

Alma 10:1-3

1 Earlier in the Book of Mormon it was mentioned that Lehi was descendant of Joseph (1 Nephi 5:14). However, Joseph had two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, and this is the first time the Book of Mormon indicates that Lehi was a descendant of Joseph's eldest son, Manasseh.

Some students of the Book of Mormon have wondered how descendants of Joseph were still living in Jerusalem in 600 BC when most members of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh were taken into captivity by the Assyrians about 721 BC. A scripture in 2 Chronicles may provide a clue to this problem. This account mentions that in about 941 BC Asa, the king of the land, gathered together at Jerusalem all of Judah and Benjamin "and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh" (2 Chronicles 15:9). These "strangers...out of Ephraim and Manasseh" who were gathered to Jerusalem in approximately 941 BC may have included the forefathers of Lehi and Ishmael.

Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976], 198-199

2 It is true that Lehi and his family were descendants of Joseph through the lineage of Manasseh (Alma 10:3), and Ishmael was a descendant of Ephraim, according to the statement of the Prophet Joseph Smith. That the Nephites were descendants of Joseph is in fulfillment of the blessings given to Joseph by his father Israel. The Nephites were of the Jews, not so much by descent as by citizenship, although in the long descent from Jacob, it could be possible of some mixing of the tribes by intermarriage.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1957], 1:142.

3 The Prophet Joseph informed us that ... the first Book of Nephi, [is a] record of Nephi individually, *he himself being of the lineage of Manasseh; but that Ishmael was of the lineage of Ephraim*, and that his sons married into Lehi's family, and Lehi's sons married Ishmael's daughters.

Erastus Snow, *Discourses*, 23:184; italics added.

Alma 10:2

4 *Writing on Temple wall*

This is the only time Aminadi is mentioned, and our present Book of Mormon gives no further details concerning the writing written by the finger of God upon the wall of the temple.

Daniel H. Ludlow, *Companion*, 198.

Alma 10:4

5 *Riches by the hand of my industry*

A friend... proudly boasted that his climb toward wealth had come from tireless work and lessons learned in the "school of hard knocks". But his fortune had come at the expense of his spiritual development. When it was too late, he regretfully discovered that his ladder of success had been leaning against the wrong wall.

Russell N. Nelson, *Ensign*, Nov. 1992 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1992], 7.

6 He is a classic case of an essentially good man being out of touch with the great spiritual realities; ... because, though he was basically good, he was preoccupied with the cares of the world.

Neal A. Maxwell, *Meek and Lowly*, 12.

Alma 10:5-6

7 *Amulek would not hear*

The voice of the Lord calls to us regularly. It is not wickedness or carnality alone which keeps us from feeling and hearing the word; it is preoccupation. We need not be guilty of gross sin to be unready for the impressions of the Spirit; we need only have our minds and hearts focused upon other things, to be so involved in the thick of thin things that we are not taking the time to ponder or meditate upon matters of substance. Excessive labor in secondary

causes leads to a lessening of spiritual opportunities. President Ezra Taft Benson told the following story, which highlights the need for being attentive and open to heavenly guidance:

"Bishop John Wells, a former member of the Presiding Bishopric, was a great detail man and was responsible for many Church reports. President David O. McKay and President Harold B. Lee used to relate an experience from his life that is instructive to all of us.

"A son of Bishop and Sister Wells was killed in a railroad accident in Emigration Canyon, east of Salt Lake City. He was run over by a freight car. Sister Wells could not be consoled. She received no comfort during the funeral and continued her mourning after her son was laid to rest. Bishop Wells feared for her health, as she was in a state of deep anguish.

"One day, soon after the funeral, Sister Wells was lying on her bed in a state of mourning. The son appeared to her and said, 'Mother, do not mourn, do not cry, I am all right.' He then related to her how the accident took place. Apparently there had been some question—even suspicion—about the accident, because the young man was an experienced railroad man. But he told his mother that it was clearly an accident.

"He told her that as soon as he realized that he was in another sphere, he had tried to reach his father but could not. His father was so busy with the details of his office and work that he could not respond to the promptings. Therefore, the son has come to his mother. He then said, 'Tell Father that all is well with me, and I want you not to mourn anymore.'

"President McKay used this experience to teach that we must always be responsive to the whisperings of the Spirit. These promptings come most often when we are not under the pressure of appointments and when we are not caught up in the worries of day-to-day life."

(Come unto Christ, p. 18) Taken from Millet & McConkie Commentary Vol 3, p. 68-69

Alma 10:7-10

8 *Angels today?*

But the ministering of angels can also be unseen. Angelic messages can be delivered by a voice or merely by thoughts or feelings, communicated to the mind ... Most angelic communications are felt or heard rather than seen. Dallin H. Oaks, *Ensign*, Nov. 1998, 39

Alma 10:11

9 *Amulek's blessing?*

The life of Amulek teaches us not only that obedience brings the inspiration of God, but that with that inspiration will come the power to accept the testing and the trials it will take to sanctify us. Amulek could not have foreseen the testing and the sacrifice ahead of him.... He says in his first sermon that the angel's promised blessings on his house and family had already been delivered. He seemed to think the blessings were delivered and assured... (Alma 10:11).

We don't know what Amulek thought those blessings had been, but we do know what became of his house and his family. He lost them all. We know that after he taught with such power as the companion of Alma in his own city, Ammonihah, his father and kindred repudiated him... (Alma 14:15:16).

Amulek may have lost even his wife and his children....

If they had rejected the gospel of Jesus Christ they would have been killed in the prophesied destruction of Ammonihah. An invading army took the life of every soul in a single day. If Amulek's wife and children had made and kept covenants of the gospel, they would have been among the martyrs Alma and Amulek were forced to see die in the flames... (Alma 14:10-13)

Amulek was delivered by God from the powers of the adversary as a blessing for his obedience, but God would not compel his loved ones to obey.

Henry B. Eyring, *Heroes from the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995] 109-111.

- 10 **Alma 10:12**
Whenever the Lord has established a dispensation by revealing his gospel and by conferring priesthood and keys upon men, he has acted in accordance with the *law of witnesses* which he himself ordained. This law is: "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every work be established." (2 Cor. 13:1; Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Matt. 18:15-16; John 8:12-29).
- 11 Never does one man stand alone in establishing a new dispensation of revealed truth, or in carrying the burden of such a message and warning to the world. In every dispensation from Adam to the present, two or more witnesses have always joined their testimonies, thus leaving their hearers without excuse in the day of judgment should the testimony be rejected. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd. Ed. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966], 436-37.
- 12 **"My Sheep Hear My Voice."** When Alvin R. Dyer arrived in Frankfurt, Germany, on 28 January 1960 to begin his tenure as European Mission president, he brought with him an inspiring and powerful testimony of missionary work. At the time, I was serving in the mission home in Frankfurt and thus was on hand to record in my journal these comments about Elder Dyer: "Our first impression was that he was a big rancher. He had long David O. McKay hair.... His powerful jaw gave him a certain force and one saw that he was a great personality. Like most general authorities, he could look right through you." The day after his arrival, Elder Dyer called the mission staff together to instruct them in the particulars of his strategy for missionary work. At the heart of his plan was the universal principle that one must teach by the Spirit (D&C 50) and never engage in debate: "Again I say, hearken ye elders of my church, whom I have appointed: Ye are not sent forth to be taught, but to teach the children of men the things which I have put into your hands by the power of my Spirit" (D&C 43:15). Like Alma and Amulek before the lawyers of Ammonihah, Elder Dyer declined descent into unproductive dialogue on world terms and instead espoused the high road of bold testimony-bearing as guided by the Spirit of the Lord.
- When he served as president of the Central States Mission he conducted a mission-wide research poll among all of the converts of the mission, asking them to declare when they first knew that the gospel was true. Several thousand participated in the project. Elder Dyer learned that 82% of the converts knew the gospel was true *the first time they heard the missionaries bear witness of it*. Thus in most cases the transforming witness came not after a period of experience with the Church but *immediately* upon hearing the message for the first time as the missionaries spoke with the power of the Spirit. Elder Dyer testified that this phenomenon was a substantiation of the Savior's statement: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27). What a lesson that is for all of us as we accept the Lord's errand to convey the good news of the gospel to the peoples of the world.
- Ed J Pineger & Richard J Alan, *Teachings & Commentaries on the Book of Mormon*, pp. 268-269
- 13 **Alma 10:12-32**
Lawyers of Zarahemla
- One of the signs of moral decay, of apostasy and corruption with a society, is an emphasis on technicalities of law. This comes about when, in order to advance their cause, people seek to play the letter against the spirit of the law and in effect to legalize chicanery. Among the pure in heart God's laws are etched on the soul; they are found written in the countenances and inscribed on the inward parts. Among the perverse, however, law is a means of accomplishing the manipulation of others. Both anciently and on our own day, lawyers who seek to uphold the law, who strive to bring the lawless to account, who earnestly endeavor to protect the rights of all—these perform a valuable and appreciated service in society. On the other hand, when lawyers undertake to generate business for themselves by encouraging litigation in instances when patience and long-suffering would be more appropriate; when they cover up the truth; when their manipulations result in the guilty not be brought to justice, thereby penalizing and punishing the innocent; and when they employ the witchery of words or the sophistry of speech to deceive the unwary or the trusting—when they do such things they have become pawns in the hand of the father of all lies. They

have sold their souls. Amulek stated the matter simply: "The foundation of the destruction of this people is beginning to be laid by the unrighteousness of your lawyers and your judges" (verse 27).

Millet & McConkie, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol 3, pp.71-72.

14 **Alma 10:17**

The gift of discernment ...when highly developed arises largely out of an acute sensitivity to ... spiritual impressions ...to read under the surface as it were, to detect hidden evil, and more importantly to find the good that may be concealed.

Stephen L. Richards, in *Conference Report*, April 1950, 162

15 **Alma 10:22-23**

Prayers & actions of the Righteous

You are so very important. This work is so much the stronger because of you. Whenever you step over the line in an immoral act or in doing any other evil thing, the Church is that much weaker because of what you have done. When you stand true and faithful, it is that much stronger. Each one of you counts.

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, May 1996, 94.

16 Many voices of seducing spirits advocate carnal pleasures and unrestrained physical satisfactions. Our world is now much the same as it was in the days of the Nephite prophet who said: "... if it were not for the prayers of the righteous... ye would even now be visited with utter destruction..." (Alma 10:22). Of course, there are many many upright and faithful who live all the commandments and whose lives and prayers keep the world from destruction. Spencer W. Kimball, *Conference Report*, April, 1971, 7.

17 The Lord has made it plain to us that if we are not a prayerful people, if we fail to remember the king of this land, Jesus Christ, we can lose all of these blessings.... (Alma 10:22-23). And so it seems to me that what we need in this fair land of ours is a shining example of prayerfulness, and the Latter-day Saints are the people who are chosen to exemplify to the world the power of prayer.

Joseph B. Wirthlin, *Conference Report*, Apr. 1949 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1949], 159.

18 Some years ago I accompanied President Hugh B. Brown on a tour of the Samoan Mission. The members and missionaries in American Samoa had advised us that a severe drought had imperiled their water supply to the point that our chapels and our school would of necessity be closed if rain did not soon fall. They asked us to unite our faith with theirs.

Signs of the drought were everywhere as we left the airport at Pago Pago and journeyed to the school at Mapasaga. The sun was shining brightly; not a cloud appeared in the azure blue sky. The members rejoiced as the meeting began. He who offered the opening prayer thanked our Heavenly Father for our safe arrival, knowing that we would somehow bring the desired rainfall. As President Brown rose to speak, the sun was soon shaded by gathering clouds. Then we heard the clap of thunder and saw the flash of lightning. The heavens opened. The rains fell. The drought ended.

Later at the airport, as we prepared for the short flight to Western Samoa, the pilot of the small plane said to the ground crew, "This is the most unusual weather pattern I have ever seen. Not a cloud is in the sky except over the Mormon school at Mapasaga. I don't understand it!"

President Brown said to me, "Here's your opportunity. Go help him understand." I did so.

Thomas S. Monson, *Conference Report*, Apr. 1984 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1984], 21.

19 I know of no better way to inculcate love for country than for parents to pray before their children for the land in which we live, invoking the blessings of the Almighty upon it that it may be preserved in liberty and in peace. I know of no better way to build within the hearts of our children a much-needed respect for authority than remembering in the daily supplications of the family the President and the Congress and others who carry the burdens of government.

Gordon B. Hinckley, "Except the Lord Build the House," *Improvement Era*, January 1964, pp. 33, 56.

20 Alma 10:13-32
Zeezrom

It is in this scenario that Zeezrom appears. While the description of conditions in Ammonihah is not given in great detail, it is not difficult to fill in the pieces of the political, moral, and social mosaic from the recorded account. Corruption and dishonesty in official circles have become endemic. Grasping for material riches, the people have clamored to gain advantage one over another. Judges have become corrupt, susceptible to bribes and yielding advantage to those who can show favors...

Numerous lawyers have emerged, skilled not only in the law but also in exploiting the devious legal system for the potential benefit of themselves and their clients.

It is a group of these lawyers that confront Alma and Amulek...

It is significant that Zeezrom presents himself as the chief spokesman for these legalists... (Alma 10:31).

Not only is he acknowledged by his peers as one of the leaders in his craft, he is well known among the people generally, and apparently is one of the foremost to whom they look for legal assistance. This would indicate that he also has a comfortable relationship with the judges in the city.

Dean L. Larsen, *Heroes from the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995], 113.