

**Alma 18:3**

1

*Whether he be the Great Spirit or a man*

An unknown author has said, "Live in such a way that people who know you but don't know Christ will want to know Christ because they know you" (quoted in H. Burton, *Ensign*, May 1994, 68).

"There was a little crippled boy who ran a small newsstand in a crowded railroad station. ...Every day he would sell papers, candy, gum, and magazines to the thousands of commuters passing through the terminal. One night two men were rushing through the crowded station to catch a train. One was fifteen or twenty yards in front of the other. It was Christmas Eve. Their train was scheduled to depart in a matter of minutes. The first man turned a corner and in his haste... plowed right into the little crippled boy. He knocked him off his stool, and candy, newspapers, and gum were scattered everywhere. Without so much as stopping, he cursed the little fellow for being there and rushed on... It was only a matter of seconds before the second commuter arrived on the scene. He stopped, knelt, and gently picked up the boy. After making sure the child was unhurt, the man gathered up the scattered newspapers, sweets, and magazines. Then he... gave the boy a five dollar bill. 'Son,' he said, 'I think this will take care of what was lost'.... The commuter...started to hurry away. As he did, the little crippled boy cupped his hands together and called out, 'Mister, Mister!' The man stopped as the boy asked, 'Are you Jesus Christ?'... He smiled and said, 'No, son. I am not Jesus Christ, but I am trying hard to do what he would do if He were here'"

(Tom Anderson, in Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, April 1984, 11-12).

2

**Alma 18:3-9***Service softens hearts*

When the other servants brought the evidence of what Ammon had done, King Lamoni said, "Where is he?" They said, "Oh, he is in the stables. He is doing every little thing to serve you" (Alma 18:8-9).

Isn't that odd? He was called to teach the doctrines of salvation, but he was in the stables. Don't you think he should have been praying and fasting and polishing his teaching plans? No, he was in the stables.

King Lamoni had been brought up with a belief that there was a God but that whatever the king did was right. He had been specifically taught false doctrine that might have made him impervious to feelings of guilt. Do you remember that when he heard where Ammon was, a feeling of guilt, of fear that he had done wrong in the killing of the servants, came over him (see Alma 18:5)?

I have always focused before on how mixed up Lamoni was in his doctrine, without seeing the miracle. The miracle was that a spiritual need was created in a man, that he might be taught the gospel of Jesus Christ. His heart was broken. He felt guilt. And it came from the temporal things that Ammon had done....

...Never, never underestimate the spiritual value of doing temporal things well for those whom you serve.

...Be their servants, and you will love them. And they will feel your love. And more important, they will feel God's love.

Henry B. Eyring, "The Book of Mormon Will Change Your Life," *Ensign*, Feb. 2004, 13-14.

3

**Alma 18:9***Horses and Chariots*

Critics have maintained: (1) no horses existed on the American continents before the time of Columbus, and (2) the people who lived on the American continents did not know the principle of the wheel before the coming of Columbus. However, since the publication of the Book of Mormon, considerable archaeological evidence has come forth to reinforce its claims that there were horses on the American continents before the time of Columbus and that these early peoples did know the principle of the wheel.

Daniel H. Ludlow, *Companion*, 206.

4 **Alma 18: 13***Rabbanah*

The Lamanite word “Rabbanah,” meaning “powerful or great king,” is strikingly similar to other Semitic words having essentially the same meaning. For example, the New Testament word *rabbani* clearly refers to one who is a leader (John 20:16). Also the word *rabbi*, which is used frequently by Jewish people, designates one who teaches or leads. That the spoken language of both the Nephites and the Lamanites is derived from the Hebrew is made quite clear.

Daniel H. Ludlow, *Companion*, 207; emphasis in original

5 **Alma 18:14***Silence*

The first requirement for prayer is silence. People of prayer are people of silence.

Jose Luis Gonzalez-Baledo, *Mother Teresa—In My Own Words*, [New York: Gramercy Books, 1996], 8

## 6 Holiness speaks when there is silence, encouraging that which is good or reproving that which is wrong.

James E. Faust, *Ensign*, May 2005 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2005] 62.

7 **Alma 18: 16, 18, 20, 32***Discernment*

On one occasion, while a Church security staff member was driving President Kimball home, Spencer leaned back to rest. After a bit, he suddenly sat bolt upright, took off his glasses, and looked intently at the driver. “Is this your first family?” he asked.

Taken aback, the driver answered, “No, sir, I was married before. I tried all I could, but it did not work out.”

President Kimball said, “I’m sorry if I have said something to cause you pain.” He lay back again briefly, then sat up again, looked intently and asked, “How is your son?”

The driver, who had only daughters by his second marriage, explained that he had not been allowed to see the son by his first marriage since the child was an infant, nearly twenty years earlier. They arrived at the Kimball home, and Spencer, embracing him, said, “You have good things to look forward to.”

Puzzled, the driver asked Arthur Haycock [President Kimball’s secretary] why the President [would be reading his personnel file. Arthur assured him that the President had not seen the file.

“How then,” the driver asked, “did he know about my family situation?”

Arthur smiled, “That’s why he’s President of the Church.”

About a week later the driver heard a knock at his door. A young man of about twenty introduced himself as his son. Now an adult, he had chosen to find his father and establish a relationship.

Spencer W. Kimball, as quoted in Edward L. Kimball, *Lengthen Your Stride: The Presidency of Spencer W. Kimball* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005], 48-49.

8 **Alma 18:23***Caught with guile*

Although the word *guile* is frequently used to mean “deceitful cunning” or “treachery,” it can also denote the use of strategy. It is evidently used in the latter sense in Alma 18:23; in other words, Ammon *planned or used strategy* in arranging the questions he asked King Lamoni.

Daniel H. Ludlow, *Companion*, 207; emphasis in original.

9 **Alma 18:24***Boldness*

Creating a gospel-sharing home does not mean that we are going to have to dedicate large amount of time to meeting and cultivating friends with whom to share the gospel. These friends will come naturally into our lives, and if we are open about our membership in the Church from the very beginning, we can easily bring gospel discussions into the relationship with very little risk of being misunderstood. Friends and acquaintances will accept that this is part of who we are, and they will feel free to ask questions...

A sister in France was asked about the secret of her success. She said, "I simply share my joy. I treat everyone as if they were already a member of the Church. If I'm standing by someone in line and strike up a conversation, I share with them how much I enjoyed my Church meetings on Sunday. When co-workers ask, "What did you do this weekend?" I do not skip Saturday night to Monday morning. I share with them that I went to church, what was said, and my experiences with the Saints. I talk about how I live, think, and feel."

Elder M. Russell Ballard, in Conference Report, Apr. 2006, 89; or *Ensign*, May 2006, 86.

10 **Alma 18: 24-28***Build on Common Beliefs*

Today we live in times of conflict, dissent, differences of opinion, charges, countercharges, disagreements. There is a need for us, perhaps more than ever before, to reach within ourselves and allow the quality of mutual respect, mingled with charity and forgiveness, to influence our actions with one another; to be able to disagree without becoming disagreeable; to lower our voices and build on common ground with the realization that once the storm has passed, we will still have to live with one another.

Loren C. Dunn, in Conference Report, Apr. 1991, 109; or *Ensign*, May 1991, 82.

## 11 We say in a spirit of love, bring with you all that you have of good and truth which you have received from whatever source, and come and let us see if we may add to it. This invitation I extend to men and women everywhere.

Gordon B. Hinckley, in Conference Report, Oct. 2002, 87; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 81.

12 **Alma 18:32***He knows all...*

In the midst of... the universe's incredible vastness is incredible personalness. For example, "[God] looketh down upon all the children of men; and he knows all the thoughts and intents of the hearts. (Alma 18:32); see also Isaiah 66:18).

Since we are thus fully accountable to Him, on Judgment Day we cannot invoke the Fifth Amendment!

Neal A. Maxwell, in Conference Report, Oct. 2003 {Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003}, 107.

13 **Alma 18:28-39***The Plan-The creation, Fall, Atonement*

If the earth and man and all living things had not been created in their physical and paradisiacal state, in a state of deathlessness, there could have been no fall. The fall, with its resultant probationary estate, is the child of the original and primeval creation, and the atonement is the child of the fall.

Bruce R. McConkie, *The New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 81-82.

14 *Regarding the Creation, Fall, and Atonement*

If we can gain an understanding of them, then the whole eternal scheme of things will fall into place, and we will be in a position to work out our salvation....

...These three are the foundation upon which all things rest. Without any one of them all things would lose their purpose and meaning and the plans and designs of Deity would come to naught.

Bruce R. McConkie, "The three Pillars of Eternity," *Brigham Young University 1981 Firesides and Devotional Speeches* [1981], 27

15  
 The plan required the Creation, and that in turn required both the Fall and the Atonement. These are the three fundamental components of the plan. The creation of a paradisiacal planet came from God. Mortality and death came into the world through the Fall of Adam. Immortality and the possibility of eternal life were provided by the Atonement of Jesus Christ. The Creation, the Fall, and the Atonement were planned long before the actual work of the Creation began.

Russell M. Nelson, in Conference Report, Apr. 2000, 105; or *Ensign*, May 2000, 84.

16 **Alma 18:42**  
*Spiritual Exhaustion*

It appears that a trance is a state in which the body and its functions become quiescent in order that the full powers of the Spirit may be centered on the revelations of heaven. Freed from the fetters of a mortal body, a man's spirit can be ushered into the divine presence; it can hear what otherwise could not be heard and see what otherwise could not be seen—even the visions of eternity and even the Almighty himself.... It is of interest that the false prophet Shemaiah wrote to the priest Zephaniah, charging him to keep the temple a house of order by putting the mad prophets in prison and in stocks. His reference to mad prophets is understood to have been directed to those prophets who claimed authority through some ecstasy or trance. His purpose in so doing was to have the prophet Jeremiah imprisoned, it being well-known that Jeremiah made claim to such experiences (see Jeremiah 29:26-27). The story of Ammon and Lamoni affirms religious trances as a legitimate revelatory device. Lamoni, as already noted, came forth from his trance testifying that he had seen the Redeemer and then prophesied relative to the Savior's birth and the necessity of all mankind believing on his name. The testimony of his servants was that while they were in this state of physical insensibility, angels instructed them in the principles of salvation and their obligation to live righteously. Indeed, they experienced a change of heart and no longer had a desire to do evil. Such is the state in which the power of God overcomes the "natural frame" and one is "carried away in God."

R. Millet and J. F. McConkie, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991], 3:140-141.

## 17 Alma 17-18 *Conclusion*

*Ammon is a type of Christ*

<u>Ammon</u>	<u>Similarities</u>	<u>Jesus Christ</u>
Alma 17:20	They were both bound and taken before the king	Matthew 27:2
Alma 17:25	Both took the role of servant	Mark 10:44
Alma 17:25	Both were shepherds	John 10:11
Alma 17:31	Both gathered sheep that had wandered astray	Matthew 18:12-13
Alma 17:37	Both have sharp swords to divide asunder both joints and marrow	D&C 6:2
Alma 17:17:35; 18:3	No man could slay them before their mission was complete	John 10:17-18
Alma 18:10	Both served faithfully their masters	John 6:38
Alma 18:13	They were called by similar titles "Rabbanah" and "Rabboni"	John 20:16
Alma 18:17	Both were willing to do very difficult things for their masters	Luke 22:42

Brian D Garner, *Search These Things Diligently*, p. 194

18 Ammon had prepared by fasting, praying, and studying the scriptures and gaining the spiritual endowment that we all need to teach. But I am struck by the way he taught. Remember, King Lamoni invited him to receive things, to have things done for him, but instead he chose to serve the people he intended to teach.... (Alma 17:25).

Underline that and remember it all your life if you want to know something about preparation. Ammon prepared himself, but he did more. He prepared his student to be taught the doctrines of salvation. How did he do it?

"And it came to pass that he was set among other servants to watch the flocks of Lamoni, according to the custom of the Lamanite" (v. 25).

Now, remember that he not only protected the servants and the animals at the waters of Sebus, but he drove off the enemy. When the other servants brought the evidence of what Ammon had done, King Lamoni said, "Where is he?" They said, "Oh, he is in the stables. He is doing every little thing to serve you" (see Alma 18:8-9).

Isn't that odd! He was called to teach the doctrines of salvation, but he was in the stables. Don't you think he should have been praying and fasting and polishing his teaching plan! No, he was in the stables.

King Lamoni had been brought up with a belief that there was a God but that whatever the king did was right. He had been specifically taught false doctrine that might have made him impervious to feelings of guilt. Do you remember that when he heard where Ammon was, a feeling of guilt, of fear that that he had done wrong in the killing of the servants, came over him (see Alma 18:5)? Remember the effect in Alma chapter 18:

"And they answered the king, and said: Whether he be the Great Spirit or a man, we know not; but this much we do know, that he cannot be slain by the enemies of the king; neither can they scatter the king's flocks when he is with us, because of his expertness and great strength; therefore, we know that he is a friend to the king. And now, O king, we do not believe that a man has such great power, for we know he cannot be slain.

"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" (Alma 18:3-4).

I have always focused before on how mixed up Lamoni was in his doctrine, without seeing the miracle. The miracle was that a spiritual need was created in a man, that he might be taught the gospel of Jesus Christ. His heart was broken. He felt guilt. And it came from the temporal things that Ammon had done.

I bear you my testimony that you can prepare the hearts of you students. Serve them; find little things to do for them. Pay the price of service, and God will honor it. I will make you a promise. Do not worry if your students are not lovable at times. Just do something for them, and they will seem a little more lovable to you. It will be a gift from God.

I bear my testimony that the Holy Ghost will prepare your students, as He prepared King Lamoni for Ammon. Never, never underestimate the spiritual value of doing temporal things well for those whom you serve...

I hope you will prepare the hearts of your students. Be their servants and you will love them. And they will feel your love. And more important, they will feel God's love. The Book of Mormon will help you in that.

Henry B. Eyring, *Ensign*, Feb. 2004 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2004], 13-14.

## 19 Characteristics of a Great Missionary

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|----------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Knowledge of Scriptures       | Alma 17:2     |
| 2. Prayerful                     | Alma 17:3     |
| 3. Fasting                       | Alma 17:3     |
| 4. Receives Revelation           | Alma 17:3     |
| 5. Patience in Suffering         | Alma 17:5, 11 |
| 6. Set Apart                     | Alma 17:18    |
| 7. Serve                         | Alma 17:25    |
| 8. Obedience                     | Alma 18:9-10  |
| 9. Boldness                      | Alma 18:24    |
| 10. Understand Plan of Salvation | Alma 18:26-39 |

20 "...The standard of truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing, persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame, but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished and the great Jehovah shall say the work is done."

Quoted by Joseph Smith in *Times and Seasons*,<sup>1</sup> March 1842, 709, quoted in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. (1992), 4:1754.

- 21
1. 1 Nephi 22:11-28
  2. D & C 3: 1-3
  3. D & C 60: 2
  4. D & C 100:5-8

