you can't trip up with it. You have to lift your arm to hit with it; that's all there is to it. So he had this trick blow, and he just cut off their arms—a very nice operation. As we'll mention later, there's an Aztec game that was done like this with prisoners of war. One person would have a club, and the other person would have a sword. The person with a club was tied by his ankle; he could have only limited range. He was a prisoner, and it was supposed to be a sacrificial thing anyway. He only had a club to defend himself; whereas, the other man was armed with a sword or with a club with very sharp obsidian blades on it. So the other person didn't have a chance unless he was awfully good. It was the club against the sword. That was supposed to be done. The person was supposed to be killed because it was ritual sacrifice. You say, “Why do

they do these bloody things?” It’s the sanest form of war there is—to limit the bloodshed. We don’t have that; we kill everybody. You’ve seen plenty of documentaries about wild animals in savage wars. You notice that they fight often, but they know when to stop. Elk will fight bloody fights, and hippopotamuses and sea lions. They fight like crazy to be head of the herd, etc. But when the time comes they stop and break it up.

365 Alma 17:37 They began to be surprised and they began to run away from him. I don’t blame them. Verse 37: “They were not few in number; and he caused them to flee by the strength of his arm. Now six of them had fallen by the sling, but he slew none save it were their leader with his sword.” He only dueled with the leader with the sword. The whole point of these things is between the leaders. A duel is what it is. With David and Goliath as soon as Goliath was finished, the Philistines surrendered. There was no battle; that ended it. That’s how it is in the Homeric wars, too. The heroes decide to fight, and the whole issue of the war depends on them. The one who wins takes over the army of the other without any trouble at all.

## Lecture 51 Alma 17-19

### [Clausewitz on War] [Waters of Sebus] Ammon and King Lamoni

367 You may ask why we are getting stuck on this trivial episode about the waters of Sebus, but it's a very important part of the Book of Mormon, and a very important part of warfare. You don't get into the big wars until later on, but we must mention Karl von Clausewitz (1783-1831). He wrote a great two-volume work, which for 150 years has been the bible of the military. It wasn't published until 1833, so Joseph Smith is "saved by the bell" there, isn't he? He couldn't have used it, although the Book of Mormon reads exactly as if it had been written by someone who had been a diligent student of Clausewitz. The main thesis is a thesis of the Book of Mormon. It begins this way. His first famous dictum is that "war is a continuation of politics by other means." That's the way he puts it—war is just a continuation of politics. And what is politics after? It's after power and gain. Whether it's the princes, or whether it's the industrial barons, they want power and they want gain. Of course, they get it that way. He goes into various wars. He was very active in the Napoleonic Wars.

367 The second rule is that "war is absolute." When you have decided to fight, CEDUNT LEGES. As the Romans say, "Forget about the laws." If you are going to follow a civilized discussion, you discuss. But when you decide to kick and scratch and gouge and shoot each other, it's silly to talk

about laws. He says it's absurd to talk about laws of war or anything like that. War is absolute. When you are into it, you are into it all the way. You can't just go partly. If you're going to go partly, why don't you continue discussion in that case? No, you throw the rule book aside. That's important with him. He says, as in the world of mules, there are no rules for battle. There are no rules, he says; throw away the book.

368 The third point of Clausewitz: What is the object? It is the total destruction of the other side's capacity to do anything at all—their total submission. So it's total destruction. That's what we have in the Book of Mormon. They begin with setting their hearts on riches, and they are already on the high road to destruction. That's what the Book of Mormon tells us again and again. They set their hearts on riches; therefore, one thing was going to happen. We get more of this later. It builds up climactically until you get those terrible, terrible chapters in Mormon that are so modern, so frightening, and so relevant.

368 Alma 17:26-35; Alma 18:7 But how about this business at the waters of Sebus? It's best to read very quickly a summary, and then we'll see what it is. This is in Alma 17, as you know: All the Lamanites would drive their flocks to a particular watering place (Alma 17:26). And when they got there, "a certain number of Lamanites, who had been with their flocks to water, stood and scattered the ... [king's] flocks." That was a fine thing to do, and this was routine. This had been done many times. After the [flocks] of the king "scattered ... and fled many ways," the servants lamented that as a matter of course, "now the king will slay us, as he has our brethren" (Alma 17:28). And they began to weep. Is everybody crazy here? What insanity is this, the king kills his own servants for losing a contest that had been acted out before? In fact, we are told in Alma 18:7 that "it was the practice of these Lamanites to stand by the waters of Sebus to scatter the flocks of the people keeping what they could for themselves, "it being a practice of plunder among them" (Alma 18:7). It looks like it was a regular custom. So it was no secret to anyone; this was not

an ambush but something to be expected. But the king's own flocks? How could they get away with that? Didn't he have enough men to protect them if this happened regularly? Well, for one thing the Lamanites played the game for sport; it was more than meat that they were after, for "they delighted in the destruction of their brethren; and for this cause they stood to scatter the flocks of the king" (Alma 17:35). They thought it was great sport. The Arabs have a saying, "If we cease GHAZA, we will cease to live. A GHAZA is a raid", our word raid is from the Arabic GHAZA. They must raid or life isn't worth living. "Life is raiding."

368,369 Alma 17:36; Alma 19:21 The fun of it was their main interest, but Ammon spoiled the fun when he "stood forth and began to cast stones at them with his sling." They were outraged: "They began to be astonished . . . [and] angry" (Alma 17:36)—he wasn't playing the game fair. So they came after him with clubs. Why only clubs? He had a sword. There is only one way you can wield a club; you cannot cut or thrust with it but have to raise it up over your head and thus expose your arms. (With both arms the strongest blow is possible.) Ammon took full advantage of the situation, slicing away at the arms raised against him. And yet, with his overwhelming advantage, Ammon "slew none save it were their leader with his sword" (Alma 17:38). He knocked six of them out with his sling and cut off the arms of others as they raised their clubs, but he only contended with the leader to death. After that, the winning party or team brought back the trophies to the king, "bearing the arms which had been smitten off by the sword of Ammon" (Alma 17:39). By now it should be clear that we are dealing with a sort of game; a regular practice, following certain rules. This becomes apparent when a few days later, the very men "who had stood at the waters of Sebus and scattered the flocks" (Alma 19:21) mingled freely and openly with the crowd of people [Lamanites] gathered at the palace. They were the ones that scattered the king's flocks and got the king's followers executed by law, according to the game. They gathered at the palace at a report that strange things were going on. Ammon was causing some stir inside the palace.

369 Alma 19:20,21 Some of the people said these things were happening because the king “slew his servants.” The king began to regret it now. That’s an interesting thing. The king saw nothing wrong whatever with killing his servants who lost flocks. He’s stunned later on when it suddenly occurs to him that this might have been a sin. Already people began to say that these things were happening because the king “slew his servants who had had their flocks scattered at the waters of Sebus” (Alma 19:20); and the very men who had scattered the king’s flocks loudly announced their presence by shouting abuses at Ammon when he came out for what he had done “to their brethren at the waters of Sebus” (Alma 19:21).

369 Alma 19:22 They were there to get revenge on Ammon right at the king’s palace. The brother of the head man (whom Ammon had killed with his sword) drew his own sword on the spot (he had a sword, too, you see) and made at Ammon (Alma 19:22). He attacked Ammon and was going to finish him off on the spot. So the men had swords but only used clubs. Isn’t that odd, and isn’t it odd that those same wicked Lamanites [not only] walked around right in front of the king’s palace where everybody recognized them, but nobody did anything about it? They were perfectly free to come and go. And no one held it against the winning team that they had stolen their flocks back (nothing wrong with that), but the losers were only angry with Ammon because he had thrown rocks at them and used his sword against men bearing only ceremonial clubs.

372 From the days of the Jaredites to the final battle at Cumorah, we find our Book of Mormon warriors observing the correct chivalric rules of battle—enemies agreeing to the time and place of the slaughter, chiefs challenging each other to single combat for the kingdom, and so on. I have written elsewhere of the martial formalities of the Battle Scroll observed in the Book of Mormon.

372 Clausewitz said you only go through those formalities just to fool a guy. You pretend to stop so you can catch him



off guard, as Zerahemnah tried to catch Moroni off guard. We say it is human nature to fight and enjoy violence. As I said, animals and savages fight regularly, especially at mating seasons. But as we have learned from nature documentaries, they know how to stop. There's no point in killing everybody. We still do this in maneuvers today. One round in ten or one round in fifty will have live ammunition in it. That will pay the price if anybody is too careless. Or decimation still happens in armies. In the Roman army when a unit had misbehaved and deserved court martial and execution, they couldn't execute the unit. They would be weakening the forces. They would use decimation—take out every tenth person. That would pay the price that the whole unit was supposed to pay. Duels stopped with the drawing of blood. The Indians had a better way. They would go around in a battle and say, "I touch you with a stick and you're dead." Or they had maneuvers where they spattered them with paint to say "you have been hit."

372 It's common for warriors to rest during the noonday heat. The Crusaders had the European idea. At the battle of Morocco, they wanted to go in and slaughter the Moslems. But the Moslems wisely took off for lunch and rested. In that particular battle, the one that St. Louis was in, they all died of the heat. They all had heavy armor and underclothes on. They sat on their horses waiting for the charge of the Moslems. The Moslems sat inside the walls and said, "What are those crazy people doing? It's lunch time." Then the heat started to take its toll and they started dropping one by one. It was a very hot day, and Morocco isn't a cool place. It was about 120 degrees, and they were sitting there in armor with heavy wool under it to pad the armor. They were sweating and sat very stiff, rigidly awaiting the oncoming enemy. The whole army was wiped out by the heat. It's quite a story.

374 Alma 18:2 Chapter 17 is the one about the waters of Sebus. Notice that they delighted in playing the game. Then the king is impressed. He said, "Surely, this is more than a man. Behold, is not this the Great Spirit [the words Great Spirit are going to be repeated many times, and that

will turn out to be very significant for us] who doth send such great punishments upon this people, because of their murders” (Alma 18:2). The people were beginning to think that what they had done was murder. The people of Ammon later on always described their killing in battle as murder. Why did he [the king] go on murdering? It could have been ritual murders, etc.

374 Alma 18:3-5 “He cannot be slain by the enemies of the king.” He was a superman. Was the king so weak? And what about his expertness? “And now, when the king heard these words, he said unto them: Now I know that it is the Great Spirit; and he has come down at this time to preserve your lives, that I might not slay you as I did your brethren.” See, he was about to slay them; he had every intention of putting them to death. It occurs to him for the first time with rather a shock that it must be wrong to kill the way he had been doing. In other words it was an established custom; it was the thing to do. Nobody thought of it as particularly wrong. “Now this is the Great Spirit of whom our fathers have spoken [there’s something required and deliberate about it]. Now this was the tradition of Lamoni, which he had received from his father, that there was a Great Spirit; . . . they supposed that whatsoever they did was right.” The Lamanites were following their customs and their rites. So King Lamoni says he “supposed that whatsoever they did was right [so do we; we suppose that whatsoever we do is right]; nevertheless, Lamoni began to fear exceedingly [now he had doubts], with fear lest he had done wrong in slaying his servants.” It is perfectly clear that he was doing it as a custom, as a required gesture, and now it suddenly occurs to him that it might be wrong to slay his servants. You would think anybody was crazy who didn’t know that was wrong. But he didn’t. It was customary, and people do these things.

374,375 Alma 18:6,7 “For he had slain many of them [it had been the custom all along] because their brethren had scattered their flocks at the place of water.” That was the established pattern. He didn’t send an army out to defend the flocks; he just let this go on. It was the custom;

the next verse makes this clear. "Now it was the practice of these Lamanites to stand by the waters of Sebus to scatter the flocks of the people, that thereby they might drive away many that were scattered unto their own land, it being a practice of plunder among them." We have these practices carried out. That's what a raid is, and it was perfectly legitimate.

375,376 Alma 18:8 Lamoni asked, "Where is this man that has such great power? ... He is feeding thy horses." Now this is very important—feeding the king's horses. You never find in the Book of Mormon anybody riding a horse. You never find any horse but the king's horses. So Ammon was making the king's horses and chariots ready. As in Egypt just the king used them only for special ceremonial occasions. Only the king, nobody else used them.

377 Alma 18:9 "For there had been a great feast appointed at the land of Nephi, by the father of Lamoni, who was king over all the land." Of course, that's the great assembly. That's the great feast which has to be held once a year. The king and everybody must come. If you don't come, you will be cut off from the kingdom for three years. You receive another touch stick, the king's arrow. If the HEROR touches you, then you must come to the presence of the king as quickly as possible, and you must bring something with you for the feast. No one comes up to the presence of the king empty handed. This is universal.

378,379 Alma 18:12,13 "And it came to pass that when Ammon had made ready the horses and the chariots for the king ... he saw that the countenance of the king was changed; therefore he was about to return out of his presence. And one of the king's servants said unto him, Rabbannah, which is ... powerful or great king ..." They called him "Rabbanah ... or great king . . .". Rabannah is not Hebrew, as I said; it's Aramaic. It means "a great one, a great king, a great person, a great wise man." But it means "a person of utter preeminence" with the nah ending. With the nah, it means "our lord." Rob is great, and Rabannah would be "our great one." Notice that these people were

Ishmaelites, which is important. That's why they didn't use the Hebrew term for "great king," which would be Melek. You get Meleks (kings) all through the Book of the Mormon—Amalickiah, Mulek, etc. But here it's Rabannah, which is what the Ishmaelites would say. We are told that these people are descendants of Ishmael in this particular community, so they would say Rabannah, "great king." They are rather removed here.

379 Alma 18:14-17 "What wilt thou that I should do for thee, O king? And the king answered him not for the space of an hour." The king just sat there and stared at him. He was stunned at the sight of him. Could he be the Great Spirit? It is true that the Indians all expect this Great Spirit that came down to visit them. The Hopis do, the Navajos do, they all do. They ask, "Is this the the Great Spirit? Verse 17: "I say unto you, what is it, that thy marvelings are so great? Behold, I am a man, and am thy servant." He still stares at him and says, "Who art thou? Art thou that Great Spirit, who knows all things?" Now here's Ammon's big chance to take advantage, as Cortez did. The king is going to believe anything he tells him now. But "Ammon answered and said unto him: I am not." Here was Ammon's chance to tell a big, fat lie and convert the king. But [he wouldn't do it].

379,380 Alma 18:20-25 "Tell me by what power ye slew and smote off the arms of my brethren that scattered my flocks. ... Now, Ammon being wise, yet harmless .. ." He's not going to lie, but now he plays a trick [by saying], will you believe everything I tell you? The king said, I will believe everything you tell me because he was ready to take it. "And thus he was caught with guile." Ammon said, now I can preach to him and he will believe me. So he began, "Believest thou that there is a God?" God is an epithet, you see. [Ammon] would have used Eloah or Eli. He said, "I do not know what that meaneth." It was an unfamiliar word. "And then Ammon said: Believest thou that there is a Great Spirit?" Now, that's the epithet they all used, the Great Spirit. "And he said, Yea. And Ammon said: "This is God," [like saying], "This is Allah." Do I believe in the Great Spirit? Yes. We are going to have this repeated a number

of times in the rest of the book here, where the Great Spirit which they believed in is made absolutely identical with the God we believe in. So if an Indian asked me, "do you believe in the Great Spirit?" I would say, "yes, I do believe in the Great Spirit." It's the same thing. If an Arab asked me, "Do you believe in Allah?" there's no other word [he could use] for God. So I would say, "Of course, I believe in Allah. I think I know more about him than you do." "I know more about the Great Spirit than you do. Do you want to hear more?" That's the approach that Ammon is using here. He gets him to say, yes, I believe in the Great Spirit. Then he says, well, so do I; now I'll tell you who he is. He said, "This is God."

380 Alma 18:26 "And then Ammon said: Believest thou that there is a Great Spirit? And he said, Yea. And Ammon said: This is God. And Ammon said unto him again: Believest thou that this Great Spirit, who is God, created all things which are in heaven and in the earth?" Well, the Indian believed that already. These are all the basic questions. "And he said: Yea, I believe that he created all things which are in the earth; but I do not know the heavens." Well, who does? This is the cosmological aspect of it. Then Ammon explains to him more; he is going to teach him more about it. "The heavens is a place where God dwells and all his holy angels." And King Lamoni, speaking with the innocence of a child, said, "Is it above the earth? And Ammon said: Yea, and he looketh down upon all the children of men; and he knows all the thoughts and intents of the heart; for by his hand were they all created from the beginning." Most people think this is a primitive superstition—that heaven is a place where God dwells with all his angels. We smile at the expression.

381 Alma 18:33-39: "And king Lamoni said: I believe all these things which thou hast spoken. Art thou sent from God?" It's very interesting that he doesn't give him a direct answer. He's still careful not to give a false impression or to take advantage of Lamoni's gullibility. He could have exploited that a lot. Lamoni is willing to believe anything he will tell him, but he wants to tell him only the truth.

He could have made great capital out of his gullibility and trustworthiness. “And king Lamoni said: I believe all these things which thou hast spoken. Art thou sent from God? Ammon said unto him: I am a man [so don’t get any ideas that I am superhuman or an angel or anything like that]; and man in the beginning was created after the image of God, and I am called by his Holy Spirit [he hasn’t talked to God face to face] to teach these things unto this people, that they may be brought to a knowledge of that which is just and true; [Then he meets him halfway here:] And a portion of that Spirit dwelleth in me, which giveth me knowledge, and also power according to my faith and desires which are in God.” As we said before, faith is not the power; it plugs into the power. It gives you access to the power. My faith gets me the power, but it is not the power. It amounts to it, if it comes to that. He began with the story of the [creation] and the fall “and rehearsed and laid before him the records and the holy scriptures [the project to follow this through would have been impossible without the scriptures] of the people, which had been spoken by the prophets, even down to the time that their father, Lehi, left Jerusalem, ... the journeyings of their fathers in the wilderness ... and he expounded unto them all the records and scriptures from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem down to the present time [verse 38].... For he expounded unto them the plan of redemption, which was prepared from the foundation of the world [see, he takes the gospel back to the preexistence, and he calls it the plan, you notice]; and he also made known unto them concerning the coming of Christ.”

381 Alma 18:41 “And he began to cry unto the Lord, saying: O Lord, have mercy. . . . And now, when he had said this, he fell unto the earth, as if he were dead. And it came to pass that his servants took him and carried him in unto his wife, and laid him upon a bed; and he lay as if he were dead for the space of two days and two nights; and his wife, and his sons, and his daughters mourned over him, after the manner of the Lamanites, greatly lamenting his loss.”

## Lecture 52 Alma 19-22

**[King Lamoni Passes Out]  
[Delphic Oracle]  
[Other world experiences of the Lamanites.]  
[Lamanites Become More  
Virtuous—Nephites less so]  
[Horses for Chariots and Kings Only]  
[Aaron Converts Lamoni's Father & household]**

384 We're on Alma 19. These chapters that follow have a number of unusual things happening in them. But in other ages these things were not so unusual; they were sort of routine. These things sound quite fantastic in the Book of Mormon. You may have heard Brother Packer during conference. He compared our time with just forty years ago. Well, I had already been teaching twenty years, forty years ago. But it's a different world, he said. Compared with that world, our world today is just a pastiche of crimes and excesses. You wouldn't recognize it. Unfortunately, I don't think its reversible either; it just goes more and more. This is the Book of Mormon; that's where it comes in. It keeps hitting back at us all the time. This was once thought to be utterly fantastic and out of this world—these excessive things, like civilizations destroying each other completely. Such a thing was utterly unheard of. Well, it isn't unheard of anymore. The Book of Mormon is for our time.

385,386 Alma 19:5-7 Let's go on here with chapter 19. The king passed out, and Ammon went to the queen. Verse

5: “I would that ye should go in and see my husband, for ... some say that he is not dead, [it’s the same story as Isaiah and King Hezekiah and the prophecy about Mannaseh] but others say that he is dead and that he stinketh ... but as for myself, to me he doth not stink. Now, this was what Ammon desired ... and the light which did light up his mind, which was the light of the glory of God . . .” Notice the imagery that’s used here and how often the word light is used: “... and the light which did light up his mind, which was the light of the glory of God, which was a marvelous light of his goodness— yea, this light had infused such joy into his soul, the cloud of darkness having been dispelled, and that the light of everlasting life was lit up in his soul.” There are six lights in this sentence. Notice that this is imagery, and yet is it imagery? We are still faced with the basic question, what is light? Nobody knows. Protons don’t have any weight or any mass. But what are they? “Yea, he knew that this had overcome his natural frame, and he was carried away in God—” This is EKSTASIS; EK means out, and STASIS means stepping. So you step out of your body when you are in a state of EKSTASIS. In Revelation John says that on the Lord’s day he was in a state of EKSTASIS. He left his body. We are told the same about Abraham. In the Hebrew it’s the TARDEMAH of Old Testament when you pass out. In Genesis 15 the same thing happens. Abraham passes out the same way. His soul is carried aloft and then he comes back and reports.

386 Alma 19:8-14 “He is not dead, but he sleepeth in God [in other words God is taking care of him].... And Ammon said unto her: Believest thou this? And she said unto him: I have had no witness save thy word [but I believe]. And Ammon said unto her: Blessed art thou because of thy exceeding faith; I say unto thee, woman [here’s another one], there has not been such great faith among all the people of the Nephites.” Now this isn’t a paraphrase of the New Testament. After all, Ammon had been a missionary to more Nephites than anyone else; he knew the Nephites by heart. He said we don’t find such faith among all the Nephites as we find here, and these are Lamanites. An interesting thing is about to happen here. He [the king]



arose and said, "I have seen my Redeemer." In the Isaiah text first the king passes out and then Isaiah. Isaiah comes to and says, "I have seen the Messiah." He has been taken aloft. So we have a sort of standard vision here. Then "he sunk again with joy; and the queen also sunk down, being overpowered by the Spirit." They were all passing out. This is the way you do when you are completely overwhelmed this way. Verse 14: "He fell upon his knees, and began to pour out his soul in prayer and thanksgiving to God for what he had done for his brethren [Ammon did this because his message has gotten over]; and he was also overpowered with joy [and he fell down, too]; and thus they all three had sunk to the earth."

386,387        Of course, the hardest thing to contain is joy. Anybody can contain all sorts of pain. It's amazing what you can put up with when you have to put up with pain. How astonishing it is—there's just no limit. But joy is a thing that scares the daylights out of you. You can't contain it and don't know what to do with it. And yet that's the purpose of our existence—we "are that we might have joy." So we are learning to control joy and control ourselves when we have it. We can't contain it, you see. It's a hard thing to contain. What do you do? Do you shout and holler and run around? Do you make a fool of yourself, etc.? How can you contain that in yourself? Well, they are all sinking down here and passing out, and that's the best thing. After all, when pain becomes too great you black out automatically. So that takes care of that. It's the same thing with joy if you can't contain it. When you don't know how to handle a problem psychologically, what do you do? You black out. This is your defense. It's a form of Pentecost here and very special. It's a part of initiation times. They are one-time experiences which people attempt to repeat, as in the Sioux sun dance and the Sufis. The Sufis are the most important branch of mystics among the Moslems; they have to pass out. So you have your various dances and dervishes and things like that.

387    Alma 19:16,20    People wondered what was going on; they didn't understand. Verse 16: "They did call on the

name of the Lord, in their might, even until they had all fallen to the earth.” Then this Abish comes along. That’s a very interesting name because that’s the name on a very famous Egyptian mural from a tomb in the Middle Kingdom. It shows a family coming from Palestine to Egypt. It’s a family of bedouins very vividly portrayed, and the leader is Abish. They [in verse 16] had all fallen to the earth. This was Abish “having been converted to the Lord, and never having made it known” to anyone before. When she saw this opportunity she ran forth from house to house making it known, and they began to assemble themselves. It was a great display, “and they all lay there as though they were dead. . . . And now the people began to murmur among themselves.” Something is wrong here. They say, the king has brought this evil upon himself. The central theme of this particular story goes back to the waters of Sebus. “The king hath brought this evil upon his house, because he slew his servants who had had their flocks scattered at the waters of Sebus.” This king has done wrong in doing this.

387 Alma 19:21,25 Now this is the interesting thing that happens. What about the men at Sebus who had scattered the flocks? They were there. Verse 21: “And they were also rebuked by those men who had stood at the waters of Sebus and scattered the flocks which belonged to the king, for they were angry with Ammon.” They were in the crowd. It was part of the game; they were accepted here. A strange crime against the king. They announced their presence here; they shouted out at him. “They were angry with Ammon because of the number which he had slain of their brethren at the waters of Sebus, while defending the flocks of the king.” One of them was the brother of the one that Ammon had killed in the single combat, the only one killed with the sword. He drew his sword and made at Ammon, and he fell dead. So they did have swords after all. Strange goings on here. But it only occurs to them now that what they had been doing there was wrong. Verse 24: “When the multitude beheld that the man had fallen dead . . . fear came upon them all, and they durst not put forth their hands to touch him or any of those who had fallen.” Strange goings on here, aren’t they? Verse 25: “There were

many among them who said that Ammon was the Great Spirit, and others said he was sent by the Great Spirit.”

388 Alma 19:25-29 Notice some said that Ammon “was sent by the Great Spirit; But others rebuked them all, saying that he was a monster, who had been sent from the Nephites to torment them.... And they said that it was this Great Spirit who had destroyed so many of their brethren, the Lamanites.” The Great Spirit is on the side of the Nephites. It turned into hysteria. Verse 28: “And thus the contention began to be exceedingly sharp among them. And while they were thus contending, the woman servant ... came” and told them about it. Then they said it was her fault. When she saw the contention that she had caused, she decided she was to blame and “was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto tears [what have I done here?]... . She went and took the queen by the hand” and she arose. This is a critical situation here, isn't it? “And when she had said this, she clasped her hands, being filled with joy, speaking many words which were not understood.”

388 Alma 19:31,32 This is typical. When the shaman comes out, he talks in riddles and rhymes. Again, the ancient world was governed by the oracles. What was the oracle? The oracle was a woman who was made to pass out. Usually she snuffed bay leaf, which is very powerful. Well, the Delphic Oracle was the woman who governed the ancient world for centuries. Everybody went to Delphi to consult that oracle. She was a woman who sat on a tripod over a pot of bay leaf and passed out. When she was out of her mind, she would utter things. It was uttered in rhyme and sometimes in strange tongues. Sometimes it was in gibberish. So this is a type of institution which we are not familiar with today, but it has ruled the world until very recently. Until very recently we have had these things—these strange gifts and perversions. You'll find them among the Druzes in Lebanon. For years I went around with an old Druze, and he taught me various things about that, too. Very strange things going on here. So she carried on like this, and then she took King Lamoni's hand and he arose. “And he, immediately, seeing the contention among his

people, went forth and began to rebuke them” for behaving the way they were. “But there were many among them who would not hear his words; therefore they went their way.”

389 Alma 19:33 “If they believe not Moses and the prophets, they will believe not the one that rose from the dead,” the Lord said. This was an anti-climax as far as they were concerned. Verse 33: “When Ammon arose he also administered unto them.” But you notice he didn’t convince everyone; many among them didn’t believe it at all. He went among all his servants, and “their hearts had been changed; ... many did declare unto the people that they had seen angels and had conversed with them.” You notice that angels must get things moving because the point is this. Here we reach a critical point in Book of Mormon history. From this time on the Lamanites start going up in virtue, and the Nephites start going down. The Lamanites become the virtuous people now. It’s a very strong trend we see from here on. This critical moment in history is the turning point. It had to be, and the only way such a thing could happen would have to be by another Pentecost, by an eruption of the spirit, a breaking in or intrusion of the other world. Theologians are talking a lot about this today. They never talked about it before, but they say what you have in the New Testament is an intrusion of the other world into this one—a breakthrough, something that people never could have arranged or suspected, a note of surprise. With the restoration of the gospel then as now, the main theme was surprise. Everybody was surprised because things were happening completely beyond their control. Utter amazement seizes them, and the angels have to say, “Don’t be afraid; we are messengers from God.” So this is not a normal occurrence. The big shift begins here in the Book of Mormon where the Lamanites begin to get a break. We talked about mixing races; from now on you’re not going to be able to distinguish them at all. Many said “they had seen angels and had conversed with them ... and as many as did believe were baptized; and they became a righteous people, and they did establish a church among them. And thus the work of the Lord did commence among the Lamanites.” That’s why this thing is so sensational, so very striking.

The work of the Lord begins among the Lamanites. The moral of that, says Mormon, is “that his arm is extended to all people who will repent and believe on his name.”

390 Alma 20:1,2- We have to move right along now, don't we? Lamoni desired that Ammon should go with him on a trip to see his father. Lamoni. They had a system of nations in which there was a high king and then the lower kings below him. But the Lord said, “Thou shalt not go up to the land of Nephi, for behold, the king will seek thy life; but thou shalt go to the land of Middoni; for behold, thy brother Aaron, and also Muloki and Ammah are in prison.”

390,391 Alma 20:3 “Behold, my brother and brethren are in prison at Middoni, and I go that I may deliver them.” The king said, I have some clout; I'll go with you and help you get them out. So they made ready his chariots and horses. As I've said before, with the exhausting treks of the brethren from land to land that we've been reading about in this part of the Book of Mormon, why didn't they ride horses like cowboys and Indians do? The horse appears in the Book of Mormon as a rare and exotic animal, exactly as the Arab steed appears in ancient, medieval, and modern times. It's the idea of these strange beasts appearing and being taken care of. This is the picture you get in the Book of Mormon. Only kings have them, and he is taking care of the king's horses for his chariots. Nobody rides horses in the Book of Mormon. As we said before, nobody rides horses in the Near East, just as nobody rides bicycles—just as we don't ride water buffaloes here. We would be scared to death to do it, but they do it in southeastern Asia.

391 Alma 20:4 Lamoni said to Ammon, “I will go with thee to the land of Middoni.” There Ammon is making ready the king's horses and chariots. That's a thing for only a noble person to do. The equestrian, the one who takes care of the king's stables, is the constable. Who is the constable of France? He is the one next to the king. The constable is the one who takes care of the king's stables, and that's as high as you can get. Remember the great speech the constable of France gives in Henry VI He was the one that

settled the peace between England and France; he was the king's highest representative. So horses are a strange, exotic thing. You can't generalize about horses too much, as I'm doing here. But in the Book of Mormon they were imported from the plains to the north. As my friend Woodrow Bora found out, all the trade in horses between the continental United States and Mexico was not in taking Spanish horses up to the continent. They brought them down from the plains through Santa Fe to Mexico. They were brought to Mexico, not from Mexico. He finds that significant, along with other things. Well, we won't bother with horses too much.

392 Alma 20:8 Now here is a very dramatic situation right out of Oedipus. Verse 8: "They met the father of Lamoni, who was king over all the land." He was the sachem, the high king. He gave a real speech, and this shows you that the Lamanites had a case. They really believed this, and this is the point at which the Lamanites turn. They now start to become the righteous people. They were justified in their own eyes in what they did because here was the king, and he couldn't stand Nephites. He said they have betrayed us, tricked us, and outsmarted us all the time. This was the point because the Nephites did outsmart them. They would have a great resentment against that.

392 Alma 20:9 "Why did ye not come to the feast on that great day when I made a feast unto my sons, and unto my people?" Well, the feast of the king is compulsory wherever you go. In the last chapter of Zachariah it's the same thing. From year to year everyone shall come up to Jerusalem to the feast—the feast of the Passover, the feast of the booths this was, the feast of the SUKKOT. You must come to the feast, and you must bring something with you. No one shall come empty handed. You had to bring your offerings of lamb or doves, etc. You had to bring food with you, and they had the great feast. Well, it's like the coronation in the book of Mosiah, where Benjamin gave his great speech. That's the strict and correct description of the rite that took place at the feast. It was feasting that they engaged in. If you didn't come, you were an ULLAGE, outlaw. You

were outlawed from the kingdom for three years. You had no citizenship and no rights. You had to come and report and have your name put in the Book of Life, the list of the INCISI.

392,393 Alma 20:10-14 After his father asked why he didn't come to the feast, "he also said: Whither art thou going with this Nephite, who is one of the children of a liar?" Now this is the case the Lamanites make out for themselves. This is a skillful history, too. It's like the telling of a saga. The language is, too. "Lamoni rehearsed unto him whither he was going" and what he was going to do because he had to tell him. "And he also told him all the cause of his tarrying in his own kingdom [why he didn't go to the feast, etc.]. And now when Lamoni had rehearsed unto him all these things, behold, to his astonishment, his father was" not impressed but he was furious. He said, "Lamoni, thou art going to deliver these Nephites, who are sons of a liar [get them out of jail; this is the Lamanite party line]. Behold, he robbed our fathers; and now his children are also come amongst us that they may, by their cunning and their lyings, deceive us." Here we have these Nephites circulating and spreading missionary news, and Lamoni had given them a free hand. He had given them a carte blanche to do anything they wanted. He goes too far; in fact it causes a revolution a little later on. They robbed our fathers, and you are letting them do anything they want among us—infiltrate us "that they may, by their cunning and their lyings, deceive us, that they again may rob us of our property." We haven't been the robbers; they have been the robbers [the king claimed]. The Nephites (men like Alma and Amulek) had consistently outsmarted the Lamanites. The Lamanites had a real grievance. They were not bad as Lamanites anymore than the Russians are bad as Russians. This is an important insight into Lamanite mentality. And we still treat the Indians this way. After all, they still get the dirty end of the stick, you might say. He [the king] ordered him to "slay Ammon with the sword." He wouldn't put up with it at all. He was very serious and "mad as a hatter."

393 Alma 20:15-17 “But Lamoni said unto him: I will not slay Ammon, neither will I return to the land of Ishmael.” He defied his father openly, and to defy the king openly is treason. Verse 16: “Now when his father had heard these words, he was angry with him, and he drew his sword that he might smite him to the earth.” After all, he had openly defied the high king, his father. This was treason, and he should be smitten. But Ammon stood forth against him, to his surprise. He said, “If thou shouldst fall at this time, in thine anger, thy soul could not be saved.” No one dies well who dies in a battle. “If thou shouldst fall at this time, in thine anger, thy soul could not be saved.” Moreover, “he being an innocent man, his blood would cry from the ground.”

394 Alma 20:19 “I know that if I should slay my son, that I should shed innocent blood; for it is thou that hast sought to destroy him. And he stretched forth his hand to slay Ammon. But Ammon withstood his blows, and also smote his arm ... [good old Ammon; he knew how to hit people’s arms, didn’t he?]. Now when the king saw that Ammon could slay him, he began to plead with Ammon that he would spare his life.” The “gun” is in the other guy’s hand now. Remember how quickly they change around in our endless police shows, etc. The person who has the gun has all power. One moment he is insufferably arrogant and the next he is cringing. This happens with the king here because Ammon has the “gun” now and is holding it on him. The king said, I will give you anything, even half the kingdom [paraphrased]. Again, why this old formula “half the kingdom.”

395,395 Alma 20:24-26 “If thou wilt grant that my brethren may be cast out of prison ... [so they spare him],... And when he saw that Ammon had no desire to destroy him, and when he also saw the great love he had for his son Lamoni, he was astonished exceedingly [by his behavior] and said: Because this is all that thou hast desired, that I would release thy brethren, and suffer that my son Lamoni should retain his kingdom [so that was all right], behold, I will grant unto you that my son may retain his kingdom



from this time and forever; and I will govern him no more [he gave him a free hand.] And I will also grant unto thee that thy brethren may be cast out of prison, and thou and thy brethren may come unto me, in my kingdom; for I shall greatly desire to see thee." Come and see me as soon as you can, he says.

395 Alma 20:28 Alma 21:1,2 Then there's another minor king. Notice that they went to the land of Middoni, and the king of Middoni was another one of those minor kings. Lamoni was a fellow king, so they got along very nicely. It says, "And Lamoni found favor in the eyes of the king of the land; therefore the brethren of Ammon were brought forth out of prison." If he and Lamoni hadn't got along they never would have got out; he had influence. But they were really in a terrible condition when they came out because they had had a rough time. Then in chapter 21 it gives a flashback and shows how they happened to get into the prison and what they went through first. They separated themselves, and "Aaron took his journey towards the land which was called by the Lamanites Jerusalem, calling it after the land of their fathers' nativity [which is a common practice, of course]. . . . Now the Lamanites and the Amalekites and the people of Amulon had built a great city, which was called Jerusalem." There were three different elements in it. We can't call them races, but there were three different cultures joined together in it. It tells us here that the "Amalekites and the Amulonites were still harder." Of the three the Lamanites were the nicest, but it was the Amalekites and the Amulonites [who were the hardest]. One was Nephite and the other was Mulekite. It tells us that apostates are the worst enemies of the church; they always are. They are much worse than any outsiders. They "were still harder; therefore they did cause the Lamanites that they should harden their hearts." And the Amalekites "had built synagogues after the order of the Nehors." The good old Nehor church; you are going to find it everywhere. It was the popular church, the popular religion. And it was a religion. Most of these wicked people in the Book of Mormon are very religious, and they were here. And there "arose an Amalekite," who challenged them and started preaching to

them. “Why do not angels appear unto us?” We are as good as you are. That’s a good question actually. “How knowest thou that we have cause to repent?” That’s not such a good question—everybody does. President Benson’s opening talk at the conference was refreshing, wasn’t it? It was the nearest to a talk on repentance I’ve heard for ages. As you know, it was on pride. And whose pride? The wickedness of the Book of Mormon. Whose wickedness? Ours. That’s what he was talking about; it was a call to repentance. He wasn’t accusing other people [non-LDS] at all when he gave that wonderful talk about pride.

395,396 Alma 21:5,6 So “there arose an Amalekite” who said, how do you know we have cause to repent. As soon as people say they are a righteous people, of course, you know they are not. That’s automatic; it’s self-righteousness. “Behold, we have built sanctuaries [we’ve built churches; aren’t we good people? We’ve done that], and we do assemble ourselves together to worship God [we go to meeting]. We do believe that God will save all men.” This is the routine. Incidentally, it’s an interesting thing that repentance is missing from all the ancient religions except the Old Testament. The word repentance doesn’t exist for the Egyptians and the others. I have been reading a lot of Egyptian wisdom literature, and the idea that you should repent [doesn’t exist there]. What you want is luck. They never connect what you have done in the past with your moral behavior. You’ve done what you’ve done, and that’s that. It’s an interesting thing that there is no word in Egyptian for sin. And in America today sin is having the wrong ideology. It’s being on the wrong side. The Ten Commandments are only fifty percent binding. They bind us but they don’t control our behavior toward bad people. We shall not kill, we shall not lie, we shall not steal from good people. But you can do it with bad people all you want [according to this philosophy]. And they do it everywhere else. We call that revenge because they have been bad. Well, notice that we are having a shift at this point. The good and bad are shifting between the Nephites and the Lamanites. We get it here.

396 Alma 21:7-14 “Now Aaron said unto him: Believest thou that the Son of God shall come to redeem mankind from their sins?” How do you know that? “We do not believe in these foolish traditions.” We don’t need them at all—this idea of the Atonement. “Now Aaron began to open the scriptures unto them concerning the coming of Christ,” and the resurrection and the redemption. This summarizes the main points of the gospel. The coming of the Christ brings about the resurrection, which brings about the redemption “through the death and sufferings of Christ, and the atonement of his blood.” He gave them the whole package, and this made them madder than ever. He gave them the straight gospel. Then “they were angry with him, and began to mock him.” They wouldn’t hear it. It sounded utterly ridiculous. So he just left them—that was all he could do—and went over to Ani-Anti. The people there were hard in their hearts just as bad, so he left there and came over to the land of Middoni. The Lord said, if they don’t receive you in one city go to another. This is how they got to the land of Middoni, and this is where they were put into jail. This has been a flashback telling us how they got into jail. Aaron and his brethren were cast into prison, and the remainder of them fled. Verse 14: “And those who were cast into prison suffered many things, and they were delivered by the hand of Lamoni and Ammon.” So this is where we were in the story.

396,397 Alma 21:16-22 And they went forth led by the Spirit after they were out of jail “preaching the word of God in every synagogue of the Amalekites, or in every assembly of the Lamanites where they could be admitted.. . . The Lord began to bless them, insomuch that they brought many to the knowledge of the truth.” King Lamoni has a rather extreme program. He hasn’t converted his people yet, but he really pushes the church. You might say he overdoes it because it is very soon going to bring about a revolution against him. They are going to get rid of him. He had “synagogues built in the land of Ishmael; and he caused that his people should assemble themselves together.... And he did teach them many things.” And any that fled from oppression by the king, his father, went to

them. “And he also declared unto them that they might have the liberty of worshipping the Lord. . . . Ammon was thus teaching the people of Lamoni continually.” Then Aaron “was led by the Spirit to the land of Nephi, even to the house of the king which was over all the land save it were the land of Ishmael [these Ishmaelites are a different stock, too]; and he was the father of Lamoni.” The king of the land of [Nephi] was the father of Ishmael, and Lamoni was an Ishmaelite. He “bowed himself before the king, and said, ... we are the brethren of Ammon; ... we will be thy servants.”

397 Alma 22:3-7 The king said, “I have been somewhat troubled in mind because of the generosity and the greatness of the words of thy brother Ammon; and I desire to know the cause why he has not come up out of Middoni with thee.” Aaron said he had gone to the land of Ishmael. Then he asked Aaron questions about the Spirit of the Lord, is there a God, etc. Remember, they are trying to establish a bridge with the Lamanites, who for hundreds of years had been going their own way and had their own version of the gospel. They had kept the Great Spirit, and they still have. They still believe all these things. It’s a complex picture we have here. Verse 7: “And the king said: I know that the Amalekites say that there is a God, and I have granted unto them that they should build sanctuaries [this is the high king].... Behold, assuredly as thou livest, O king [said Aaron], there is a God. And the king said: Is God that Great Spirit that brought our fathers out of the land of Jerusalem?”

397,398 Alma 22:10-18 If an Indian says, “We believe in the Great Spirit. Do you believe in the Great Spirit?” That’s a legitimate title. Verse 10: “And Aaron said unto him: Yea, he is that Great Spirit, and he created all things both in heaven and in earth.” So we both worship the same Great Spirit after all. Verse 12: “When Aaron saw that the king would believe his words, he began from the creation of Adam.” That’s the starting point, and it’s an on-going history through verse 18—the creation of Adam and the plan of redemption. “And since man had fallen he could not

merit anything of himself.” How could that happen? What does that mean? Why do you disqualify yourself once you fall? If you just fall once why do you disqualify yourself? Because you will never again be as pure and as strong as you were before you fell just that once—unless you undergo a complete renovation again. So we have to have the atonement and baptism and all that. But it’s true that if you have yielded once you will never be as strong and as certain as you were before. You may think, “Well, I found out now; I had to learn about sin.” But it doesn’t work that way. Nevertheless, we do have to learn about it, so here we go. That’s what the gospel is. It brings this very powerful medicine in after we’ve got ourselves good and sick here.

398 Alma 22:15 “What shall I do that I may have this eternal life of which thou hast spoken?” He being a king, this is a very interesting thing. But the point is that these great kings, have everything. But what’s the good of having everything if you can’t keep it—if you can only keep it for a very little while? This worries kings more than it worries other people. What does he say here? If I can only be king for a little while it’s nothing.

398 Alma 22:15 What shall I do that I may have this eternal life? ... Yea, what shall I do that I may be born of God, having this wicked spirit rooted out of my breast [the guilty king, you see; the king can do anything he wants, so he has done some pretty awful things] ... that I may not be cast off at the last day? Behold ... I will forsake my kingdom, that I may receive this great joy” (Alma 22:15).

399 Alma 22:18 “That I may be raised from the dead.” See, that’s what he wants; he wants to be raised from the dead. His kingdom doesn’t count for anything if it’s just going to go down the drain.

399 Alma 22:24-28 “Now there was a multitude gathered” and because of the great murmurings “the king stood forth among them and administered unto them.” It parallels the other missionary occurrence; it follows a formula almost. Then “the king sent a proclamation throughout all the land.” Then in verse 28 we have a nice summary of Lamanite

culture. The Lamanites are changing their ways now, and these had been their customs for centuries. “Now, the more idle part of the Lamanites lived in the wilderness, and dwelt in tents [or tepees]; and they were spread throughout the wilderness on the west, in the land of Nephi; yea, and also on the west of the land of Zarahemla [they are always on the west along the Pacific coast there] in the borders by the seashore, and on the west in the land of Nephi, in the place of their fathers’ first inheritance [because they landed from the Pacific] and thus bordering along by the seashore.”

399 Alma 22:29,30 They could complain about Nephite aggression because the Nephites had practically bottled them up here. “And also there were many Lamanites on the east by the seashore, whither the Nephites had driven them.” They wouldn’t allow the east and the west to make contact. As the Generalstab says, “The one thing to avoid is a war on two fronts.” So they kept them separated; they kept the Lamanites off balance because they were greatly outnumbered by the Lamanites. You can see why the Lamanites would resent that—being always kept off balance, and things always being stirred up. In the far north it was called Desolation.

400 Alma 22:31 “And they came from there up into the south wilderness.” From the north there they came up. It’s just like the Nile when you go upstream to the south wilderness. Of course, it’s much higher elevation than the coastlands. The land northward was Desolation, and the land southward was Bountiful.

400 Alma 22:32 “And now, it was only the distance of a day and a half’s journey for a Nephite, on the line Bountiful and the land Desolation, from the east to the west sea.”

401 Alma 22:32 “And thus the land of Nephi and the land of Zarahemla were nearly surrounded by water.” That certainly places them in Central America, doesn’t it? Notice that the Nephites “had hemmed in the Lamanites on the south.” They wouldn’t like that, you see. The wisdom of the Nephite was “that they might have a country whither they might flee.” They were outnumbered and they looked

forward to a time when they might have to withdraw. To have something to fall back on they kept the land up in the North. This was their military policy through the years, and you can see it would always bring pressure on the Lamanites. The Lamanites were always making their slave raids, etc.

401 It's in chapter 23 when the king goes too far. I mean he practically turns the kingdom over to the missionaries and lets them do what they want. A lot of people resent it, and they stage a revolution. There's a big war as a result of it. You shouldn't go too far in your piety.

## Lecture 53 Alma 23-27

**[Geopolitics: Sedentary & Mobile People]**  
**[Lamanites Lay Down Weapons]**  
**[Anti-Nephi-Lehies Refuse to Murder]**  
**[Angelic Visitations]**  
**[Ammon's Mission Report on Success]**  
**[Anti-Nephi-Lehies Led to Safety]**

402 Alma 22:28-34 We have a long way to go, but there are some things that are much too important to miss. What we want to get now, just to begin with, is this general situation that seems so confused—this confused situation of battles, etc., in these chapters following Alma 22. In Alma 22:28-34 it makes a very important statement. It's hard to believe that this was written in 1829 because it wasn't until the beginning of the twentieth century that Alfred MacKinder, a Scotch geographer, invented geopolitics, which is the basic theory of two main types of culture that occupy the world and are in constant conflict. All world wars have been based on that, and here it is set forth here. We get the picture that the Lamanites are in the Southwest and scattered off toward the East. They are pushed in this direction and that direction, and they are being contained by the Nephites who are in the Northeast in general. So you have two general land masses, the one surrounding the other. In the Southwest all along here are Lamanites. The main body are Nephites, but there are Lamanites over here. They want to keep their way open in case they can retreat there. These are the two cultures. The one is the culture of



the steppes, the heartland, or the BEDII.

403 This is exactly what we have in the Book of Mormon. Nobody pointed this out until anthropologists of the twentieth century did. Especially geographers pointed out that this is the basic pattern that we are going to have in our history. We are going to have [people like] the Lamanites who are essentially mobile. They move around, but they can have settlements—they always do. Of course, the Nephites can also move around. There are the sedentary and the mobile [people]; those are the two that divide the world and always have. The battle is between them; they keep the pressure on all the time. Verse 28 describes it very well. They dwelt in tents, and they were idle. To us they don't work; they don't cultivate the soil or anything like that, whereas the others work very hard.

403 Alma 23:1-3 Then in Alma 23 the Lamanite king pushes the church; he backs it up. He rules a very large area, you notice. As we find out at the beginning of the next chapter, he rules the Amalekites, the Amulonites, the Lamanites, and the people of Anti-Lehi-Nephi who were his own people. The key to this whole thing is that those who were converted at this time were a relatively small group, but very influential. Alma 23:1: "The king of the Lamanites sent a proclamation among all his people that they should not lay their hands on Ammon [or his people]" or make any trouble, but let them do anything they wanted. The brethren were given a *carte blanche* here to go forth and preach in whatsoever place they wanted to. They should have free access to their houses, temples, and sanctuaries—everything wide open to the missionaries "that they might be convinced concerning the wicked traditions of their fathers." Well, some aren't going to take that very well; [all people are] proud of the traditions of their fathers. He wants to convince them. This is a "glasnost." He wants these people to believe that they are all one people; they have to bury their differences, etc. Notice he says in verse 3: "... that they might be convinced that they were all brethren, and that they ought not to murder, nor to plunder, nor to steal, nor to commit adultery .. ." They were all his subjects.

403,404 Alma 23:5-7 Aaron, Ammon, and the brethren got busy “consecrating priests and teachers throughout the land among the Lamanites” who began accepting the gospel. Verse 5: “And thousands were brought to the knowledge of the Lord, ... and they were taught the records and prophecies.” And the Lamanites proved the most faithful of them all. We are told in verse 6 that many who joined at that time were rock firm and never again did fall away. “For they became a righteous people; they did lay down the weapons of their rebellion [they started doing this before Ammon’s people buried theirs, which is what righteousness means. What is righteousness?] that they did not fight against God any more, neither against any of their brethren.” This, as I said, was before [Ammon’s people], so this is an interesting thing the way things are being pushed here.

404 Alma 23:8-14 Here’s a list of the good Lamanites, you notice. It’s quite a complicated thing here. They include the people of Middoni, and those in the city of Nephi, and Lamanites in the land of Shilom and Shemlon, and those in the city of Lemuel, and in the city of Shimnilom, etc. It sounds like the Hopi villages; their names all sound alike, you know. They sound just like that. Verse 13: “And these are they that laid down the weapons of their rebellion, yea, all their weapons of war; and they were all Lamanites.” So the tide has turned now; these have been very important events that have happened.

404 Alma 23:16 So then what happens? Then the question arises with verses 16: Do we have a state within a state here? It looks awfully good for the church, but most of the people were out of it. They didn’t like it at all, as we shall soon see. “And now it came to pass that the king and those who were converted were desirous that they might have a name.” Not only were they going to be a distinct people, they were going to have a name to set themselves off from the rest of the nation. Well, again was that a tactful thing to do? Was that a wise thing? Well, you have to have the name anyway. As we read in Doctrine and Covenants 115, the name of the Church was a very important thing. You have to have a name to distinguish yourself—NOMEN EST

OMEN. Without a name you can't be identified. We know that in this age of computers identification is everything. You have to have a name to distinguish you from all others. But would this be disruptive in the state? On the contrary it was a removal of barriers. It wasn't a setting up of barriers by giving themselves a special name, Anti-Nephi-Lehi. It's an interesting name, incidentally; we will get to that. They were doing the very opposite.

404,405 Alma 23:18 This is what he says here in verse 18: "And they began to be a very industrious people; yea, and they were friendly with the Nephites; therefore, they did open a correspondence with them, and the curse of God did no more follow them." He tells us again right across the page here that what they did was to remove all the barriers; they opened trade to everybody. They were named Anti-Nephi-Lehies. You know that Nephi-Lehi means a combination of Nephi and Lehi, and ANTI means "combination, face-to-face, meeting." You have Adam-ondi-Ahman. That's one of the richest prepositions we have. This ANTI means so many things. We get it in the Book of Mormon a good deal—Antiomno and things like that. There's ANTI in the Book of Mormon. The Latin ANTE means "standing in front of a person and facing him." Of course, that's the Greek ANTI and the Arabic CINDA. The Old English is AND-. The word ANSWER, for example, is ANSWARIAN—swear back at a person. This means "face to face confrontation" whether it's in Old Norse, Old English, Semitic, Arabic, Greek, Latin, or in the Book of Mormon. It means "a face-to-face meeting, a joining together with somebody." We are going to find later on about an Anti-Christ, who is a person who pretends to be Christ, who matches Christ, who pretends to take the place of Christ. It's not somebody who opposes Christ, but somebody who pretends to be Christ. We get that a little later when we get to Korihor. But first they gave themselves this name of Anti-Nephi-Lehies. "And they were called by this name and were no more called Lamanites." So they were set apart, but they began to be an industrious people—getting to work at last. They did open a correspondence with the Nephites, "and the curse of God did no more follow them."

405,406 Do we have a state within a state? Well, some people thought so. They didn't like it. In chapter 24 there's going to be real trouble. This chapter 24 is one of the most significant in the Book of Mormon. We never quote it, of course. We like to talk about Captain Moroni and the two thousand. We don't like to talk about these pacifist "wimps" here, but these are the best people in the Book of Mormon. They are doing what the Lord wants them to do. But they [the unconverted] didn't like it at all. They were stirred up, and when [the converts] formed this Anti-Nephi-Lehi group, that was just too much for them. They were stirred up by the Amalekites and the Amulonites to get anybody who wasn't in the combination, and they began to rebel against their king. It was open revolution now; they took up arms against him. So they were rebelling and having a revolution against the king and the whole thing. They are much more numerous than the other people, too. How are they going to handle that, especially since these people aren't inclined to fight back? This is the backlash. Armed rebellion is what it leads to, as you would expect it to considering that with only a [small] number of the people the king went so far. They were just reveling in this religion, the new name, and everything else they had given themselves. It causes the inevitable backlash. But, on the other hand, they are faced with a policy of nonresistance. This is a strange thing. Remember that Ammon's people were a relatively small group. But that's what the Hopis practice; they practice nonresistance. Hopi means a peaceful people, and anybody can take advantage of them, from anthropologists to oil companies to uranium companies, etc. They are just pushovers for anybody, and you would think they would have been wiped out long ago. But as the Book of Mormon tells us later on, those that take up arms and oppose are the ones who are going to be destroyed. The Hopis are still there and going strong after everybody has been perfectly free to take advantage of them, and don't think people haven't tried to do it.

406 Alma 23:8-22 There actually are people who would refuse to fight. So how are you going to fight these people? This is an important thing to remember here. From verse

22 on there is no contest. This is the reason for it, and this is the most interesting thing. That's why I say this is not a popular chapter. Notice how often they repeat the word murders here. Verse 8: "And behold, I thank my great God that he has given us a portion of his Spirit to soften our hearts, that we have opened a correspondence with these brethren, the Nephites." Notice they are opening correspondence with everybody. They are not raising barriers; they are lowering them. Verse 9: "We have been convinced of our sins, and of the many murders which we have committed." In the next verse it talks about the murders, and in verse 11 "the many murders." They keep talking about the murders here. They refer to killing on the battlefield. Is that murder? Well, you bet it is.

406,407 Alma 23:11,14 "For it was all we could do to repent sufficiently before God [they can't repent enough] since God hath taken away our stains, and our swords have become bright, then let us stain our swords no more with the blood of our brethren; ... if we should stain our swords again" we couldn't have a claim on the atonement if we went on doing this sort of killing. It won't do. These are mostly Lamanites talking now, you see. Verse 14: "And the great God has had mercy on us, and made these things known unto us that we might not perish; yea, and he has made these things known unto us beforehand, because he loveth our souls [they realized the enormity of what they had been doing] as well as he loveth our children; therefore, in his mercy he doth visit us by his angels [that's what it takes to turn them around] ... since it has been as much as we could do to get our stains taken away from us, and our swords are made bright, let us hide them away that they may be kept bright, as a testimony to our God."

407 Alma 23:15-22 "As a testimony to God." It's interesting—they tell me a slogan you often found in Korea and Vietnam was "Kill a gook for God." Now the gooks have come over here and shown us that they are not gooks at all. Most of them are a lot smarter than we are as students, and we've got a lot of them. But we thought that was virtuous. These chapters of the Book of Mormon

are very necessary—actually they are. Verse 16: “And now, my brethren, if our brethren seek to destroy us, behold, we will hide away our swords.” The rest of the chapter is on the theme of not offering resistance. From verse 22 on there is no contest. This is a change of Lamanite policy, and it was most effective among the pure Lamanites. The others didn’t go for it, we are told here [in verse 29]: “Now among those who joined the people of the Lord, there were none who were Amalekites [they were an important part of the kingdom] or Amulonites,” who were mostly the other ethnic group, the Mulekites. And none of the order of Nehor were persuaded—the whole church had been Nehor before, “but they were [only the] actual descendants of Laman and Lemuel,” the blood of Israel. This certainly implies that the others—the Ishmaelites, the Amulonites, and the Amalekites—were of another stock actually. But they are so closely related, just as they are among the Indians and as we are. After a people have once been enlightened (they had been enlightened; remember they came out of Zarahemla) and then have fallen away it’s worse than ever before.

407,408 As a result [of their not fighting] they get mad at these people, “Won’t you resist? Dammit, why don’t you fight?” They get mad enough to slaughter them. It’s a paradox here because they didn’t want to slaughter them; they forced them to do it. “Why do you force us to do this dirty thing?” This happens at the beginning of the next chapter. “Those Lamanites were more angry because they had slain their brethren.” The Lamanites stopped fighting then because the others weren’t putting up a fight. In various cases war tribes have dropped their ferocity. That’s a characteristic of the Indians. They can change very quickly from being enemies to being friends, and the other way around. So the Lamanites stopped killing them then.

408 Alma 24:24 “There were many whose hearts had swollen in them for those of their brethren who had fallen under the sword, for they repented of the things which they had done.” As I say, it takes all the heroics and passion out of it. Clausewitz says there is no hatred in war at all because you don’t know any of the enemy to hate them. It has to

be artificially induced. It's used very skillfully in the Book of Mormon by Amalickiah when he sets up towers and has regular speakers going around. You have to whip up this hatred. You have to make an issue, as Clausewitz tells us, and build it up. It's artificially produced. Why would they stop fighting so readily? For a very good reason. These were their own people they were fighting; they weren't fighting a traditional enemy. Just a month or so before they had all been one nation and one people; moreover, the bonds had been lowered. They had been visiting each other and knew each other. If it had been a traditional enemy, if it had been somebody else [they might have gone on fighting]. But they were all under the same king in the same kingdom. These people were in a state of open rebellion; they were the rebels. Yet even with rebels what a bloody thing it can become, as we have seen in the case of our Civil War—the nastiest thing that ever happened. They just went on killing as if they were hypnotized, a horrible thing, and gaining nothing by it.

408 Alma 24:25-29 So they threw down their weapons. They wouldn't fight anymore, "for they were stung for the murders which they had committed." This was murder they were doing. I mean when you take life it's murder no matter what you call it. Then more of them were joining the church than those who were slain. "Now, among those who joined the people of the Lord, there were none who were Amalekites or Amulonites." They still remained outside and they still remained hostile, so there would be more war. None of the Nehor people [joined the church], and that was the main church among them. Only the actual descendants of Laman and Lemuel were converted.

408,409 In chapter 25 the Lamanites were angry because they had slain their brethren. That may be puzzling because it gets mixed up here. The Lamanites transferred the action to Ammonihah now. That was Ishmael's group. Here's another thing. You remember what the blessing on Ishmael was. Ammonihah was the city they were going to wipe out completely. This was a group of Lamanites [that would do it]—not the Lamanites that had pledged not to

fight again because these were fighting. These were the other Lamanites, their brothers, who were so mad to see the way their brethren had been treated. They started taking it out on the Amalekites and the Amulonites, and they made an example of Ammonihah. When Abraham gave his blessing to Isaac and Ishmael, his two sons, the blessing on Ishmael was that his hand should be against all men and all men's hands should be against him. Of course, that's the GHDZA, that's the raid. You're fighting everybody. There's a perpetual state of tribal war among them. They make agreements in tribes and then somebody breaks them. Somebody kills somebody and there must be vengeance. Honor requires that you seek vengeance. So you revenge him, and they have to revenge the one you killed. So this goes on and away you go back and forth. Later on the Book of Mormon lays immense importance on not avenging anything because once you start that there is no end—as you see in Ireland, in Lebanon, in the Philippines, etc. There are factions that have to get even with each other, and each one has a legitimate offence. They have both been wronged, etc.

409 Alma 25:2,4 So the Lamanites were angry, and they took it out. They “went over into the borders of the land of Zarahemla, and fell upon the people who were in the land of Ammonihah and destroyed them.” The lands were divided up into lesser sections. This was Ammonihah, and they wiped them out. This led to general fighting all along the front here. What we find here is the Nephites versus the Lamanites, and the fighting goes on. In verse 4 Amulon takes a beating. [His people] were Mulekites. Amulon was the leader of the priests who were led out by Noah. Noah was the son of Zeniff, who was a direct descendant of Zarahemla, a Mulekite. This is another stock here. They were slain by the hands of the Nephites. It's a free for all now. Everybody is fighting everybody else, just like the wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth century—the point being that you would be on one side one day and another side the next. This is the way you would shift back and forth. Here the remainder of the people of Amulon fled into the wilderness—they were old hands at that. They got there by



themselves. Then they usurped power over the Lamanites they found there and had an auto-da-fe and caused many of the Lamanites to perish because of their belief. See, they moved to the only safe place. They moved into the territory of the recently converted, nonresistant Lamanites so they wouldn't have any trouble. The Amulonites just went in there, took over and became their usual brutal selves.

409,410 Alma 25:6,8 "For many of them, after having suffered much loss and so many afflictions, began to be stirred up in remembrance of the words which Aaron and his brethren had preached to them in their land; therefore they began to disbelieve the traditions of their fathers, and to believe in the Lord." This is talking about the Lamanites. On a broad front around the east side you find them also. These general movements take place. You know how that happens. After Amulon took a beating he moved into Lamanite country and oppressed the Lamanite nonresisters who had been converted by this general pacifistic trend. These general movements have their trends. There are times in this country when we feel very warlike, very proud, and all this sort of thing. Then there are other times when we are much more critical of ourselves, more inclined to be sober. So the pendulum swings back and forth. The Lamanites in general reacted against the arrogant Amulonites because of the way they had treated the non-resistant, gentle Lamanites. The other Lamanites got mad at the Amulonites and lit into them. So we find a perennial feud going on here, a terrible mess. Verse 8: "Now this martyrdom caused that many of their brethren should be stirred up to anger; and there began to be contention in the wilderness; and the Lamanites began to hunt the seed of Amulon and his brethren [who had done so much mischief to their more faithful brethren] and began to slay them.... And behold they are hunted at this day by the Lamanites." So it was going on at the time this was written.

410 Alma 25:13-15 They saw it was going to be a no-win situation. Verse 13: "When the Lamanites saw that they could not overpower the Nephites they returned again to their own land [the conversions were steadily increasing

among them, and it says they did accept and follow the law of Moses]; and many of them came over to dwell in the land of Ishmael and the land of Nephi [this was a very mobile period], and did join themselves to the people of God, who were the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi. And they did also bury their weapons of war, according as their brethren had, and they began to be a righteous people.... Yea, and they did keep the law of Moses ... [and] did look forward to the coming of Christ. The law of Moses was the type, the outward performances, but they had to perform them to keep them in mind, to keep them informed, relying upon the spirit of prophecy that the Messiah would come.

410,411 Alma 26:3,6 Now we come to this wonderful speech, Ammon's mission report. It's a very good one here. It's a most singular document. The Book of Mormon is so full of things like this one here. This is Ammon [writing] to his brethren. Remember, this was the same Ammon who was more than a match for the people at the waters of Sebus. He was a one-man platoon; he could wipe out anything you wanted. He was the most ferocious and effective fighter in the Book of Mormon. Yet see what kind of a mission he went on here. Verse 3: "Behold, I answer for you; for our brethren, the Lamanites, were in darkness, . . . but behold, how many of them are brought to behold the marvelous light of God! . . . Behold, the field was ripe." This is what happened, a miraculous turn. There's one key figure in all this change, all this going on. The whole movement comes back to this one man, Ammon, so it is very important that he gives a report on his behavior, his motivation, and how he was able to do it. It's very interesting how one person will start a movement, like Martin Luther, for example. He makes the first move, and everything starts rolling. That's what happened here. It was just the time to do it; they thrust in their sickles and did reap. Verse 6: "... but when the storm cometh they shall be gathered together in their place, that the storm cannot penetrate to them."

411 Alma 26:9-12 "For if we had not come up out of the land of Zarahemla, these our dearly beloved brethren, who have so dearly beloved us, would still have been racked

with hatred against us, yea, and they would also have been strangers to God.” How can you break down the barrier of hatred? This is the big problem. How can we do it? Well, not by making a virtue of hatred and cultivating your traditional hatred, as they do in certain countries. “His brother Aaron rebuked him, saying: Ammon, I fear that thy joy doth carry thee away unto boasting.” Are you responsible for the whole thing? Did you turn the tide? Oh, no, no, “my joy is full.” Notice he says here that he knows he is nothing. “Yea, I know that I am nothing.” As a result of that he says his joy is full. As Mosiah tells us in Mosiah 4:11, do this and you will always be happy; you will always feel to rejoice, because that removes the great burden of ego so we can turn our attention away from this image of invidiousness, conspicuous consumption, and competitiveness. This frees you to deal with and enjoy reality because all that other stuff is phoney—to say, “What is my rank? What is my position? How do I look? etc. That has nothing to do with it; that’s ridiculous. When you free yourself from all that and realize that you are nothing, then you can afford the luxury of being happy, which is very nice.

411 Alma 26:13 “Behold, how many thousands of our brethren has he loosed from the pains of hell; and they are brought to sing redeeming love.” We are told that they went back to the law of Moses, and the song of redeeming love was a very important part in the cult of Moses. When the people all came together, they would sing the song of redeeming love. It was part of their ritual; I have an article coming out on that: “... and this because of the power of his word which is in us, therefore have we not great reason to rejoice? ... Yea, they were encircled about with everlasting darkness and destruction.” True, it was everlasting darkness. We all are until we accept the gospel. What have you to look forward to here?

412 Alma 26:16 “Therefore, let us glory, yea, we will glory in the Lord; yea, we will rejoice, for our joy is full [because you have done away with that].... I cannot say the smallest part which I feel.” This is pure joy. This is what you call charity. Our word cheer is the same as CHARITY, the Greek

CHARTS, Latin GRATIA, etc. It's no mental reservations, no gnawing discontent, no vaulting ambition. These are the seeds of tragedy, you see. If you have to have your success here in the world and this is the only place you can get it, then you have the making of a tragedy. In the first place because you are going to have to do some immoral things to get there, and in the second place because you are going to be disappointed. Every tragedy ends in death. Well, sooner or later it will.

413 Alma 26:20 "Oh, my soul, almost as it were, fleeth at the thought. Behold, he did not exercise his justice upon us [we didn't suffer the way we deserved to suffer], but in his great mercy hath brought us over that everlasting gulf of death." That's the big one, you see. This is the only thing men really fear. That's why they live in quiet desperation, because that's what they are looking toward at the end of their careers. Their careers are going to take a downturn before long. Present dangers and inconveniences can be dealt with very easily because they are merely temporary. We can get along with them very nicely. But that's not the big unpleasantness. Remember T. S. Eliot's immortal lines, "I have seen the immortal footman hold my coat and snicker, and in short, I was afraid." Here's the footman holding his coat and saying, "It's time to go now, Buster." He was afraid, and we are all scared to death. Don't think you can face it down because nobody has ever done it. There are the defiant characters, like Macbeth, but theirs are the cruelest ends of all.

413 Alma 26:21 Then he says in verse 21: "I say unto you, there is none that knoweth these things, save it be the penitent." Am I talking over your heads? he says. Do you think I'm crazy because I'm rejoicing in all this? No, only the penitent know these things. You'll never rejoice unless you are penitent, because, as Freud says, it's the guilt feelings that keep you from being happy after all. They're suppressed; you have to bring them out to get them out into the open. (It's not a very good cure actually.) But they are the things that give you the skin rashes, the ulcers, and things like that. You know the guilt is there, but you

try to keep it down. You think you have forgotten, but you haven't. It's going to haunt you all the time. He said we get rid of all this. We haven't been punished as we deserve to be punished, but it's wonderful, he says. But you'll never know these things unless you repent, completely aware of how wrong they are. Here they believe a thing that makes them desperately sorrowful, that makes them absolutely miserable. The funny thing is if you only knew how wrong you are. You don't have to be miserable because you are not right. That's not what comes after at all. It's not darkness. You wouldn't have come out of nothing in the first place.

413,414 Alma 26:22 “Yea, he that repenteth and exerciseth faith, and bringeth forth good works, and prayeth continually without ceasing—unto such it is given to know the mysteries of God; yea, unto such it shall be given to reveal things which never have been revealed.” What is a mystery here? Now he starts telling about his mission here. He had a plan to go out and convert these people. “Now do ye remember, my brethren, that we said unto our brethren in the land of Zarahemla, we go up to the land of Nephi, to preach unto our brethren, the Lamanites, and they laughed us to scorn?” They laughed their heads off; it was the funniest thing they ever heard of. Convert those characters? This is what they said. “For they said unto us: Do ye suppose that ye can bring the Lamanites to the knowledge of the truth? Do ye suppose that ye can convince the Lamanites of the incorrectness of the traditions of their fathers [in which they firmly believed], as stiffnecked a people as they are; whose hearts delight in the shedding of blood; whose days have been spent in the grossest iniquity; whose ways have been the ways of a transgressor from the beginning? Now my brethren, ye remember that this was their language.” They're worse than Communists. These people are unthinkably vile. They just laughed at the idea of going up to preach to them. You are not going to get anywhere, is what they said. There's only one way to deal with those people; we have to get them before they get us. That's the only thing to do. .

414 Alma 26:25 “And moreover they did say: Let us

take up arms against them, that we destroy them and their iniquity out of the land, lest they overrun us and destroy us.” This is the unanswerable argument for war. With a gun it’s kill or be killed. If you put yourself in that position, then you must do it. We must defend ourselves. This is what he [Ammon] is talking about here, this absurdity. But this is the answer they gave: we must destroy them before they destroy us. That’s unanswerable, we say, because they are dangerous—they’re a threat.

415 Alma 26:26 Ah, but Ammon has the answer to that in verse 26: “But behold, my beloved brethren, we came into the wilderness not with the intent to destroy our brethren, but with the intent that perhaps we might save some few of their souls.” Notice this; it’s a gamble as far as he’s concerned. Of course, all war is a gamble, too. It’s a gamble, but he says it’s worth it, “that perhaps we might save some few of their souls.” He doesn’t have great hopes in going; it’s not a sure deal at all. It’s just possible that they might save a few of them. It’s worth all this trouble just to save a few of them. That’s quite an exchange when you start figuring out the chances, the expense, and all this sort of thing.

415 Alma 26:27-30 “Now when our hearts were depressed, and we were about to turn back, behold ...” They weren’t getting anywhere at all; they met what they thought they would. Things looked very bleak when they got there. “And now behold, we have come, and been forth amongst them; and we have been patient in our sufferings ...” They went back again because “the Lord comforted us, and said: Go amongst thy brethren, the Lamanites, and bear with patience thine afflictions, and I will give unto you success.” And this is what the mightiest warrior in the Book of Mormon had to put up with: “And we have been patient in our sufferings, and we have suffered every privation; yea, we have traveled from house to house [and let the people kick us around], relying upon the mercies of the world—not upon the mercies of the world alone but upon the mercies of God. President Benson’s speech was on pride. This man had no pride at all—the mighty Ammon

going around begging, as it were, from door to door, relying on the mercies of the world and the people. "And we have been cast out, and mocked, and spit upon, and smote upon our cheeks." I wouldn't take a chance spitting on Ammon. But he allowed it. Why? He goes on: "And we have been stoned, and taken and bound with strong cords, and cast into prison." Why did he allow all this to happen? Verse 30: "And we have suffered all manner of afflictions, and all this, that perhaps we might be the means of saving some soul." That was a gamble right there, but it was worth it. Is it worth the chance? "And we supposed that our joy would be full if perhaps we could be the means of saving some."

416 Alma 26:32-34 "For behold, they had rather sacrifice their lives than even to take the life of their enemy [this is what he regards as his reward, the great triumph of this great warrior]; and they have buried their weapons of war deep in the earth, because of their love towards their brethren. And now, behold I say unto you, has there been so great love in all the land? Behold, I say unto you, Nay, there has not, even among the Nephites. For behold, they would take up arms against their brethren; they would not suffer themselves to be slain. But behold how many of these have laid down their lives; and we know that they have gone to their God, because of their love and of their hatred to sin." Regarding that as the ultimate sin, they keep calling it murder, and they don't want to do that.

416 Alma 26:36 "Now if this is boasting, even so will I boast." I don't make any excuses. They are a branch of the tree of Israel that has been lost from its body. This is how they thought of themselves; they knew that they were isolated, etc. There have been enclaves. People never forget their homes that they have come from originally. There are some enclaves in Europe, Asia, etc., the Jews being the isolated ones that never forget. During the time that I was growing up and the generation before me, all the Saints in the West here felt we were just marking time until we could return to Jackson County, which was the real place where we should be. We should go back to Missouri. Everybody thought we would be doing that. "This people, who are a

branch of the tree of Israel, and has been lost from its body in a strange land,... wanderers in a strange land.” These are enclaves, etc.

416 Alma 26:37 Now he gets into a universal theme in verse 37, which is very important. “Now my brethren, we see that God is mindful of every people, whatsoever land they may be in; yea, he numbereth his people, and his bowels of mercy are over all the earth.” You can’t divide the earth into the godly and the godless, can you?

416,417 Alma 27:4 In this next chapter the Amalekites were still strong and still dangerous. They began a movement against the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi, who were with the government that had taken over more or less. “The Amalekites, because of their loss, were exceedingly angry. And when they saw that they could not seek revenge from the Nephites, they began to stir up the people in anger against their brethren, the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi; therefore they began again to destroy them.” Remember, these various people who were members of the nation had their districts, states, or provinces they lived in, which were fairly uniform. They were going to make trouble for the king. They did rebel, but they were reduced. They began to destroy the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi, and the people still refused to take up arms. Well, that was a pushover for them now, but they were really mad about the Anti-Lehi-Nephi people. Verse 4: “When Ammon and his brethren saw this great work of destruction, they were moved with compassion.” They had to do something about it. Ammon said, well, let’s get the people together and clear out and go to the land of Zarahemla.

417 Alma 27:5-8 “Let us go down to the land of Zarahemla to our brethren the Nephites, and flee out of the hands of our enemies, that we be not destroyed.” Since we won’t fight them we had better run away from them. “But the king said unto them: Behold, the Nephites will destroy us [we deserve what we are getting], because of the many murders and sins which we have committed against them [there you are again—war is murder]. We will be their slaves [boy, he



has it bad] until we repair unto them the many murders and sins which we have committed against them.” Notice regardless of the fact that they were killing mutually and reciprocally on the battlefield, it was a murder against the enemy.

417 Alma 27:9-12 “But Ammon said unto him: It is against the law of our brethren ... that there should be any slaves [at all] among them.” We can’t be their slaves. Our only alternative is to submit to them. Then we would be their slaves, but Ammon says it’s against the law of Moses that Israelites should be made slaves—they can’t be. We can’t do it, but we’ve got to get out. So the voice of the Lord came to Ammon and said, “Get this people out of this land, that they perish not.” This is another one of those migrations.

417,418 Alma 27: 12-14 : “For Satan has great hold on the hearts of the Amalekites, who do stir up the Lamanites to anger against their brethren to slay them.” So they gathered the people together. It’s the usual procedure in verse 14. “And they gathered together all their people, yea, all the people of the Lord, and did gather together all their flocks and herds.” You may say this is extravagant. Remember, this was [translated] in 1828-29 before the Church was founded, but this is exactly what the Mormons did. From New York they went to Ohio, from Ohio to Missouri and Jackson County, from Jackson County [to Nauvoo, from Nauvoo] to Salt Lake Valley. They were always gathering everything they had and getting out. They had to take everything with them and move, and that’s what they did. Some of the wagon trains crossing the plains must have been enormously impressive, when you would see hundreds of wagons

418 Alma 27:17,18 But where are they going to settle? All the good land was taken already. They were relieved fortunately because, as they were making the journey, Ammon was going to Zarahemla to ask for permission to do something. He met Alma and the missionaries returning from their labors. There was a great rejoicing. The joy of

Ammon was full “even to the exhausting of his strength.” He fell to earth he was so overcome. This Ammon was a passionate person. Of course, this is PROSKYNESIS, this falling to the earth. This is another ancient custom that we don’t have today. In a SAL AM the knees bend over. When you fall on your knees and bend over, that’s a common salute to a person in certain countries. This is what happened. He fell to the earth again, which is what you do when you are overwhelmed in the presence of God or a great man like Alma, “but behold their joy was not that to exceed their strength... Alma conducted his brethren back to the land of Zarahemla, even to his own house.”

418 Alma 27 19-23 The brethren stayed at his house, but meantime they were going to make negotiations to see if they couldn’t get these people of Ammon who wouldn’t fight, the Anti-Nephi-Lehi people, settled somewhere. They found a place for them; they formed a buffer state in the land Jershon. They didn’t have to fight, but they were a buffer. They supplied grain and other necessities to the Nephites, and the Nephites gave them protection there. It was a good arrangement for both of them. They fixed it up very nicely. Verse 22: “Behold, we will give up the land of Jershon ... for an inheritance. And behold, we will set our armies between the land Jershon and the land Nephi, that we may protect our brethren in the land Jershon.”

419 Alma 27:23,24 “And this their great fear came because of their sore repentance which they had, on account of their many murders and their awful wickedness [it isn’t all fair in war]... that they may inherit the land Jershon; and we will guard them [and] they will give us a portion of their substance to assist us that we may maintain our armies.” Well, that was a fair operation then. So they settled down and took to that. These people that settled there were absolutely ideal—I guess something like the Amish that you find in Pennsylvania or the Doukhobors, perfectly honest and upright. “And they did look upon shedding the blood of their brethren with the greatest abhorrence [it didn’t depend on whose blood either] ... and they never did look upon death with any degree of terror” for themselves.

419 We need to get to this very important chapter 30. With 62 chapters to Alma, we are going to have to move right along. We'll probably be able to do it if it gets into sort of a uniformity here. In chapter 28 the Lamanites keep up the pressure at a high price to themselves. There's a general confrontation and lots of bloodshed. Then we get a picture of confused war, you see.

# Lecture 54 Alma 30-31

**[Two Types of Economy]  
Alma and Korihor  
[Alma Testifies of Coming of Christ]  
[Korihor Introduces Priestcraft]  
[Korihor Demands a Sign  
and is Struck Deaf & Dumb]  
[Law Judged According to Crimes Not Speech]  
[Zoramites Put Korihor to Death]  
[Mission to the Zoramites]**

420 Now, if there ever were authentic and inspired passages in the Book of Mormon it's these [next] chapters we have come to in Alma. We really have something there. Nothing in the whole wide spectrum covered by the Book of Mormon is more significant than what is laid out in Alma 30-35. Wars are tactically territorial, as you know. They always are. That's absolutely basic—Clausewitz again. It's the taking and occupying of land that measures an army's success, but strategically wars are always ideological and they remain that way. The confused alarms and the horrible battles that we get in chapter 28 lead to Alma's passionate outcry in chapter 29, a very short declaration. Then in chapter 30 everybody is fed up with war for a time. It stops in chapter 30—everybody is exhausted. But how had it all begun? The issues are going to continue. The territorial issues have been settled for the time being, but the ideological issues are still there. Now we have the real conflicts here. Remember, [Ammon's] religious reforms

were pushed by the king and rejected by the majority of his subjects, among whom the Nehor philosophy was the one that was dominant. So when the fighting stopped, the ideological controversy was taken up by the skillful spokesman for Nehor, who was Korihor. His name is very interesting, too, like the chief judge that follows him. We'll mention it in a minute.

421 The modest and austere ways of life of the Saints and all this that Alma went for was a subsistence economy, as against a market economy. They are the two kinds of economies that flourish in the world. Subsistence is when you subsist. That's stable and goes on from year to year. The Hopis and other Indians do that. People do that normally. Those are the ancient civilizations; they go on indefinitely. To subsist is all you expect. "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content," said Paul. We have food storage for the sake of subsistence. We don't store our two-year supply to sell for the market. It's for subsistence so we can subsist over the bad years by taking advantage of the good years. This is what the ancients have done. It has always gone on; whereas with the market it is always going up and down. We consult the Dow-Jones everyday. Some days it's up, and some people are made rich and some made poor. So we have these two conflicting philosophies very, very clearly set forth in these chapters of Alma, which are so beautiful. We see the contrast then.

422 According to Alma 1-2 it was Nehor who introduced the first priestcraft. In Egypt it was Korihor who observed the first priestcraft in the twentieth dynasty. His name is being read differently today as HRY-HR (HERIHOR). This was the priestcraft, and it ruined Egypt, actually. Pharaoh lost his authority, and nobody knew who was in charge after that.

422 Alma 1:12 When Nehor comes before Alma right in the first chapter, Alma says, this is the first time we have had priestcraft here. Well if it was the first time, how would he know about priestcraft? Well, of course, the traditions were very great, and we have it right in the Book of Mormon

here. This man Korihor had the same name as [the man in Egypt], and he introduced priestcraft in the time of Alma here. “But Alma said unto him: Behold, this is the first time that priestcraft has been introduced among this people. And behold, thou art not only guilty of priestcraft, but hast endeavored to enforce it by the sword . . .” “And were priestcraft to be enforced among this people it would prove their entire destruction.” Alma knew his history. This hadn’t happened before there. It wasn’t Nephite history he was talking about; it was history from the Old World.

422,423      Question: Is it just coincidental that they have people with the same name that seem to play the same roles in the two different societies?

Answer: It can’t be accidental when you get a name like this [Paanchi SBH]. It ends in “i” in the Book of Mormon. That isn’t a Greek or Latin name. It’s not a Hebrew name or an English name. What is it? Where does it come from? Well, the name was only discovered in the latter part of the nineteenth century, around the 1870s or 1880s. Then there was quite a number of them. It’s a fairly popular name which means “he is my life,” meaning “Amon is my life.” Remember, Amon is the big thing [in Egypt]. But a name like that you wouldn’t invent in a million years. This is the one thing that Albright said you could not get around. This is definitely an Egyptian name and couldn’t be found anywhere else. Somebody had to know it, and there it is in the Book of Mormon. He was very much impressed. Albright’s own copy of the Book of Mormon was heavily marked and carefully read. He was very much impressed by it, and we had some very nice talks together. Anyway, the great Albright is dead now. He got an honorary doctorate from BYU. He came out here and spoke.

423      Alma 30:15,16 He [Nehor] is being a very reasonable person. He takes the position that many people take now in the Church and have always taken. They are the enlightened, the emancipated intellectuals. You can’t know of things you can’t see, he says in verse 15. That’s being very reasonable; he’s a positivist. You can only know what

you can weigh and measure and be sure of. That's scientific and fair enough. What's the rest of it? Well, you're just sick, he says. "But behold, it is the effect of a frenzied mind." Now many of my friends think like this, that Mormons must be deranged.. "But behold, it is the effect of a frenzied mind; and this derangement of your minds comes because of the traditions of your fathers, which lead you away into a belief of things which are not so." Remember the classic example of believing the old traditions and legends and going crazy? Don Quixote. You're a lot of Don Quixotes. You've got these traditions of your fathers. You've romanticized them, you're stuck with them, and you believe things which just are not so, he says.

424 Alma 30:17 Then he talks about the facts of life. "And many more such things did he say unto them ..." Now here is the creed. This is the creed of individualism, dialectical materialism, etc.—Mill, Ricardo, and all the rest of them. When you talk about "the management of the creature," that's a perfect expression. It's the manipulation of people as if they were items or products. You can manipulate everything with the psychology of salesmanship. It is the manipulation, the management of the creature. Every man will fare according to how he manages himself; therefore, every man prospers according to his genius, and every man conquers according to his strength. The result is, of course, that you deserve what you get—the survival of the fittest, nature wants it that way, "and whatsoever a man did was no crime." On the founding of BYU, Brigham Young said that was the doctrine that BYU was founded to counteract. We won't go into that quotation, but I should find it here.

424 Alma 30:18 That is just what they [the Nehors] wanted to do, because if that is so God is dead and all is permitted. They enjoyed that because they weren't bound down. They were now emancipated (verse 18), "leading away the hearts of many [because they liked it], causing them to lift up their heads in their wickedness, yea, leading away many women, and also men, to commit whoredoms—telling them that when a man was dead, that was the end thereof." So, as I said, nobody has to be paid off. On the basis of this

materialistic thing you are not going anywhere. If you are going to have your fun you must have it here. So it led to immorality. That's part of the picture of this positivism.

424,425 Alma 30: 19-23 Now this man [Korihor] went over to the land of Jershon. This was now going to be occupied by the Ammonites to make a buffer state. They carried him before Ammon there; they didn't like him. These were the Ammonites who had followed Ammon and were settled in Jershon. They didn't like it, but what can you do about it? They took him to the high priest, and he was a hot potato. The high priest ordered him deported—that was all he could do. So they deported him to the land of Gideon, and he began to preach to them, too. The high priest there was also the chief judge over the land. He said, "Why do ye go about perverting the ways of the Lord?" The high priest's name was Giddonah, another good Egyptian name. Then Korihor gives them the reply here. This is what religion is [according to him]: ". . . foolish ordinances and performances which are laid down by ancient priests, to usurp power and authority over them." He has a point there because there are such foolish ordinances and performances laid down by ancient priests to gain power and authority. That's priestcraft. So you see how confused the issue can become and how the arguments can tighten up against each other here. It's the "opiate of the people" here. It keeps "them in ignorance, that they may not lift up their heads, but be brought down according to thy words." They must live by the old morality, be so strict, etc. This is the thing that everybody is laughing about now, our Victorian morals. They make fun of that. That's a lot of old superstition and nonsense. That's the way they talk today.

425 Alma 30:24 "Ye say that this people is a free people. Behold, I say they are in bondage." This is a crucial point. When are we free? This is what the Zoramites and the people of Zarahemla think. They think they are free. He goes on to explain that freedom must include complete freedom from any government interference in anything we do, especially with our money. Remember, this was a sacral civilization. They lived by the law of Moses, and the judges



were also priests. They had judges and they judged by the law of Moses, we are told. So that means we have a sacral or priestly society here. We have two priestcrafts colliding, you might say.

425 Alma 30:26-28 “Ye do not know that there shall be a Christ.” You say this is a fallen people. That’s one way to lose an election. You’ll never make yourself popular asking for repentance. “And thus ye lead away this people after the foolish traditions of your fathers, and according to your own desires; and ye keep them down, even as it were in bondage, that ye may glut yourselves with the labors of their hands, that they durst not look up with boldness [on what was their own], and that they durst not enjoy their rights and privileges.” This is total privatization is what he is out for. “Yea, they durst not make use of that which is their own lest they should offend their priests, who do yoke them according to their desires, and have brought them to believe, by their traditions and their dreams and their whims and their visions [he starts really pouring it on here] and their pretended mysteries, that they should, if they did not do according to their words, offend some unknown being, who they say is God—a being who never has been seen or known, who never was nor ever will be.”

425,426 Alma 30 29-42 Alma said, I have labored with my own hands for my own support all my life. You know that. As a judge I got paid by my time, a flat rate, one senine for my labor for the day in the judgment seat. That’s the only pay I ever got for any work in the state or in the church. “Then why sayest thou that we preach unto this people to get gain, when thou, of thyself, knowest that we receive no gain? [Why do you go around deceiving the people this way?] And now, believest thou that we deceive this people, that causes such joy in their hearts? And Korihor answered him, Yea. And then Alma said unto him: Believest thou that there is a God?” And he said, no I don’t believe that. And in verse 40 Alma said, “And now what evidence have ye that there is no God, or that Christ cometh not?” See, you can never prove a negative. You can’t prove to me absolutely now as we are standing and sitting here that there is not

a kangaroo behind that desk. There could very well be. I don't know, but there could be. You can't prove that there isn't, as you go down there. You can't prove a negative, in other words, but you can prove a positive. On the other hand we "have all things as a testimony that these things are true; and ye also have all things as a testimony unto you that they are true; and will ye deny them? . . . Behold, I know that thou believest, but thou art possessed with a lying spirit, and ye have put off the Spirit of God that it may have no place in you."

426 Alma 30:43,44 Why are people so obsessed with rage, for example, against Joseph Smith, as if he had personally insulted them and ruined their lives? They have never seen him, but they really take on. Korihor says, then "show me a sign." That's the usual thing. After all, he is positivist. Verse 44: "But Alma said unto him: Thou hast had signs enough; will ye tempt your God? Will ye say, Show unto me a sign, when ye have the testimony of all these thy brethren, and also all the holy prophets? The scriptures are laid before thee, yea, and all things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it." Did they make themselves, in other words? Did they just come about accidentally? Well, Korihor would say they did. And that is what Darwin introduced here in this ANNUS MIRABILIS. ". . . and also all the planets which move in their regular form do witness that there is a Supreme Creator." These are the old classic arguments for deity which Aristotle used. "And he said: Yes, I will deny, except ye shall show me a sign." These are signs actually, but he said, "Show me a sign." What kind of a sign would it be if these aren't signs?

426,427 Alma 30:48 So he said, if you want a sign God will smite you dumb. Then he started getting worried in verse 48: "Now Korihor said unto him: I do not deny the existence of a God [he just had], but I do not believe that there is a God, . . . and except ye show me a sign, I will not believe."

427 Alma 30:50-52 Alma said, okay I will give you a sign

“that thou shalt be struck dumb, according to my words; and I say, that in the name of God, ye shall be struck dumb.” And Korihor was struck dumb. Was it a stroke? Was he so wrought up? Would that be the effect of this sort of thing if he had actually been putting it on? He got himself in so deep that he had to put on this big show. We find out he really was scared here, and this was all it took to push him over. He was struck dumb, and deaf also because Alma had to write for him. “And now when the chief judge saw this, he put forth his hand and wrote unto Korihor.” [The chief judge] wrote to Korihor, so he was deaf and dumb. In reply Korihor wrote, in verse 52, “Yea, and I always knew that there was a God.” Here we have an interesting paradox. What happened? He said, “The devil hath deceived me; for he appeared unto me in the form of an angel.” Well, an angel comes and tells you there is no God, and that’s why you don’t believe in God? What would make you believe in God more than to have an angel come to you? Well, that’s a nice paradox, but it works that way. As Brigham Young said, “Pray that you’ll never see an angel.” All those that saw angels apostatized—like Oliver Cowdery, the Whitmers, and others. They didn’t deny the angels, but it made them very negative. How would they possibly turn against and deny the work? They did. Frederick G. Williams, W. W. Phelps, and others trotted off to the courthouse at Richmond and swore out these horrible accusations against Joseph Smith. Shortly afterward, they denied them. Joseph held nothing against them and took them back again. See the effect that has. They were momentarily seized by something, the men that should have had the firmest faith. They went and swore out depositions of the most terrible things against Joseph Smith. Then within a matter of weeks or months they came back, asked for his pardon, and wanted to be admitted into the Church again. That’s a strange state of things, isn’t it? No, it’s not strange. It shows that something unusual is going on here.

427 Alma 30:17,18 Korihor said, he said to me in the form of an angel “there is no God; yea, and he taught me that which I should say. And I have taught his words; and I taught them because they were pleasing unto the carnal

mind.” And it tells us here why they were pleasing to the carnal mind. The carnal mind is that which caused men and women to lift up their heads and to commit whoredoms, “telling them that when a man was dead, that was the end thereof.” That’s what they wanted. They wanted a *carte blanche* for carnal behavior to do whatever they wanted. It appealed to the carnal mind. Carnal also means things of the world, as indicated in Alma 30:17, “but every man fared in this life according to the management of the creature [that’s carnal], . . . prospered according to his genius, . . . conquered according to his strength.” That’s on the carnal level of the warfare in which you deal with objects and people, having no spirit at all. So he had been fooled into that, and the people liked to hear it for that reason.

428 Alma 30:53-59 “I taught them, even until I had much success.” It was easy to believe, an emancipating belief. I began to believe it myself. That’s a nice psychological touch. He was going on so strongly. When he started defying Alma, you could see he was backing up all the time until he said, “I do not deny the existence of a God.” You know he is weakening at that time. Now is the time for Alma to lower the beam, and he gets deaf and dumb. “I taught them, even until I had much success, insomuch that I verily believed that they were true.” Well, the curse was not taken off him, and he was cast out. This leads us over to the next people. He went around begging from door to door for his bread, a pitiful figure, until he finally came among the Zoramites, who were dissenters from the Nephites. They were living by themselves and were a very superior people actually. He was run over and put to death by a mob.

428 Alma 30:2; Moses 1:19 Did we start back at the beginning of this chapter the last time? The first part of the chapter is the most important part; I’d better take it on then. At the beginning of the chapter the war was over, and the dead were not numbered because of the great slaughter. Then there was continual peace at the end of verse 2. “And they were strict in observing the ordinances of God, according to the law of Moses.” So that’s the way they were living in verse 3. But the Nehors are still the more

popular. Then in verse 6 “there came a man into the land of Zarahemla, and he was Anti-Christ ...” We mentioned Anti-Christ the last time. His name was Korihor. Anti-Christ means putting yourself up and defying Christ. We put all those words on the boards. Anti-Nephi-Lehi means Nephi brought face to face, or joined together with the other descendants of Lehi. He didn't name Lamanites and Lemuelites separately. Lehi covered all the Lamans and Lemuels. Anti-Nephi-Lehi means Nephi and Lehi brought together again, which they were. The Lamanites and Lemuelites became dominant and more numerous than the Nephites; they were more righteous, too. So it is very proper to call this event the bringing together of Nephi and Lehi, the anti. He [Korihor] was Anti-Christ in the same way. He confronted Christ face to face and claimed to be him. He claimed to replace him. He was the false Christ. There are lots of Anti-Christ. The Anti-Christ comes and says that he is Christ. This is what Satan does. Remember in the beginning of Moses, he said, “I am the Only Begotten, worship me,” and he ranted upon the ground.

428,429 Well, he [Korihor] came to Zarahemla. He preached against the religion and everything Alma stood for, and yet Alma had to let him do it. After all, Alma had been permitted by his father to go out and preach against the church, and the sons of Mosiah, the king, were out preaching against the church. Why were they allowed to do that? It was according to the law of Mosiah it tells us here. “Now there was no law against a man's belief; for it was strictly contrary to the commands of God that there should be a law which should bring men on to unequal grounds.” If there was a favored religion, a state religion, then we would have social pressure and things could be more serious, too. Then you could start censorship and all sorts of things. But it was strictly contrary to the law of God that they should make laws controlling other people's religion or judging them at all. They were perfectly free to believe anything they wanted to. That would make them unequal, because the Lord said, “Choose you this day whom ye will serve.” You have the right to choose it. “Now if a man desired to serve God, it was his privilege [so you can go to church all

you want and have school prayer all you want, as we do here]; but if he did not believe in him there was no law to punish him,” or to put him under restraint. What you do in a case like this is to bring social pressure. That leads to other things like censorship and being outcasts, pariahs, etc.

429 Alma 30:11,12 “For there was a law that men should be judged according to their crimes. Nevertheless, there was no law against a man’s belief.” That wasn’t a crime, whatever he believed. If it led him to commit a crime, he was punished for the crime—not for the belief, even though the belief might have led him to it. “Therefore, a man was punished only for the crimes which he had done; therefore all men were on equal grounds.” This means socially equal, politically equal, and religiously equal. So he was able to preach. The law could have no hold on this Anti-Christ whose name was Korihor. He said, “Behold, these things which ye call prophecies,... they are foolish traditions of your fathers.”

429 Elder Oaks gave a wonderful talk during conference on criticism and criticizing. Just criticize all you want. Write anything you want anywhere; just don’t expect the Church officially to endorse it. That would be foolish. We don’t have to endorse what you say. That’s what these people want to do. They think because they are members of the Church they can have influence. They can argue and be perfectly free. I have criticized as freely as anybody else. Should I tell you about this? Yes. When I first came to Provo I went up and asked Brother J. Reuben Clark, “Should I ‘keep my nose clean’? I’m sassy, shoot off my mouth, and become very critical down at BYU. Shouldn’t I shut up?”

429 He said, “That would be the worst thing you could possibly do. We have to have an adversary relationship if we are going to get at the truth in these things.” (He was a lawyer, of course.) So you have to have some forum for expression here, and nobody was freer in that than President Oaks when he was here.

430 Then Korihor goes on to say [the traditions] were the

effect of a frenzied mind. We read that already. We have to see why Korihor had to be allowed to do anything he wanted to there. It was only when he came to these upright Zoramites that were so strict and so materialistic that he was mobbed and put to death. They were the intolerant ones, not Alma. Alma couldn't afford to be intolerant. After all, his father had put up with him.

430 Alma 30 22; Alma 31:1 Now these Zoramites were "perverting the ways of the Lord." Notice, they kept them but they perverted them. It wasn't apostasy; it was perversion. That's what happened in the second, third, and fourth centuries. They continued to claim the gospel, but now they started bowing down to dumb idols. We have lots of indication here that there were older traditions in the land, which they adopted. We won't talk about that now, but there was a great culture here already. The evidence for that comes later in the book. But Alma began to sicken because of the iniquity he saw among this people, when he saw what was going on there. Alma is very much affected by these things. If he is sickened by them, the question arises then, why should he judge the iniquity of his people? Why should he be worried about the wickedness of other people? Well, we see a little later why that is so—not only because of its blatant way, but he has a definite reason for being sickened.

430 Alma 31:3,4 "Now the Zoramites had gathered themselves together in a land which they called Antionum [they were people who had left the Nephites]... which also bordered upon the wilderness south, which wilderness was full of the Lamanites." The Lamanites were to the south, Antionum was in the middle, and the Nephites were on the north. [Brother Nibley shows their locations on the board.] He didn't want the Zoramites to get together with the Lamanites and make a squeeze-play on [the Ammonites]. This was Jershon; this was their buffer state in between. The Zoramites were on top. The Lamanites were on the bottom, and the Ammonites, the people of Jershon, were in between. (I should get things straight once in a while. They would throw me right out if I had to make an intelligence

report today, wouldn't they? I get all mixed up. If you say the south is on the north, it is going to ruin a lot of action. You get your artillery going in the wrong places and wipe your own people out. That has happened.) The Zoramites gathered themselves together in the land Antionum. The land south was the land of Jershon. The Ammonites in Jershon were on the south, and south of them [notice] "upon the wilderness south, which wilderness was full of the Lamanites. Now the Nephites greatly feared that the Zoramites would enter into a correspondence with the Lamanites." See, if they got together with the Lamanites, then they could put the squeeze on the people of Ammon in between. That's what they were afraid of; tactically it was a very dangerous situation.

431 Alma 31:5,6 What do we do? What do we do to weaken them? Well, Alma thought, we have to strengthen our position among the Zoramites so that they won't link up with the Lamanites there. The preaching of the word was the way to do it, so he took his mission there. He had found that "had more powerful effect upon the minds of the people than the sword," and that they should first give it a try—"try the virtue of the word of God" and see if that would work. So he got together his famous SWAT team of all the powerful missionaries: Ammon, Aaron, Omner, and Himni. Even Zeezrom now. Remember old Zeezrom, who had been converted and healed of a fever. He had been just as arrogant as Korihor, but he joined the brethren. Alma took Amulek and Zeezrom and also two of his sons. So that's quite a crowd. They had a missionary task force here that was going to go in and work on the Zoramites, but they didn't get to first base. Immediately they find among the Zoramites, very strongly marked, this ideological conflict. There are the poor Zoramites that live out by themselves, and there are the rich Zoramites. They have very little to do with each other, he is going to tell us here.

431 Alma 31:8 "Now the Zoramites were dissenters from the Nephites [they had been Nephites]; therefore they had had the word of God preached unto them." They had perverted it. They would not keep the law of Moses; they



didn't like that part of it. And they wouldn't pray "that they might not enter into temptation." That's the best way to resist temptation, the social norms, etc. So they had their own religion and built synagogues. Remember, the Nephites had synagogues, too, and they built their own synagogues now. They were following the old pattern. The Jews had their synagogues, too. They were a very religious people, a church-building people. This was important with the Zoramites. They had built synagogues and gathered themselves together on one day of the week, which they did call the day of the Lord. They were doing it themselves. Following the old Nehor pattern, aren't they? They had a place for standing, high enough for one person to stand on.

432 At the top [of a Temple in South America] there is a stand, which is sometimes a very small place. We don't know what it was, but it was called a Rameumptom, he tells us. This is very interesting, because the word RAM in all Semitic languages means high, whether it's Hebrew, Aramaic, Arabic, Babylonian, or anything else. So it's a high place. But KB means curved or curling, like a serpent, winding 'round and 'round. So it could have been a winding stairway that went up to the top of the tower, winding up and winding down. But one person at a time would go up. The name is interesting; it suggests winding. You would think that they would be straight, following the usual pattern. But remember, this was long before the classical period. All of this is just a guess thrown out freely, but at least it's not a bad guess. If he (Joseph Smith) was making this up, he is awfully good at making things up. You have to give him credit for that.

432 Alma 31:13 This is the way they would go. They would go on the top and stretch forth their hands to heaven. That's the HALLEL gesture, which you find anciently everywhere. It gave us the Hebrew letter H. It's the little hallelujah mannequin here [Brother Nibley draws it on the board]. You see it on jars, vases, rocks, glyphs, etc. They would do that. It's the usual gesture, the HALLEL or HALLELUJAH. HALLEL means "to greet the new moon" and various things like that. They would recite this prayer.

433 Alma 31:15-22 So they go through this sort of thing and say, “Holy, holy God; we believe that thou art God, and we believe that thou art holy, and that thou wast a spirit, and that thou art a spirit, and that thou wilt be a spirit forever. Holy God, we believe that thou hast separated us [now this self-righteousness] from our brethren,... but we believe that thou hast elected us to be thy holy children.” This doctrine of election can be very flattering. There are people who have kept it. “But thou art the same yesterday, today, and forever; and thou hast elected us that we shall be saved, whilst all around us are elected to be cast by thy wrath down to hell,... and we also thank thee that thou hast elected us, that we may not be led away after the foolish traditions of our brethren.” They say, “Don’t reveal this to anyone. This is secret and just for a particular group.” But they [the Zoramites] make this an instrument of pride and vanity.

433,434 Alma 31: 18,24 “And again we thank thee, O God, that we are a chosen and a holy people.” Now Alma was astonished at what he found. There had been big changes; they had picked up something somewhere. They talked about the Rameumptom and they gave this prayer to God and said “their hearts were not stolen away to believe in things to come, which they knew nothing about.” This was their positive position; they didn’t believe in the other things. Each man would give his thanks, bear his testimony, and then come down. Then they would never mention it again for the rest of the week. That was the Nehor element, very proper and very correct, but they weren’t really religious. They weren’t religious around the clock at all; they would just take care of it. Now this was silly, but was it wicked? It was extreme wickedness that worried Alma. We’ll see what the wickedness consisted in. The next week they “assembled themselves together again to the holy stand, to offer up thanks after their manner. Now when Alma saw this his heart was grieved; for he saw that they were a wicked and a perverse people” (Alma 31:24).

434 Alma 31:24 This is where the wickedness and

perversity come in. If you want to be silly, that's one thing. If they were charitable and good people and did this silly thing, that's no sillier than lots of people do today. But this is it. "He saw that their hearts were set upon gold, and upon silver, and upon all manner of fine goods. Yea, and he also saw that their hearts were lifted up unto great boasting, in their pride [remember President Benson's talk at conference].... O Lord, wilt thou suffer that thy servants shall dwell here below in the flesh, to behold such gross wickedness among the children of men?" Behold, O God, they cry unto thee, and yet their hearts are swallowed up in their pride." It's the and yet that makes it wicked. There's nothing wrong with crying unto God and praying to him in sincerity. "Behold, O God, they cry unto thee with their mouths, while they are puffed up, even to greatness, with the vain things of the world."

434 That's what they were doing. These are the sort of corporate apologetics we hear so much of today: Things are what we say they are. We are doing a good job. We are leaning over backwards. You just talk to people and they will go for it. He said, they cry unto thee with their mouths, while their hearts are puffed up. Well, of course, the Lord told Joseph Smith that in the First Vision. "They draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me."

434,435 Alma 31:28 "Behold, O my God, their costly apparel, and their ringlets, and their bracelets [we think again of the vase paintings and murals that show this lavish overadornment of these people, at a much later period though] and their ornaments of gold, and all their precious things which they are ornamented with; and behold, their hearts are set upon them, and yet they cry unto thee [there's the hypocrisy; that's what made it a sin; there's nothing wrong with crying to God, but it's where your heart really is]. We thank thee, O God, for we are a chosen people unto thee, while others shall perish. Yea, and they say that thou hast made it known unto them that there shall be no Christ. O Lord God, how long wilt thou suffer that such wickedness and infidelity shall be among this people?"

435 Alma 31:33,35 Isn't he being rather judgmental here? No, he is not at all. Why is he so concerned? Well, in the first place they were so blatantly, so overtly [wicked], and Alma had wider experience than anybody else. He knew about people and characters, etc. He had seen more wickedness than anybody else, he being Alma the Younger. So he was able to judge them on that basis, and also because they were blatant. They put on quite a show. But the main thing is in verse 35. He loves them, and his heart is concerned about them. "Behold, O Lord, their souls are precious, and many of them are our brethren." So that's why he feels right to be saying that he is suffering terribly. He's not a hypocrite who is overwhelmed by other people's wickedness when it should be his own sins that concern him. It's that he's on a mission here, and he wants to do what he can. "O Lord God, how long wilt thou suffer that such wickedness and infidelity shall be among this people? O Lord, wilt thou give me strength, that I may bear with mine infirmities." Notice, good old Alma again. He must bear with his infirmities. Remember, Nephi says in his prayer right at the beginning, why am I angry at my enemies instead of at myself? He rebukes himself for that, and Alma does the same thing here. "Give me strength, that I may bear with mine infirmities" and face them. But meantime, the reason he is interested [is to have] success with them. Here's a refreshing definition of success, written without dollar signs. Verse 33: "Wilt thou grant unto them [his companions] that they may have strength, that they may bear their afflictions. . . . Behold, O Lord, their souls are precious." So he wants to save them. His concern is not mean, but generous for them. He doesn't want to damn them.

435 Alma 31:36 In verse 36 it says "that he clapped his hands upon all them who were with him." That's an interesting word there, isn't it? To clap means to put your hands firmly on something. The Old English word is CLIPPYON and it [is related] to grab, grope, and gripe, [German] KLEBEN. They mean to grab firmly, and the Latin CARPO is the same thing. But this HARPO, CARPO is a good old English usage. In fact, the Egyptian word for

“to embrace” is HPT. That means to gain control, to grab a thing, to hold it firmly, etc. So it’s proper. The old Anglo-Saxon use “to clap” his hands on his head doesn’t mean he applauded this way. He put his hands firmly on their heads when he set them apart is what happened. And taking no thought for themselves, they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

436 The next chapter is an extremely important one, because this is such an accurate picture of Mesoamerican society, according to a recent collection of studies. It’s about people building the sacred centers for the ruling class and the like. That can go quickly though.

# Lecture 55 Alma 32-35

**Mission to the Zoramites**  
**[Two Zoramite Societies Described]**  
**[Nibley dissertation on faith]**  
**[Importance of Nourishing the Seed]**  
**[Universality of the Atonement in Past Cultures]**  
**[This Life is a Time for Preparation]**

437 Alma 35:3; Alma 32:1-4 The Book of Mormon doesn't dabble around, as historical romances and things like that do. It's really to the "nitty gritty." In this chapter 34, Alma is speaking to the other Zoramites. Alma has two missions, you'll notice, with this people. The first one was a complete failure with the Zoramites proper. There are the excluded ones that are not included in this. They are another society entirely. They're not even allowed to go to these temples. You remember, he talks about the temples, their riches, their homes, and all this sort of thing. But this is where the other society doesn't even come near; they are shut out of town after dark. It's expressed here a little further on in Alma 35:3 where he says, "And it came to pass that after the more popular part of the Zoramites had consulted together concerning the words which had been preached unto them, they were angry because ... it did destroy their craft." The more popular parts wouldn't accept it at all. Their craft, of course, was priestcraft. But these [people] are the less popular parts. In fact, they don't even have citizen's rights or anything else, as we soon find out. They met on the hill Onidah and "began to have great success

among the poor class of people; for behold, they were cast out of the synagogues because of the coarseness of their apparel.... They were esteemed by their brethren as dross.”

337 Alma 32:3,4 You see we have two different societies, the quality and the nothings—the riff-raff, the great unwashed. Of course, because of that condition “they were poor in heart.” Alma spoke to a large throng of them who met on the hill Onidah. They had these general mass meetings then as now; in fact, mass meetings were much more common in ancient times than today. “Upon the hill Onidah, there came a great multitude unto him who were ... poor in heart, because of their poverty as to the things of the world. They came to Alma, and this was their complaint. Their leader said, “Behold, what shall these my brethren do, for they are despised of all men because of their poverty, yea, and more especially by our priests; for they have cast us out of our synagogues which we have labored abundantly to build with our own hands; and they have cast us out because of our exceeding poverty, and we have no place to worship our God; and behold, what shall we do?”

439 Alma 32:5 “The priestly leaders of these great centers [remember, Alma said, ‘and especially by their priests’] in their efforts to outdo each other, to draw more wealth and prestige to themselves, and to bring more worshippers and taxpayers into their particular orbits, must have diverted all possible labor and capital to their aggrandizement.... Add to all this the competition for trade, . . . and we can see the situation brought to a fighting pitch, . . . all leading to a rapid down-spiraling to extinction.” This is where it culminates in the Book of Mormon. We are approaching the long war, the great fourteen-year war. We are not going to be able to go into it this semester, if ever. They (the Maya) didn’t get anywhere. They didn’t collapse and then build up again. It was extinction in every case. The ruins of the cities were never rebuilt. That was just it; they were finished. It’s an amazing picture, and, of course, this is the amazing picture that we find in the Book of Mormon. You don’t find it in Europe; that’s not the way things go there. People go

on suffering in Europe and Asia, etc. The same old cities are still there, the same old mobs, troubles, murders, etc. They continue with starvation and all the rest of it. But it's a different pattern in the promised land here.

439 Alma 32:6 When he saw these people were humble, Alma was filled with great joy. "For he beheld that their afflictions had truly humbled them, and that they were in a preparation to hear the word [he had a new clientele now]. Therefore he did say no more to the other multitude." See, there were two multitudes, two Zoramite communities. His mission was to the first. Why did he go to the first? Because they were the ones that made the trouble. Remember, the idea was he didn't want the Zoramites to join in with the Lamanites on the other side of the Ammonites so they would have a "squeeze play." They would break down the value of their buffer state. In order to discourage them from going away and joining the enemy, he decided, we will go and preach to them. That's the best way he could think of. So these dangerous people were the ones he wanted to preach to—the influential ones. But he couldn't get anywhere with them, so then he turned to what he calls "the other multitude," making it clear that we do have two societies here. He stretched forth his hand and cried unto them and said, "Behold I say unto you, do ye suppose that ye cannot worship God save it be in your synagogues only?" Well, they certainly had that ingrained into them. The building of the holy places was of prime consideration. That's where everything went on; that was the center of holiness. (Every Sunday we thank the Lord for our beautiful meeting houses, etc. We talked about the fashionable religion, where they met only once a week and did the right thing.)

440 Alma 32:12 "I say unto you, it is well that ye are cast out of your synagogues, that ye may be humble, and that ye may learn wisdom." Of course, they couldn't go in because they didn't observe dress standards. Remember, they were cast out because of the coarseness of their apparel. The dress standards were very strict. Notice some things about the Zoramites. A lot is said from here on about the Zoramites in the Book of Mormon. Someone mentioned last time after



class that Zoram was a servant of Laban. He was drafted by Lehi's family, by Nephi especially. Being a servant of Laban, the military governor of Jerusalem, he would not be an Israelite because you can't enslave or make a servant of an Israelite. The name Zoram is again one of those desert names. It's from the eastern half of Manasseh. It means a welcome, refreshing, powerful rain. A lot of this stuff has come out of Genesis 13-14, but the people of the Near East are noted for their genealogical awareness. It's IBN so-and-so. You identify yourself as a son of so-and-so, or ABI so-and-so, or the father of so-and-so, or IBN ABU (the son of the father). But you always trace back your relationships. They could do it many generations by memory, if not in writing. But along with that, even more easy to keep alive, are old grudges and feuds, the times you were wronged, because you had to take revenge when you were wronged. That's the GHDZA, revenge, the raid. So you would make your raid to get your revenge. They were honor bound to get revenge. You have the chivalric system of honor, revenge, etc. These things are endless. They have gone on how many hundreds of years in Ireland, in the Philippines, and in Lebanon.

440,441      So it is very possible that these Zoramites would keep a sort of aloofness or distinction among themselves. They were proud of their blood, etc. It was not a hundred percent [Zoramite]. They had joined with Lehi's family and were good friends. The Zoramites were Nephites. They went along, but still they were aware of their ancestry, traditions, etc. Then the tendency comes to break up. After all, Alma started it when he moved out. Nephi started it when he moved out. That was the thing if you had a group with particular aspirations. We've seen numerous records of the fact that they had their own dialects, their own manner of speech. They could understand each other, but they were forming [other] languages. These Zoramites were people with their own traditions, and they were remarkable people—you must give them that. Notice down here some of the qualities they had. Well, first they were church builders. They went to regular religious service and gave fervent testimony and thanksgiving. They were very

enterprising, very sophisticated, elegant in their dress, insisted on dress standards. They were independent and went off by themselves. The best military officers were always found [among them], we are told. That's the one thing that threatened the Nephites when the Zoramites joined with the Lamanites, because the best military officers who knew all the Nephite tricks were with them. This greatly endangered the Nephite cause in the long war that followed. They were the best fighters. They certainly were proud and brave. They were hard working and made other people work hard, too, and they were highly successful. They had strict censorship and were very proper. They were ultra conservative, imposing a rule of righteousness on all, we find in chapter 35. They were determined, free enterprising, and had a perfectly beautiful self-image.

441 Alma 32:16 Well, what's wrong with these people? Just that contradiction. There's nothing wrong with praying and thanking the Lord for what you have. The pride they had was not wholly wrong. But to say one thing when your heart is really somewhere else. It was all on this vulgar display and how much they could pile up, this invidious comparison. This was what was wrong, and this is what sickened Alma. He said it made him sick. Anyway, he is talking to the other side, which he calls the other multitude. He said, you should be glad you are cast out of the synagogues; I have a surprise for you. You don't have to go to the sacred centers in order to worship. You are compelled to be humble, and that's good. If you're compelled to be humble you seek repentance. This verse 16 looks like an exception: "Therefore, blessed are they who humble themselves without being compelled to be humble." Is that a franchise for riches after all? It does tell us you can be humble without being poor. But remember, to seek riches is to seek power, prestige, influence and luxury, and you are not humble when you are looking for those things—if they are the things that interest you. So I must assert that I am humble if I want to feel right. If I'm too rich I have to make a big shout about being humble. I've heard a lot of that from rich friends. "Blessed are they who humble themselves without being compelled to be humble"—that's

nice, and without talking about it, of course. HUMUS is the earth, and humility means “down to the earth.” DHN & the Egyptians call it—grinding your forehead in the dirt. You are lowering yourself as low as you can get in the dust.

441,442 Alma 32:17 “Yea, there are many who do say: If thou wilt show unto us a sign from heaven, then we shall know of a surety.” Notice, he’s beginning with the fundamentals with these people. These people are practically slaves. They want to know about the gospel. They don’t know anything. There are things they don’t understand. All the hints they’ve been taking, they’ve been taking from the other Zoramites. They were Zoramites, too, you see. This is a sermon on faith that comes here, and it’s a very important sermon on faith. He begins working from the ground up with these people. He has a new audience, his second audience, the other multitude. He says, shouldn’t we begin by showing you a sign? Because that’s the way it always begins in the Golden Legend and the early Christian legends of the fourth and fifth centuries. The apostles go about, and the only way they convert people is by signs—making a dead fish sign and things like that. They do this and it immediately converts everybody, and everybody becomes good Christians. This is routine. He says, “Now I ask, is this faith? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for if a man knoweth a thing he hath no cause to believe, for he knoweth it.”

442 Alma 32:20,21 Well, are knowledge and faith enemies then? If I have something, I don’t have to believe and I don’t have to have faith. There are some people who would tell us that knowledge is the enemy of faith. Will study weaken faith? That’s thought to be so in some quarters. If you know, it’s not the same thing as only believing. “And it shall be unto every man according to this work. And now as I said concerning faith—faith is not to have a perfect knowledge of things; therefore if ye have faith ye hope for things which are not seen, which are true.” You hope it is true. Peter in his argument with Simon Magus says [something like this]. You can imagine an island. It’s an imaginary island; you have never been there. It’s a real island though. Well, you

can imagine visiting Mirror Lake, what it would be like up there. It's imaginary for you. You have faith that it's there. You are imagining something that's real, but for you is only imagination. Peter says the same thing: Before I came to Caesaria I didn't know what it was like. I had an image of what it was like, which was not correct. But it was reality, and here I am [paraphrased].

442 Alma 32:22,23 "God is merciful unto all who believe on his name; therefore he desireth, in the first place, that ye should believe, yea, even on his word." First you believe on his name. His name is the only tie you have with him. The name is going to identify. The name is the way you "hitch in." You can start in on this with the name and with the word. "He imparteth his word by angels unto men" and women also and "little children do have words given unto them many times, which confound the wise and the learned."

442 In the old Joseph Smith Lectures on Faith the question comes, "What proof do we have in the first instance that there is a God?" The answer is, human testimony and human testimony only. It's not actually by looking at the flowers, the bees, the clouds, etc. They testify that somebody's in charge. But what we have is people who have witnessed, the people who have been in the presence. This is a very important thing.

443 Orson F. Whitney at Eliza R. Snow's funeral mentioned an interesting thing. You know that passage in Abraham where it says, "Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones. And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers." This was before the creation. He [Whitney] said there were just as many women in that group as there were men. He was speaking about Eliza R. Snow and why she should be one of the most gifted prophets and poets in the school—not just prophetess, but most gifted prophet. She had tremendous gifts and powers.

443 Alma 23:25 It comes down to this witnessing thing—how can you witness this and how do you know it? This is what you do. “For I do not mean that ye all of you have been compelled to humble yourselves.” Some would be humble under any circumstances at all, which means you should be humble all the time. In Alma 34:38 and Ether 12:27, humble really means what it says—humilus “in the dust,” as low as that.

443 Alma 32:27 Faith is not a perfect knowledge, we know that. But it's not authoritarian here. You can't command somebody to believe something; you can't twist a person's arm. Verse 27: “But behold, if ye will awake and arouse your faculties ...” This is a famous passage. All I'm asking for you to do is to make an experiment. I'm not asking you to believe me. We talked about the kangaroo behind the desk there. If I come down and say, “I just saw a polar bear in Rock Canyon,” what are you supposed to say? “If you say you saw a polar bear in Rock Canyon, Brother Nibley, I believe you.” Well, that's terrible. I don't want to hear that. That takes all the wind out of my sails. I want you to go up and see for yourself. Or you might say, “Of course, there's no polar bear. You didn't see anything of the sort. No polar bears are found below a certain latitude. Polar bears just aren't found in these regions, so you didn't see any polar bear.” Well, I might have; there might have been one that escaped from the zoo. But you don't know. The thing for you to do is not just take it because I say so, or not to reject it because you are being scientific and you don't think it can be possible. Find out for yourself.

443,444 Alma 32:27,28 That's what he is telling us here. It turns out that faith is intellectual honesty. That's what it is. He makes this very clear a little later. He says, first you arouse your faculties, use your brains, and be willing to make an experiment. You don't accept it when you make an experiment. You're going to try it out to see if it is so. Do we have [cold] fusion or not? Some people have faith in it, and some people don't have faith. The only thing to do is to try it out and see. If you can exercise even a particle of faith, just start out with that. That's all you

need. But “let this desire work in you.” Then you say, “Oh, you believe it because you want to believe it.” Of course, you’re not going to do anything if you don’t have that inducement, to want to believe in something. You say it’s wishful thinking. Of course, everything you want to believe in is wishful thinking. You never discover anything unless you hope it is there or wish it is there. Here he talks about your faith being dormant, but he says don’t fight it. If you have a desire to believe, don’t fight it, “that ye can give place for a portion of my words.” Notice that it comes by degrees; it comes by steps here. There’s more and more reason why you should believe, but no reason why you should believe it completely ever. This is the interesting thing here. It’s like planting a seed in your heart. If it’s a true seed this is what will happen. Don’t cast it out in your unbelief. Give it a chance; let it grow. It will begin to swell within your breast. Then you will feel the swelling motions. You will think something is happening here. Don’t throw it away at all. If it is growing it must be good “for it beginneth to enlarge my soul [this is recognition]; yea, it beginneth to enlighten my understanding, yea, it beginneth to be delicious to me.”

444 Alma 32:30 Each success leads to another try; it gets better and better. What do you know when you are entirely certain? (We’ll look in Klein’s book here; I brought it along.) You haven’t got the answers, and it’s not one way or the other. As long as you are in the flesh, you can always doubt it. He goes on here, if the seed grows it’s good; don’t cast it away. Because you have tried the experiment and planted the seed and it “swelleth, and sprouteth, and beginneth to grow, then you must needs say that the seed is good.” It’s not dead yet. If it doesn’t work just forget it. This is the whole thing. It will cause a dullness in your breast, a stupor of thought will come over you. Remember, the Lord says if you have worked out a good plan about your fusion or something else, you ask him about it. If it is right he will cause a burning in your bosom. If it is not he will cause a dullness of spirit. This is what happens. But even though you know it’s good and you are wide open for impressions, you are awaiting the next operation. It’s still always on hold, “and your faith is dormant; and this because you know,

for ye know that the word hath swelled your souls.” That’s what you do know, that something is happening, but it is still dormant. You keep it on hold. You have to take further steps than that. “Your understanding doth begin to be enlightened [notice, that faith and intelligence go together here], and your mind doth begin to expand.”

444,445 Alma 32:31-34 Then you begin to see possibilities of other things. You ask the question, what will we be doing for the next thousand years? Well, until you get there you won’t know. Until your mind has expanded to a certain degree, you don’t even know what’s beyond. It’s nonexistence. The Egyptians say NT-TLWT-T, “that which is and that which is not.” I live on the “that which is” side. The “that which is not” side is just as big, except I haven’t moved into it yet. You are always pushing out the borders of your knowledge. They will retreat before you. Heraclitus reminds us that they are like dogs. They will retreat before you if you walk toward them, but if you walk away from them they will chase you. If you shrink in and limit your knowledge and understanding and are willing to settle within certain bounds, then the borders will shrink to accommodate your way of life and your self-satisfaction. But as long as you continue to push the boundaries, the boundaries will retreat before you, and you find there are no boundaries. That’s what the horizon is, you see. With the Egyptians it’s the AAKHUT, the great mystery. What’s beyond the horizon? Well, there is something. The horizon is a funny thing. It doesn’t appear to us as a mist or a vague land of nothing. There’s a sharp line against the horizon, especially in the desert. It’s just drawn with a razor. You say, well, that ends it. I can see nothing beyond that line; that’s it. You go up to it and lo and behold there’s more. There’s another nice sharp line beyond, and this goes on forever. He’s talking about this, and he says, isn’t this real, what you see? With every one of these steps, you know that this is real “for ye know that the word hath swelled your souls, and . . . that your understanding doth begin to be enlightened, and your mind doth begin to expand.”

445 Alma 32:35 Well, if this isn’t real, nothing is real.

It is something that's discernible, this knowledge. But he says it's not a perfect knowledge yet, of course. Verse 35: "Behold, after ye have tasted this light is your knowledge perfect? . . . Nay; neither must ye lay aside your faith [you keep exercising it all the time; you never stop] for ye have only exercised your faith to plant the seed that ye might try the experiment to know if the seed was good." You don't know whether it will grow or not yet. That's what you do. We spend millions of dollars on laboratories, projects, etc. We don't know whether they'll work or not. If you knew whether they worked or not, you couldn't get the money. They'd say, "Well, that's already done; that's no problem." It's the problems we are working on. "Let us nourish it with great care"—exercise control, discipline, etc., awaiting the next operation. "With much care it will get root, and grow up, and bring forth fruit."

445 Alma 32:41,42 You must keep it up. If you neglect it, it will shrink to accommodate your own program. It's not because the seed wasn't good if that happens, but because your ground was barren and you would not nourish the tree. You have to create intelligence; you have to create faith. It's a funny thing. You pull yourself up by your own bootstraps, so to speak. You must look forward with an eye of faith. As long as it hasn't happened yet, you still have to look forward always with faith if you can ever pluck the fruit of the tree of life. You look forward to it with patience, and this goes on. The idea is to pluck the fruit which is most precious. It is worth the try. What else is there? There's nothing else to look for. It is most precious and sweet, "and ye shall feast upon this fruit even until ye are filled, that ye hunger not, neither shall ye thirst."

447 Alma 33:1-11 Well, we have to move along here because Alma is going to get into a very interesting debate on some of these subjects. "They sent forth unto him desiring to know whether they should believe in one God." They asked him questions, you see. Should they believe in one God? How should they plant the seed he talked about? They didn't know anything. He was building from ground up, "or in what manner they should begin to exercise their faith."



They want practical instructions here. Well, in the first place don't worry about being cast out of your synagogues; that's a good thing. Do you remember the words of Zenos concerning the prayer of worship? We are going to have to pass this by. This is a delightful passage from verse 4 to the end of the chapter. It's the story of Zenos and how he was cast out. Under certain circumstances certain things are going to happen. They happen this way in the Church many times, "for thou hast turned thy judgments away from me, because of thy Son."

448 Alma 33:3 He reads them that story because he was the outcast, and they were the outcasts. So he reads them the story of the outcast Zenos. Zenos was an outcast prophet who lived between Moses and Elijah. About 1906 in a work called the Pseudo-Philo the writings of this Zenos were discovered. I wrote quite a bit about them in *Since Cumorah*. There was a prophet called Zenos. He was cast out and he wrote a long allegory on the olive tree. When Jacob gave his long story of the olive tree, he said he was quoting Zenos. He was a real person, a prophet who was lost and was found again in the early twentieth century.

448 Alma 33:17 "And now, my brethren, ye see that a second prophet of old has testified of the Son of God." He refers to him as a second prophet. Zenos was never popular with the doctors of the schools. That's why he was thrown out. They weren't going to preserve that sort of thing.

448 Alma 33:18 "These are not the only ones who have spoken concerning the Son of God. Behold, he was spoken of by Moses; yea, and behold a type was raised up in the wilderness, that whosoever would look upon it might live. ... If ye could be healed by merely casting about your eyes [why] would ye rather harden your hearts in unbelief and slothfulness— too lazy to exercise a little faith?"

448 Alma 33:22 Now this looks like the Essene community here, and this is a very good [summary] of the gospel in a nutshell in verse 22: "begin to believe in the Son of God, that he will come to redeem his people, and that he shall suffer and die to atone for their sins; and

that he shall rise again from the dead, which shall bring to pass the resurrection [for the rest of us], that all men shall stand before him, to be judged at the last and judgment day, according to their works.” The emphasis is on the works. There we have the gospel in a nutshell, which he is giving to these people. They have to be caught up in a hurry because they have gotten way behind. He says, if you plant this word in your heart you will find it begins to swell.

448,449 Alma 34:2 Then Amulek starts and he gives the testimony. He says, “My brethren, I think that it is impossible that ye should be ignorant of the things which have been spoken concerning the coming of Christ . . . [which were] taught unto you bountifully before your dissension from among us.” He is talking about the fashionable group of Zoramites who adopted their own religion. They got very smart and made improvements on it, and they adopted some of the neighboring cults. I’m sure that’s what they did because Alma and his friends were completely astounded when they saw the changes that had taken place, yet they were the changes that prevailed among the other people around there. There were other people around. So he says, it is impossible that ye should be ignorant of these things after you have been taught them before. You had them taught to you before you came out here with the other Zoramites, before your dissension from among us. The Zoramites had dissented from the Nephites, and before the dissension they were taught these things, as well as the other people they built the temples for.

449 Alma 34:4 “Plant the word in your hearts, that ye may try the experiment of its goodness. And we have beheld that the great question which is in your minds is whether the word be in the Son of God, or whether there shall be no Christ. . . . My brother has called upon the words of Zenos, that redemption cometh through the Son of God [and Zenock and Moses]. . . . For it is expedient that an atonement should be made . . . or else all mankind must unavoidably perish; yea, all are hardened; yea, all are fallen and are lost.”

449 This idea of the atonement you find everywhere because it's a basic theme. It's a theme of Greek tragedy, and it's the theme of the year rites everywhere in the world. I have been catching up on periodical literature the last few weeks. It's very interesting to see how the formulas of the year rites and the great assemblies are really being emphasized more and more today. What a great part they played, a greater part than anyone ever supposed, in the ancient societies. It was this. In a tragedy when the play begins, things have gone wrong. There is a plague or a war, something very wrong in the society, and destruction threatens. So what do you do? The king gives an opening speech, and someone must be to blame. They must explain it. They cannot stand by and see mischief wrecking things with impunity. Something must be done. Things must be set right. A price must be paid, but who is guilty? Well, we are all guilty. We cannot be probabilists because we cannot ever make payment, and we don't know how to distribute the guilt. We all share some of it. How do you distribute guilt like that? You have to have someone pay the price. The price is demanded, and nothing short of an infinite atonement will suffice for the sins of the world. Of course, no individual or people themselves can pay that. What's going to happen? Fixing everyone's guilt won't do.

449,450 We said that faith is intellectual honesty. What is that? Know thyself. Remember, that's the creed of Delphi. Complete intellectual honesty is to know where you stand in the problem, to know your ignorance. The only way you can solve the problem is step by step unbearing and exploring your ignorance. Not what you know, but what you don't know is what you've got to get after. There's the flaw, and this is a humiliating process—a progressive unbearing of your ignorance—and most people won't stand it. They want to get a terminal degree, and from then on they're not going to be reminded of their ignorance. And knowing thyself is repentance. That's the hardest part of all. You can't separate faith and repentance. It's self-knowledge and intellectual honesty. If you are going to solve the problem, if you really want to know whether it's so or not, you'll go about the right way trying to find whether it's so or not. And

you won't draw premature conclusions the way everybody does. That's the trouble with people who argue about the Book of Mormon. They'll ask very good questions, and then they'll leave the room. They don't wait for an answer. They don't want to risk an answer every time. The harder and better the question, the better the chance there is to show that the Book of Mormon is true, that it will stand up. They don't wait for that; they walk out on it. That's a good line to leave the stage with.

450 Alma 34:16 "He that exercises no faith unto repentance is exposed to the whole law [this is showing that faith is repentance, and the same are intelligence] of the demands of justice; therefore only unto him that has faith unto repentance is brought about the great and eternal plan of redemption," He'll only have the knowledge if he has faith, and the faith must be unto repentance. He must lower himself down. He must be humble and start with the hard part of the problem.

450,451 Alma 34:18-27 The interesting thing about Newton, for example—he didn't like his great works he was doing. They bored and annoyed him. He was looking for proof of the gospel. I have some interesting statements from Cline about that. It was his faith that carried him on. So you cry unto him [the Savior]; this is what you do. This repeats chapter 33. This famous passage here is an important thing: "Yea, cry unto him for mercy; for he is mighty to save. Yea, humble yourselves, and continue in prayer unto him. Cry unto him when ye are in your fields, yea, over all your flocks. Cry unto him in your houses, yea, over all your household, both morning, mid-day, and evening. Yea, cry unto him against the power of your enemies. Yea, cry unto him against the devil, who is an enemy to all righteousness. Cry unto him over the crops of your fields, that ye may prosper in them." Don't be afraid of it; don't be afraid to ask God for anything. "Cry over the flocks of your fields that they may increase, ... in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness" and also in public. You would spend a long day crying unto the Lord all day long, wouldn't you? As I say, it's like the

FATRA of the Arabs; everything they say is Allah, “yea, and when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you.” That’s what the Arabs call the/arra. It’s a set; it’s a state of mind. You can have that state of mind. Say that you are in particularly great peril. You are in very great danger and don’t know if you’ll be alive three minutes from now. What do you do? Well, you’re praying all the time, but you don’t have time to compose proper words or anything like that. You just have that feeling that’s very strong; “let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare.” That will draw you on.

451 Alma 34:28,29 When you have done all these things, this is very important. Remember, he is talking to the selfish Zoramites. “For after ye have done all these things, if ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart of your substance, if ye have, to those who stand in need—I say unto you, if ye do not any of these things, behold, your prayer is vain . . . [all these spiritual exercises aren’t going to get you anywhere without charity]. Therefore, if ye do not remember to be charitable, ye are as dross [you are as nothing], which the refiners do cast out.” So don’t harden your hearts any longer. They had been doing that.

451 Alma 34:32-34 Now here are these great lines about life as a preparation: “For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God.” That’s why we don’t have all the answers here. There are only two things we can do, as we said before. You can repent and you can forgive. “Yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors.” This is a KIROS, as the New Testament says. That’s a special block of time set aside for some special purpose or activity. “I beseech of you that ye do not procrastinate the day of your repentance until the end.” There’s this urgency not to procrastinate; this is an interesting thing. “If we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed.” The poets talk about the “black night of darkness,” etc. But

does that mean we can't ever repent, forever after? No, it doesn't mean that, but he is going to tell us when that day comes. "Nay, ye cannot say this; for that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world."

451-452 Alma 34:35 It's as if it were being set in concrete. Make up your mind now which plane you will take, because the plane you take makes a lot of difference where you are going to end. The idea is that once you get on you are stuck. Well, I thought we were going to have eternal progression, eternal chances, and all that sort of thing. Well, that is so, but there is great emphasis on the particular purpose this short, dirty life has to perform. Unless we take it at its main purpose, there's not much point of doing it because it is not long enough for much else but just these things. We are launched fully equipped into the next phase of our existence, and we are stuck with it apparently for a long time. Notice verse 35: "Ye have become subjected to the spirit of the devil, and he doth seal you his." You are going to be sealed for a long time; you are going to be in a sealed cabin. You might be able to change later on; that's something, but for a long haul ahead we have to prepare here. We do not know what the conditions will be after this, but we do know that for some reason repentance is the one thing we are here for—to set our course for this long time ahead. It's absolutely vital. When you get there you might say, "Well, I'm a totally different person now; we can forget all that." No, that won't do. What you do [on earth] is to establish your attitude, your framework, and your aim for a long time to come.

452 Alma 34:35 : "The Spirit of the Lord hath withdrawn from you, and hath no place in you, and the devil hath all power over you; and this is the final state of the wicked." When the devil has all power over you, the point is, that's as far as wickedness will get you. That's the final state. The wickedness will get you only as far as Vegas, we'll say, and nowhere else. That's where it will dump you forever unless you want to get out. It doesn't necessarily mean you will

have to stay there forever and ever, but it does mean that being wicked can only take you so far.

452 Alma 30:58-60 We had a wonderful statement back there which I overlooked, where it tells what happened to Korihor. In Alma 30:60 Korihor was killed by a Zoramite mob. Verse 58: "And Korihor did go about from house to house, begging food for his support." Notice it tells us the Zoramites had separated themselves from the Nephites, being led by a man whose name was Zoram. So you see, they were a separatist group anyway. But here it says he was killed by the Zoramite mob. Verse 60: "And thus we see that the devil will not support his children at the last day." The libertine is the most lonesome, deserted person in the world, a pathetic, let-down person. In his life he is selfish, licentious, and self-indulgent, but he is a pitiable figure. "The devil will not support his children at the last day."

452 He [Alma] is preaching to them to establish something. Remember, what they are trying to do is lessen the danger of a major conflict between the Nephites and the Lamanites. We have an interesting and very important development here. In chapter 35 the more popular part of the Zoramites wouldn't have anything to do with him, but the others did. So they are split now. What do they do? The people who are converted of the Zoramites go over and want to join Alma and Ammon's people. They want to join the Ammonites in Jershon. But they are Zoramites, and if they go over and join the Ammonites they will be the other party. This causes great alarm, so a real cold war begins now.

452,453 . You have the Nephites being willing to support these renegade Zoramites who had left and joined the Ammonites. The Ammonites were renegade enough; that shocked them. The Lamanites called those Ammonites traitors, we find out a little later on. On the other hand, the Nephites were giving them support, while the Lamanites were supporting the Zoramites, who were Nephite dissenters. They had gone over from the Nephites, and the Lamanites were supporting them. Then more

Zoramites break off and go back to the Nephites, and the Nephites support them. You have two factions fighting each other; Nephites support one and [Lamanites] support the other. They tear everything apart, and this leads unto into fourteen years of gory war, which we are lucky to avoid this semester, aren't we?

453 Alma 35:13 What could they do about it? Notice it goes on here in Alma 35:13: "And the people of Ammon departed out of the land of Jershon [that was the buffer state; they were to leave it as a field of fire in case real war began], and came over into the land of Melek, and gave place in the land of Jershon for the armies of the Nephites," to give them room to maneuver. So that's what it was, a field of fire, that they might contend—the killing fields being opened up with the armies of the Lamanites and the armies of the Zoramites on the field, "and thus commenced a war betwixt the Lamanites and the Nephites, in the eighteenth year of the reign of the judges." It began with this cold war and lasted for years and years. It was a horrendous war, a great study for strategy and tactics though.

453 Alma and Ammon and the brethren had to pack up and go back to Zarahemla. Their mission was over; it had been frustrated. The Zoramites whom they had brought to repentance were driven out of the land. The Zoramites threw all the converts out of the land that hadn't already gone over to Ammon. Then they attacked the Ammonites for receiving them after they had driven them out. They drove them out of [their land], and they made a casus belli for their offence. The Zoramites were driven out of their land, and they went to Jershon. They took it up there. Remember, the Ammonites had vacated because they wouldn't fight, so they left it empty as a field of fire. But the Zoramites were driven out. They weren't Ammonites, so they took up arms there and were ready to defend it. Now things are being lined up, and this is what happened.

453,454 Alma was grieved about the contentions. Is this going to be the good guys against the bad guys again? Don't fool yourself; they are equally bad. They are ready for



war when that happens, he says here. "Now Alma, being grieved for the iniquity of his people, yea for the wars, and the bloodsheds, and the contentions which were among them; and having been to declare the word, among all the people in every city [he made a survey of the whole nation]; and seeing that the hearts of the people began to wax hard, and that they began to be offended because of the strictness of the word [remember Alma was always very strict], his heart was exceedingly sorrowful." The people were spoiling for war, too.

454 There's a complete change of pace in the next chapters. We have Alma to his sons, which are marvelous discourses preceding the war. They are really great things. What character sketches of each type of boy! Helaman was a great guy. Shiblon was a prig; he didn't like him very much. Corianton was a wild guy, but his father had a sneaking likeness for his youngest son because he was the same sort of playboy that he had been. [There are] interesting character studies in these next three chapters.

# Lecture 56 Alma 36-41

## **Alma Addresses His Sons** **[Nibley on the importance of records]** **[Nibley on the Resurrection]**

455 Alma 36:8,9 Now we have come to Alma's addresses to his three sons. Each is a very different character. This has very important things to say for us in chapter 36. In verse 8 he tells about when the angel appeared and said to him some peculiar Semitic [expressions]. This is the Semitic threat or warning to a child, "If thou wilt of thyself be destroyed, seek no more to destroy the church of God." Doesn't he mean "If you don't want to be destroyed, seek no more to destroy the church of God." No, in the Semitic language you have to say it this way, because he repeats the very same thing. In Hebrew you say to a child, "Don't do that if you want to get spanked." That's the way you say it. We would say, "Do that and you'll get spanked," but they say, "Don't do that if you want to get spanked." It sounds contradictory to us, but that is the normal way. That's how you have to put it. That's the way it is put here, and it catches you right off. It's a very proper Semitic warning here.

455 Alma 36:11,12 For three days and nights he couldn't open his mouth; he was utterly paralyzed. Then there's another contradiction in verse 11. "And the angel spake more things unto me, which were heard by my brethren, but I did not hear them." Well, why is the angel talking to him and he didn't hear him? The others heard him. Again,

this is a common thing. Alma is going to get a real working over here, but the rest of them have to have their share of it, and this is what they get. This is what is given to them here, the part he doesn't hear. But he is going to get the full treatment presently. So it is for their benefit because the others were doing it along with him. But he fell to the earth absolutely in a stroke and heard no more. He was "racked with eternal torment, . . . racked with all my sins. Yea, I did remember all my sins and iniquities." Well, we have heard this phenomenon—my whole life flashed before me. This happens; many people have told us that. With what he had been up to now, he knew why he was being hit. He had been brought up properly and knew what he should have done. He couldn't have suffered more.

456 Alma 36:14 "Yea, and I had murdered many of his children [remember, the Ammonites always talked of their battles as murders], or rather led them away unto destruction." This is the Mahan principle: "I am master of this great secret that I can murder and get gain." You notice it is the violation of life, the equivalence of murder. Life, like glory, has endless degrees. To curtail life, to warp life, to defile it, to despoil it, to confine it is to destroy it. If you lock a person up all his days for your own purpose, you keep him enslaved. This is very common to make yourself rich. You're murdering to get gain is what you're doing. You see, you are depriving people of life. You are curtailing it and shortening it; you've wrecked its quality, etc. This happens with almost any kind of gain. Any larger type of gain does require destruction of life. You must convert life into property

456 Alma 36:14 Alma said, "The very thought of coming into the presence of my God did rack my soul with inexpressible horror. Oh, thought I, that I could be banished and become extinct,... that I might not be brought to stand in the presence of my God, to be judged of my deeds." Now isn't it interesting that the most desirable thing, the thing everybody wants more than anything else is finally to return to the presence of God and stand in his presence. And the thing we dread more than anything else is to return to the

presence of God and stand in his presence. It's the worst thing that could possibly happen to you, to have to face God. As we were told earlier, you would rather have the rocks and the mountains fall on you—anything but that. Yet that's the thing we want to return to eventually and be worthy of. We have a long way to go between now and then. Don't even think about becoming gods and that sort of thing for a long time to come. That's way down the road, I assure you.

457 These are the two possibilities. Which is the more likely? That we'll have to stand in the presence of God, or that we will dissolve into nothing. For three days he was racked with the pains of a damned soul. No more Freudian repressions. They emerge, and he knows everything he has done wrong. We are much more aware of our sins than we think we are.

458 Alma 36:18 [Alma knew whoever it was who is saving him was Jesus.] That's all he knew about him. Notice, he turned to "just one Jesus Christ," a very impersonal [phrase]. He had no close experience, no great feelings about him. There was just one Jesus. But now he is the Savior, and he calls upon him and says, "O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me." Then he says, and this is quite literally as we saw before, that he is "encircled about by the everlasting chains of death." This is what faces us; you can't escape it. So it's true; he's worried now. This is the bottom line, you notice—by the chains of death.

458 Alma 36:19 When he did this he could remember his pains no more. Well, is he suddenly born again? Is he getting off that easy? Not at all. No, you don't get off that easy. Remember, "Ye shall not come forth hence until you have paid the last farthing." He is talking about being in hell. You have to pay the full price to get out. Alma appeals to the one he can appeal to. He's scared; he doesn't want to go to God. So he appeals to him.

459 Alma 36:22 . "Yea, methought I saw [because it was timeless here, he is going to tell us], even as our father Lehi saw, God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with

numberless concourses of angels, in the attitude of singing and praising their God.” That is a standard, recurrent scenario. I have at least twenty very important, very early apocalyptic writings, like 3 Enoch, about a person who repents, is caught away, and sees God sitting on this throne surrounded by the concourses of angels singing their hymns. He comes back and then teaches his children. It’s a standard scenario, and it’s something that really happens.

459 Alma 36:26,27 “For because of the word ... many have been born of God, and have tasted as I have tasted, and have seen eye to eye as I have seen.” That taste is very interesting. That’s the Egyptian word meaning “to experience anything.” They use the same word DP to mean experience or taste anything. This was the beginning of his troubles, you might say. “And I have been supported under trials and troubles of every kind .., afflictions . . . prison . . . bonds . . . death [all had faced him]; yea, and I do put my trust in him, and he will still deliver me.” He is not in the clear yet; he still hopes for it. He is going to have to pay the uttermost farthing here. “He has brought our fathers out of Egypt.” But the Lord’s mercy is extended to us as long as we are in the blessed vessel. As long as we are here, it is never too late to repent. He brought our fathers out, and he is going to bring me out, “delivered them out of bondage and captivity from time to time even down to the present day.” This is the basic rule that he repeats over and over again. “Inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall prosper in the land [but if you don’t] ... keep the commandments of God ye shall be cut off from his presence.”

459,460 Alma 37:2,3; Moses 1:39 Now he is still talking to Helaman about the great importance of [keeping] the records. “And I also command you that ye keep a record of this people ... upon the plates of Nephi,... for it is for a wise purpose that they are kept.” He doesn’t know exactly what it is all about, but it’s a wise purpose. Remember the whole purpose of this: “This is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man.” The news has to be spread. The business of glory is to be

spread abroad. You can't keep it to yourself or it won't be glory. This is what the record does. It makes it possible to spread it widely. You don't have to be visited by an angel every time, because when the angel comes all he does is quote the scripture. That's all Moroni did; that's all Gabriel did. That's all the angels did when they appeared to the shepherds in the fields. When an angel appears he'll quote the scriptures being fulfilled with his visit, etc. He talks about the written word here, "these plates of brass," or bronze. They didn't have the word bronze in Joseph Smith's day. They are the scriptures, and "they have the genealogy of our forefathers." You have to include the past in this and the future. "Behold, it has been prophesied by our fathers [which are things to come], that they should be kept and preserved by the hand of the Lord until they should go forth [these plates] unto every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, that they shall know of the mysteries contained thereon."

460 Alma 37:4,7 There's no chosen people here. These records are for everybody, and the gospel is to be spread so widely. With this scripture, this writing, "by small and simple things are great things brought to pass; and small means in many instances doth confound the wise." The great mysteries have the simple answers. He says in verse 7: "By very small means the Lord doth confound the wise and bringeth about the salvation of many souls." You notice that writing is the greatest of inventions, without any doubt, and yet it's the simplest. But notice the others, such as recording or the telephone. They are awfully simple. The principles are absolutely basic; a child can understand them once they are made clear. If you list all the Nobel Prizes, every one is given for something supremely simple that everybody has overlooked. It turns out to be the same way almost inevitably, unless you get into economics. Then they don't deserve the prize because their prophecy is all fouled up anyway. They introduced economics later on, you know, but I'm talking about the prize in physics, etc. They are simple. The principle of the computer is shockingly simple; it's just the one-two. That's all it is. Once they realize that, things really begin to work. As Arthur Clarke

says, writing is the only means we have of bridging time. Writing will bridge time and bring all things together. No matter when a thing is written, we can tell not only what happened and who said what, but the subtlest nuances of feeling, the subtlest thoughts of people can be conveyed for untold thousands of years. You'll find it all in Homer, for example. You can just live it all over again. You can't do that with any other media at all. You can record things, but you have to have expensive and special means of reproducing them then. But with anything that will scratch on anything else, you have writing.

461 Alma 37:8 "These things should be preserved; for behold, they have enlarged the memory of this people." Their purpose is to overcome time; they are time binding. Years ago everybody was all excited about man as the "time binding animal." We can bind time together. Now we talk of time in a different way though. Were it not for these records, you wouldn't have had the case of Ammon and his brethren, for example. The Lamanites learned of "the incorrect traditions of their fathers; yea, these records and their words brought them unto repentance." So the records have great value, but, of course, you have to have the interpreter there, too. You have to have the spirit, too. When the Lord explained the scriptures to the apostles, then their eyes were opened, they began to understand things, and their breasts burned within them, because he was there to explain them. We find out later in the Book of Mormon, he turns over the pages and sees that they have every book here.

461 Alma 37:10 "And who knoweth but what they will be the means of bringing many thousands of them ... to the knowledge of their Redeemer? Now these mysteries are not yet fully made known unto me; therefore I shall forbear. They are preserved for a wise purpose. And they are "one eternal round." That means there's no point at which you can say the record begins, or a point at which it ends. It's an eternal round. Eternal doesn't mean it just goes 'round and 'round and 'round forever. But the circle is never completed; it never has a beginning or an end.

It's an eternal rounding. This conveys two different ideas. The one is that it hews to the mark, not moving to the one side or the other. It's the best to keep accuracy. The other is that it doesn't begin or end but just goes on forever in an eternal course. Then he gives the basic promise. They are entrusted to you and are to be kept sacred for a wise purpose for future generations. That's their purpose. It's always with this provision, that they will be taken away [if they don't keep the commandments]. You are still on probation, he says. This is important here. They were taken away later. But if you behave yourself no power on earth or in hell can take them from you.

462 Alma 37:18-20 "For he promised unto them that he would preserve these things for a wise purpose in him, that he might show forth his power unto future generations." He has already done it. He has already fulfilled it to the Lamanites to bring them to a knowledge of the truth. "Therefore I command you, my son Helaman ... that ye be diligent in keeping the commandments of God as they are written." You are responsible for that. This is what the living prophets go by.

462 Alma 35:21 "And now, I will speak unto you concerning those twenty-four plates." These are the Jaredites. This is a very important thing, because the Jaredite history is a particularly morbid one, as you know. We get to that next time. "... that the mysteries and the works of darkness, and their secret works, or the secret works of those people who have been destroyed [notice this is all bad news], may be made manifest unto this people: [I want them to know all this bad news] yea, all their murders, and robbings, and their plunderings, and all their wickedness and abominations, may be made manifest unto this people; yea, and that ye preserve these interpreters." Well, why is the Book of Mormon so negative? "For behold, the Lord saw that his people began to work in darkness [they have to be warned, he says, and it is going to begin again and again], yea, work secret murders and abominations." He is talking about the Nephites and the Lamanites here. When they began to become wicked he gave them this Jaredite



record as a warning.

462 Alma 37:23 “I will prepare unto my servant Gazelem, a stone, which shall shine forth in darkness unto light.” That’s a person he is talking about; Gazelem is not the stone. His servant Gazelem has the stone; he is preparing it for him. Incidentally, that word Gazelem is a very interesting one. It’s an Aramaic word, and it has definitely to do with the shining stone. “. . . yea, their secret works, their works of darkness, and their wickedness and abominations.” Now that’s what the story is going to be. That’s not very nice. These interpreters were prepared for that reason, the whole idea being this horrible story I’m telling you that “except they repent I will destroy them from off the face of the earth; and I will bring to light all their secrets [just as I did of the Jaredites] and abominations, unto every nation that shall hereafter possess the land.” All this will be highly relevant, in other words. Now the next verse is going to be highly relevant to future generations, whoever receives it here.

462,463 Alma 37:26-28: “And now, my son, we see that they did not repent; therefore they have been destroyed. . . . I command you that ye retain all their oaths.” You tell what they did but not how they did it.. Don’t tell them how to make the stuff.. “Yea, and all their signs and their wonders ye shall keep from this people, that they know them not, lest peradventure they should fall into darkness also and be destroyed.” Now that’s a real possibility. But in the next verse we get warning and assurance. “For behold, there is a curse upon all this land, that destruction shall come upon all those workers of darkness [no matter which generation or dispensation they come in], according to the power of God, when they are fully ripe; therefore [now this is what the Lord wants] I desire that this people might not be destroyed.” That’s why I’m giving this, so they won’t be destroyed. My intention is this. Well, if God desires he can have anything he wants; then we are safe. Oh no, it’s consoling, but it is also alarming. Remember, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!” (Luke 13:34). And the Lord said that just before he

said, there is the temple and not one stone is going to be left upon another. Why not? I wanted to save them, he said. God wanted to save them, but they didn't want to be saved. He is not going to force their free agency, so they brought destruction on themselves.

463 Alma 37:28,29 "I desire that this people might not be destroyed." This is grim, but they have their agency. I desire it but you don't desire it; you'll see what's going to happen then. "Only their wickedness and their murders and their abominations shall ye make known unto them [which are relevant to us, but not how they did it], ... and ye shall also teach them that these people were destroyed on account of their wickedness and abominations and their murders.". They murdered all the prophets. And here goes that curse again [Every blessing has a curse with it.]. Notice that this record is very negative. It's a horrendous record, isn't it?

463,464 Alma 37:31: "Yea, and cursed be the land forever and ever unto those workers of darkness and secret combinations [well, we certainly have them], even unto destruction, except they repent before they are fully ripe." Well, that's the promise on the promised land. "And now, my son, remember the words which I have spoken unto you; trust not those secret plans unto this people [don't start giving them any ideas—what you will teach them is this]; ... teach them to humble themselves and to be meek and lowly in heart; teach them to withstand every temptation of the devil, with their faith on the Lord Jesus Christ." And how does the devil tempt? You can have anything in this world for money. You must withstand every temptation here. "Teach them to never be weary of good works, but to be meek and lowly in heart."

464 Why does he keep hitting that all the time? Why doesn't he talk about teaching them to be hard workers, to save money, to plan their careers, to dress for success, and to be independent? That's never mentioned in the Book of Mormon. It always cuts you down, whether it's Mosiah, or Benjamin, or Alma, or anybody else talking. These are the

things we are after. These three verses here show that they apply to people in a very tight situation.

464 Alma 37:35-37 “O, remember, my son, and learn wisdom in thy youth; yea, learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God. Yea, and cry unto God for all thy support; yea, let all thy doings be unto the Lord, and whithersoever thou goest let it be in the Lord; yea, let all thy thoughts be directed unto the Lord; yea, let the affections of thy heart be placed upon the Lord forever.” That’s the only way you can keep clear of it. Satan is abroad as a ravening lion. His commission is to tempt and try us, and he is very skillful at it. “Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good; yea, when thou liest down at night lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep; and when thou risest in the morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God; and if ye do these things, ye shall be lifted up at the last day.”

464 Well, that’s the objective—not the happy life here. This is rather strict and severe, isn’t it? According to this we need help, we need it urgently, and we need it all the time. It’s rather severe, but he says you are going to rejoice if you do this.

464,465 Alma 37:38 , I’ll tell you about the Liahona. That’s a type of this sort of thing. The Liahona isn’t magic. Magic is the thing that Sophists work. If you have the magic robe, or the book, or the staff, or the arrow, or the ring, anybody who gets it has power. There’s a great series of legends about Solomon and his magic implements that were stolen. The demons can get it. If they have it they have the power. This is the theme of Star Wars and things like that. In other words the power lies in the gadget itself, which is the very opposite of this. The Liahona did work for them only according to their faith in God. If they had faith that God could cause the spindles to point, they would point, but they didn’t point by themselves. The Liahona hasn’t worked for years. It’s not functioning anymore, and neither is the Urim and Thummim.. These things work [only] when we need them to work, and they always work [only] by faith,

which is the opposite of magic.

467 . Alma 38:7: Then you notice that this Shiblon is something of a prig. He is very conscientious. He was good on his mission, etc. Alma 38:7: “But behold, the Lord in his great mercy sent his angel to declare unto me that I must stop the work of destruction among his people [with himself and his people too]; yea, and I have seen an angel face to face.” So he testifies to his son Shiblon the same thing, but he gives him only a short blessing, just this short chapter 38. It’s mostly a warning against being too darn self-righteous. So you get the picture of him. He’s a good man here—conscientious, self-righteous, approved. It turns out that he did take the advice, as we read in chapter 63, and he was entrusted with the records after the death of Helaman.

467 Alma 38:11,12 “See that ye are not lifted up unto pride; yea, see that ye do not boast in your own wisdom, nor of your much strength.” He doesn’t say that to the others. “Use boldness, but not overbearance [it’s all right to be bold, but don’t be overbearing]; and also see that ye bridle all your passions, that ye may be filled with love.... Do not say: O God, I thank thee that we are better than our brethren; but rather say, O Lord, forgive my unworthiness.” See he is telling this guy to be humbler than he is. Don’t say that you are holier than your brethren, but say rather “forgive my unworthiness, and remember my brethren in mercy— yea, acknowledge your unworthiness before God at all times.”

467 We’re told that Joseph Smith never made Hyrum an apostle. He never became an apostle because he was too inflexible. He was too righteous was the reason that Joseph gave for it. You had to have a more forgiving nature, something like Matthew Cowley. In this short blessing you get a good picture of Shiblon here, and an even better picture of Corianton.

467 Alma 39:1 He [Alma] has a sneaking love for Corianton because he had misbehaved himself. He was wild. Notice, “Have ye not observed the steadiness of thy

brother, his faithfulness, and his diligence in keeping the commandments of God?" So he hasn't been too reliable. Later on he was very independent. He opened a line of ships carrying goods to the north to make a lot of money in a hurry when there was lots of expansion up to the north and east. He took stuff on barges and came back for more, etc. In chapter 63 you read what Shiblon did later and what Corianton did later. Notice, "Thou didst go on unto boasting in thy strength and thy wisdom. [He was guilty of that, and worse than that] ... for thou didst forsake the ministry, and did go over into the land of Siron among the borders of the Lamanites, after the harlot Isabel."

468 Alma 39:5,6: "Know ye not, my son, that these things are an abomination in the sight of the Lord." What is he talking about? He is talking about unbridled sex; it's very clear what this verse 5 is talking about. This is the hierodule Mother, the great cult of the Classic Period in Central America, as well as in the Ancient World among both the Philistines and the Phoenicians. This is next to murder; once you start on this path look out! "... yea, most abominable above all sins save it be the shedding of innocent blood or denying the Holy Ghost." This is a number one crime. This is not a thing that you do just because nature gives motivation for it. How far do you go is the point. Remember that appetites, desires, and passions are not to be denied, but they must be kept within the bounds the Lord has set. This is boundless. Verse 6: "If ye deny the Holy Ghost when it once has had place in you, ... this is a sin which is unpardonable." This tells why that is so.

469 Alma 39:9 "Now my son, I would that ye should repent and forsake your sins, and go no more after the lusts of your eyes, but cross yourself in all these things." Many people misunderstand this "cross yourself as make the sign of the cross on yourself. "Oh, remember, and take it upon you, and cross yourself in these things." Well, "to cross" means "to check" a thing. Remember we have the song "A poor wayfaring man of grief did often cross me on my way." When I was going my way untroubled, this poor

wayfaring man drew my attention, like the good Samaritan on the road to Jericho. So he had to change his course and stop and consider. In the end he had to make a great sacrifice. He crossed him on his way. That means to stop you or to check you on your way and make you consider where you are going and what you are doing. So that's why you do—you cross yourself. You stop yourself dead still and say, "What am I doing here; this has got to stop and stop right now." He tells his son, don't commit one more sin like that whatever you do—it's very dangerous. So "cross yourself in all these things.

469 Alma 39:11,14 "Suffer not yourself to be led away by any vain or foolish things; [again he says] suffer not the devil to lead away your heart again after those wicked harlots." That's what he is talking about. It's not just the lady Isabel, but it's the whole cult going on there at Siron. They call it Siron, a very interesting name, too. "Command thy children to do good, lest they lead away the hearts of many people to destruction." They are an example for others. Then we get this old routine. "Seek not after riches nor the vain things of this world; for behold, you cannot carry them with you." But he did later on. He must have gotten quite rich in his shipping business. He was an important person.

469,470 Alma 39:17 Alma 40:5 : "And now I will ease your mind somewhat on this subject." Time is not the issue here. You ask why it should be known so long before the Lord comes. Well, he is not coming yet. When he comes we will start talking about that. We'll cross that bridge when we get to it. Why are we bothering so long before? Today we say, "Why do we bother so long after?" He says it doesn't make any difference. It's all the same show; it's all the same party. "Is it not as easy at this time for the Lord to send his angel to declare these glad tidings?" Long before or long after it is just as easy. It's all one story. It's just as easy then or after this time. Before this time is what Corianton is worrying about. After this time is what worries people today. Above all your mind is worrying about this one problem that people use as an excuse. The hardest thing to take is the resurrection. What about the resurrection?

You say there is no resurrection until after the coming of Christ. Why would that be? Well, he brings to pass the resurrection. Then it talks about the first resurrection, etc. Notice it's the idea of time. Don't worry about time. Verse 5: "Now whether there shall be one time, or a second time, or a third time, that men shall come forth from the dead, it mattereth not." Notice verse 8 where he says, "For all do not die at once, and this mattereth not; all is as one day with God, and time only is measured unto men."

470 Alma 40:18-20 So he is right in there with Stephen Hawking, isn't he, saying that time is just our fiction that we go by. But for us it is necessary; it's the essence of our existence. But only for us; it's not going to be in the next world at all. When you are dealing with resurrection you are on another level, he says. You are in a different league. Don't let time worry you about these things. The value of rising in the first resurrection is the quality of the resurrection, the greater glory that goes with it, and not the time. In verses 18, 19, and 20 he makes this very clear about the time. Verse 18: "Behold, I say unto you, Nay; but it meaneth the reuniting of the soul with body of those from the days of Adam down to the resurrection of Christ [that will be one resurrection]. Now, whether the souls and the bodies ... shall all be reunited at once, the wicked as well as the righteous, I do not say [he says they didn't all die at once, so I won't say when it will be] let it suffice, that I say that they all come forth [forget about the time, he says, whether they shall be all at once]; or in other words, their resurrection cometh to pass before the resurrection of those who die after the resurrection of Christ. Now, my son, I do not say that their resurrection cometh at the resurrection of Christ; but behold, I give it as my opinion, that the souls and the bodies are reunited, of the righteous, at the resurrection of Christ."

470 Alma 40:23 [This] is the definition of the resurrection. "Every limb and joint shall be restored to its body [a good Egyptian formula]; yea, even a hair of the head shall not be lost [won't you have too much hair then? No] but all things shall be restored to their proper and perfect frame."

So you sure won't recognize me when we get back there. Their proper and perfect frame is the way we should be, proper stature. "And then shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of God," and the others be cast out to "drink the dregs of the bitter cup." But that time between death and the resurrection is the time that interests us.

471 Alma 40:10,11 "God knoweth all the times which are appointed unto man." Time is for us. It's appointed for us, and God knows those times. Don't worry. Here's what he wanted to know. Verse 11: "Now, concerning the state of the soul between death and the resurrection,... the spirits of all men, as soon as they are departed from the mortal body, yea, the spirits of all men, whether they be good or evil, are taken home to that God who gave them life." That's wonderful for [some] of them, but you are looking forward to the judgment, it's not going to be too happy a time. "The spirits of those who are righteous are received into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest." Not from all their happy activities. Remember, when people go over there they find their relatives very busy doing this and that? It's a state of rest from what? Rest from troubles, rest from care, rest from sorrow. You don't have any of that. That's what you rest from. But as far as activity is concerned, there can be plenty of that without the care, and sorrow, and trouble. But the wicked have an awful time. They have time to think it over, in other words. They are not going to like that at all. "There shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth." That's not just a poetic expression at all. It's a good psychological expression. They are grinding their teeth in utter futility. If I had only done that. Why was I such a damn fool? The utter frustration! This is not the happy time it should be, but it is too late. Why did I blow it? That's the time that you're angry with yourself. You weep and wail and gnash your teeth, not at anybody but yourself. Then shall the righteous shine.

471,472 Alma 41:2,3 He continues to Corianton about the restoration—all things will be restored. Men will be judged according to their works and the desires of their



hearts. Your works may include an awful lot of blundering. You may mess up everything, but on what grounds can you be safely judged? On the desire of your heart, not what you say you intend to do. You may say, "I did no wrong. I wanted to do the right thing." That isn't enough. The real desire of your heart is what you will be judged by. You never do as well as you expect to do. You muff and blunder everything. That's our nature. We make mistakes. As Voltaire said, "We are made to blunder." But you are not going to be judged by your works, except in the light of what the desire of your heart really was.

472 Alma 41:4,7 "Raised to endless happiness to inherit the kingdom of God, or to endless misery to inherit the kingdom of the devil." This is how fair it is. You will get exactly what you want, according to your desires for good or your desires for evil. Everybody gets what he wants. What could be more fair? You judge yourself. If they have repented of their sins, they are redeemed of the Lord; "yea, these are they that are taken out, that are delivered, ... for behold, they are their own judges whether to do good or do evil," it says in verse 7. They have complete agency. In the next world we guarantee maximum satisfaction; you will get exactly what you want. What you want and what pleases you may be horrendously shocking to somebody else, but if that's what you want you'll have it. You dig yourself in deeper and deeper. Here is the psychological pretext that Corianton had been using. Alma said, "And now behold, my son, do not risk one more offense against your God upon those points of doctrine, which ye have hitherto risked to commit sin." He used the points of doctrine for a pretext, as many people do. I get them all the time. A confusion of doctrine, something that isn't clear, they take as an excuse for not committing themselves, for not resolving to do right, because I don't know yet about this, that, and the other. When people become hypercritical of doctrine, you know they are misbehaving. I've done it myself.

472,473 Alma 41:10-13 "Behold, I say unto you, wickedness never was happiness." Why has Corianton been tempted here? Don't be surprised. "All men that are

in a state of nature, or I would say, in a carnal state, are in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity; they are without God in the world, . . . therefore, they are in a state contrary to the nature of happiness.” The libertine is not happy; nothing is truer than that. He ends with this strong admonition to him. You will move into the house you have built for yourself. Verse 13: “Restoration is to bring back again evil for evil, or carnal for carnal.” You’ve built the house, and you will move into it. That’s what you wanted, so you are going to have it. There’s not going to be any cruelty. Nobody is going to be forced to go to a world [where he doesn’t belong]. If he went to the highest heaven it would be hell to him; he wouldn’t know what anybody was talking about and wouldn’t understand anything. You want to go where you belong. That’s your condemnation. If those are your people, all right; that’s it. So he says this here. This is a surprising thing. “Therefore, my son, see that you are merciful unto your brethren; deal justly, judge righteously, and do good continually.” This is the difference, you see.