

1 **Mosiah 27:1-2**

Opposition from fellow Nephites

THINK NOT WHEN YOU GATHER TO ZION (Eliza R. Snow)

*Think not when you gather to Zion
Your troubles and trials are through,
That nothing but comfort and pleasure
Are waiting in for you.
Think not when you gather to Zion,
That all will be holy and pure;
That fraud and deception are banished,
And confidence wholly secure.
Think not when you gather to Zion,
The prize and the victory won.
Think not that the warfare is ended,
The work of salvation is done.
No, no; for the great prince of darkness
A tenfold exertion will make,
When he sees you go the fountain,
Where freely the truth you may take.*

There was a time when we were driven by mobs, and our faith was tried in various ways...There are no mobs now, we do not have our houses burnt down now, or our cattle shot down. But shall we be without trials?...It is necessary in the providence of God—that there should be liquor saloons, etc., so that Latter-day Saints...if they want to drink beer and get drunk, or go in and play billiards and gamble, or go to other places that are worse—can do so. “But,” says one, “I thought in coming to Zion I was coming to a place of purity where none of these things existed.” If that had been the case how would you have been tried?

George Q Cannon, *Journal of discourses*, [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1882] 22:108

2 Many students who enroll at LDS Church-owned universities and colleges are caught off guard when they discover opposition in what they believed would be a trouble-free environment...But frequently, just when they believe they've left opposition behind...these students discover that opposition has stowed away on board, for it crawls out of the closet when they have hardly unpacked their bags. There may be unstable roommates who have not yet made a genuine break from their habits of the past; there may be disappointments with what appeared to be ideal arrangements for housing or classes; or, surprisingly, there may be new forms of temptations to which the unsuspecting are especially vulnerable when they let down their normal guard...But, if our Church campuses are the Garden of Eden, they unfortunately still have their share of serpents

Bruce C. Hafen, *The Broken Heart* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989], 64-65

3 **Mosiah 27:2-3**

Freedom of worship is one of the basic doctrines of the gospel. Indeed, in one manner of speaking it is the most basic of all doctrines, even taking precedence over the nature and kind of being that God is, or the atoning sacrifice of the son of God.

Bruce R. McConkie, *New Witness for the Articles of Faith*, 665. See also Articles of Faith 1:11

4 In 1985 the First Presidency issue an invitation for everyone to come back, which reminded us of our duty toward those who have had their names “blotted out”: “We are aware of some who are inactive, of others who have become critical and are prone to find fault, and of those who have been disfellowshipped or excommunicated because of serious transgressions. “To all such we reach out in love. We are anxious to forgive in the spirit of Him who said: ‘I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men.’ (D&C 64:10) “We encourage Church members to forgive those who may have wronged them. To those who have ceased activity and to those who have become critical, we say, ‘Come back. Come back and feast at the table of the Lord, and taste again the sweet and satisfying fruits of fellowship with the saints.’ “We are confident that many have longed to return, but have felt awkward about doing so. We assure you that you will find open arms to receive you and willing hands to assist you” Ezra Taft Benson, Gordon B. Hinckley, and Thomas S. Monson, “Ann Invitation to Come Back,” *Church News*, Dec 22, 1985, 3.

5 Mosiah 27:11

Visit from an angel

[An account by Wilford Woodruff.] One of the Apostles said to me years ago, “Brother Woodruff, I have prayed for a long time for the Lord to send me the administration of an angel I have had a great desire for this but I have never had my prayers answered.” I said to him that if he were to pray a thousand years to the God of Israel for that gift, it would not be granted, unless the Lord had a motive in sending an angel to him. I told him that the Lord never did nor will send an angel to anybody merely to gratify the desire of the individual to see an angel. If the Lord sends an angel to anyone, He sends him to perform a work that cannot be performed only by the administration of an angel...The Holy Ghost is what every Saint of God needs. It is far more important that a man should have that gift than he should have the ministrations of an angel, unless it is necessary for an angel to teach him something that he has not been taught.

Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976], 191

6 Mosiah 27:8-19

Alma rehearses the story in Alma 36, in respect of which a more detailed commentary will be given. At this point let us confine ourselves primarily to the question why Alma the Younger and the sons of Mosiah were accorded a call to repentance by an angel, when so many others who have left the Church and warred against it do not appear to have been granted a like privilege. Some considerations would include the following:

First, it ought be observed that if all rebellious souls were accorded a personal visit from an angel assuring the reality of the world to come with its rewards and punishments, there would be little need for faith on anyone’s part.

Second, such appearances of angels would create the temptation to obtain a testimony by negative behavior rather than through righteousness. Given that few among the faithful are privileged to enjoy the ministering of angels, it would seem a strange system of theology that freely granted such a privilege to the wicked.

Third, it could be that some appreciable number of people have had such an experience and have rejected the divine counsel and chosen not to repent, and thus we have no record of the experience. We know, for example, that Laman and Lemuel were rebuked by an angel and that they disregarded it (1 Nephi 3:29). And there is no evidence that they ever recorded such things.

Fourth, the Savior explained that those who reject the testimony of scripture and living prophets would also reject the testimony of angels were they to appear to them (see Luke 16:31).

Fifth, we have the testimony of scripture that “some have entertained angels unawares” (Hebrews 13:2), and we might suppose that in many instances angels have sought to entice transgressors from their course in unobserved or less dramatic ways that this appearance to Alma and the sons of Mosiah.

Sixth, the prayers of the righteous cannot go unheard. Alma the Elder and Mosiah were both men of great faith who no doubt implored the heavens night and day with a plea of help to save their wayward sons. Nor did they pray alone, for their pleadings were joined by those of all the faithful of the Church in and around Zarahemla.

Seventh, it need be remembered that the Lord, who can manifest his power in a great variety of ways, is hardly limited to angelic ministrations or open visions. Many have had conversion experiences of spiritual impact and consequence equal to Alma's, experiences which are the result of a coalescence of circumstances divinely contrived: the life-changing experiences involving such things as a confrontation with death, an inspired sermon, a caring parent or relative, or a sensitive priesthood leader.

Milliet & McConkie, *Doctrinal Commentary on the BOM*, Vol 2 pp 304-305.

Mosiah 27:14-16

7 *Prayer of the Righteous*

You remember what Alma did when his son, Alma, didn't walk in the ways of the Lord and went about trying to destroy the church. He just did not give the Lord any rest about it; he took it to the Lord in mighty prayer until an angel of heaven appeared to his son....

LeGrand Richards, in Conference Report, Oct. 1947 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1947],75

8 [An account of Zion's Camp.] The scourge came as had been foretold, and the Camp of Zion felt its terrible effects. Moanings and lamentations filled the air....Joseph and Hyrum administered assiduously to the sick, and soon they were in the grasp of the cholera. They were together when it seized them; and together they knelt down and prayed for deliverance. Three times they bowed in supplication, the third time with a vow that they would not rise until deliverance from the destroyer was vouchsafed. While they were thus upon their knees a vision of comfort came to Hyrum. He saw their mother afar off in Kirtland praying for her absent sons, and he felt that the Lord was answering her cry. Hyrum told Joseph of the comforting vision and together they arose, made whole every whit. George Q. Cannon, *Life of Joseph Smith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972] 183.

9 The stake president asked if I would meet with a distraught mother and father who were grieving over a son's decision to leave his mission....We knelt quietly in a private place....When we arose, the father said, "Brother Monson, do you really think our Heavenly Father can alter our son's announced decision to return home before completing his mission?"...I responded, "Where is your son serving?" He replied, "In Dusseldorf, Germany." I placed my arm around the mother and father and said to them, "Your prayers have been heard and will be answered. With more than thirty-eight stake conferences being held this day attended by General Authorities, I was assigned to your stake. Of all the Brethren, I am the only one who has the assignment to meet with the missionaries in the Germany Dusseldorf Mission this very Thursday." Their petition had been honored by the Lord. I was able to meet with their son. He responded to their pleadings. He remained and completed a highly successful mission. Thomas S. Monson, *Be Your Best Self*[Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979], 28

10 We learn that there is majestic, undeniable power in the love and prayer of a parent. The angel who appeared to Alma and the sons of Mosiah did not come in response to any righteousness on their part....He came in response to the prayers of a faithful parent.

Jeffrey R. Holland, *However Long and Hard the Road*, 81

11 Pray for the weather. We have floods in one area and drought in another. I am satisfied that if enough prayers ascent to heaven for moisture upon the land, the Lord will answer those prayers for the sake of the righteous. Way back in 1969 I was in South America. I flew from Argentina to Santiago, Chili. The Andes mountains were dry. There was no snow. The grass was burned. Chili was in the midst of a devastating drought. The people pleaded for help in bringing moisture. We dedicated two new buildings on that visit. In each of the dedicatory services we pleaded with the Lord for rain upon the land. I have the testimony of many who were in those meetings that the heavens were opened and the rains fell with such abundance that the people asked the Lord to shut them off. Gordon B. Hinckley, in Conference Report, Apr 2003, 105

12 When the Prophet [Joseph Smith's] ...enemies were threatening him with violence, he was told that quite a number of little children were then gathered together, praying for his safety. To this he commented, "Then I need have no fear: I am safe" (*Young Woman's Journal*, xvi, 550).

Hyrum L. Andrus, *Joseph Smith, the Man and the Seer*[Salt Lake City:Deseret Book, 1970], 59

13 We learn that there is a majestic, undeniable power in the love and prayer of a parent. The angel who appeared to Alma and sons of Mosiah did not come in response to any righteousness on their part, though their souls were still precious in the sight of God. He came in response to the prayers of a faithful parent...(Mosiah 27:14). Parental prayer is an unfathomable source of power. Parents can never give up hoping or caring or believing. Surely they can never give up praying. At times prayer may be the only course of action remaining—but it is the most powerful of them all. We learn that there is great power in the united faith of the priesthood. It is not only the elder Alma who prays when his son is laid helpless and insensible before him, but also the priests and, we might assume, other faithful friends and neighbors...(Mosiah 27:22). Here is a majestic example of Christlike love. No one in this group seems delighted that devastating recompense has finally come. No one here seems pleased to imagine the torment of this young spirit. Yet this is the young man who has despised the very church of God which they hold dearer than life itself...What we all need we cannot in good conscience or integrity deny another. So they prayed for him who had despitely used them.

Jeffrey R Holland, *The Book of Mormon: It Begins with a Family*[Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983] 94-95.

14 Love of God, the very essence of religion, was always with me. I never doubted the Lord's existence, his goodness or his power. When in trouble my first thought was to pray to Him. I did not share the notion, expressed by some of my fellows, that "the Lord doesn't want us to bother him about every little thing." I have never believed that we trouble our Heavenly Father by craving blessings at his hand. Prayer is an expression of faith, and the exercise of faith, whereby comes spiritual development, is one of the great objects and privileges of this earthly existence, our "second estate," where we "walk by faith," as before we "walked by sight." I believed then and believe now, that God's ear is as open to the pleadings of a little child, as to the prayers of a congregation...A rather remarkable experience befell me when a child. I had lost my pocket knife—the first I ever owned. Grieving bitterly over the misfortune, I almost questioned Providence for permitting it to happen. Yes, I was just that unreasonable, not knowing any better, and being so constituted that it nearly tore my heart out to lose anything upon which I had set my affections. While sorrowing over my loss, I suddenly felt an influence of peace, and as I looked up to heaven through my tears, a ray of light seemed resting down upon me. All at once those splendid lines of Cowper's flashed into my mind:

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning Providence
He hides a smiling face.

Never to my knowledge had I seen or heard that verse before. But be that as it may, it had the effect of drying my tears and giving me the assurance that I should find my lost knife. A few minutes later I walked the path to my mother's gate, and there, half hidden in the dust, lay my precious treasure. How eagerly I pounced upon it, and how grateful I was for its recovery, I need not say. To some this incident may appear trivial. To me, it is anything but that. Orson F. Whitney, *Through Memory's Halls* [Independence, Missouri: Press of Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1930], 70-71

15 Mosiah 27:17-19
Miraculous Conversion

Those who are born again not only live a new life, but they also have a new father. Their new life is one of righteousness, and their new father is God. They become the sons of God; or more particularly, they become the sons and daughters of Jesus Christ. They bear, ever thereafter, the name of their new parent; that is, they take upon themselves the name of Christ and become Christians, not only in word but in very deed. They become by

adoption the seed or offspring of Christ, the children in his family, the members of his household, which is the perfect household of perfect faith....They also become joint-heirs with him of the fullness of the glory of the Father, thus becoming by adoption the sons of God the Father.

McConkie, *A New Witness for Articles of Faith*, p. 282.

16 Mosiah 27:22-23

Fasting and Prayer

A certain kind of devil goes not out except by fasting and prayer, the scriptures tell us. (See Matt. 17:14-21.) Periodic fasting can help clear up the mind and strengthen the body and the spirit....To make a fast most fruitful, it should be coupled with prayer and meditation.

Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, October 1986, 4

17 *Ministering to those who have strayed*

I have been asked the question, "Isn't it depressing to have to review the sins and transgressions of people involved in such difficulties?" It would be if I were looking for sins and transgressions. But I am working with people who are repenting. These are sons and daughters of God who have made mistakes—some of them very serious. But they are *not* sinners. They *were* sinners in the past but have learned through bitter experience the heartbreak that results from disobedience to God's laws. *Now* they are no longer sinners. They are God's repentant children who want to come back to Him and are striving to do so. They have made their mistakes and have paid for them. Now they seek understanding, love, and acceptance.

Theodore M. Burton, in Conference Report, Oct 1985, 80-81; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 64.

18 Mosiah 27:24-27

Born Again

We learn that when repentance is complete we are born again and leave behind forever the self we once were. To me, none of the many approaches to teaching repentance falls more short than the well-intentioned suggestion that "although a nail may be removed from a wooden post, there will forever be a hole in that post." We know that repentance (the removal of that nail, if you will) can be a very long and painful and difficult task....But where repentance is possible and its requirements are faithfully pursued and completed, there is no "hole left in the post" for the bold reason that it is no longer the same post. It is a new post. We can start again, utterly clean, with a new will and a new way of life. Through repentance we are changed to what Alma calls "new creatures" (Mosiah 27:26).... Repentance and baptism allow Christ to purify our lives in the blood of the Lamb and we are clean again. What we were, we never have to be again....Christ is the power behind all repentance.

Jeffrey R. Holland, "Alma, Son of Alma," *Ensign*, March 1977, pp.82-83

19 We must be careful, as we seek to become more and more godlike, that we do not become discouraged and lose hope. Becoming Christlike is a lifetime pursuit and very often involves growth and change that is slow, almost imperceptible. The scriptures record remarkable accounts of men whose lives changed dramatically, in an instant, as it were: Alma the Younger, Paul on the road to Damascus, Enos praying far into the night, King Lamoni. Such astonishing examples of the power to change even those steeped in sin give confidence that the Atonement can reach even those deepest in despair.

But we must be cautious as we discuss these remarkable examples. Though they are real and powerful, they are the exception more than the rule. For every Paul, for every Enos, and for every King Lamoni, there are hundreds and thousands of people who find the process of repentance much more subtle, much more imperceptible. Day by day they move closer to the Lord, little realizing they are building a godlike life. They live quiet lives of goodness, service, and commitment. They are like the Lamanites, who the Lord said "were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost and they *knew it not*" (3 Ne. 9:20; italics added).

Ezra Taft Benson, "a Mighty Change of Heart," *Ensign*, October 1989, p. 5.

20 We were born again when we entered into a covenant relationship with our Savior by being born of water and of the Spirit and by taking upon us the name of Jesus Christ. We can renew that rebirth each Sabbath when we partake of the sacrament.

Latter-day Saints affirm that those who have been born again in this way are spiritually begotten sons and daughters of Jesus Christ (see Mosiah 5:7; 15:9-13; 27:25). Nevertheless, in order to realize the intended blessings of this born-again status, we must still keep our covenants and endure to the end. In the meantime, through the grace of God, we have been born again as new creatures with new spiritual parentage and the prospects of a glorious inheritance.

Dallin H. Oaks, in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 77; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 56

21 The very process of being born again spiritually is not a one-time occurrence. Hence, Paul said that he died “daily” (1 Cor. 15:31). Such is the process of putting off the old self as one becomes a woman or a man of God. Quick change artists are rare. I have not seen many put off the old and put on the new very rapidly.

Neal A Maxwell, BYU Fireside, 2 Dec 1984.

22 Have you ever thought, “Wouldn’t it be nice to have that experience?” Well, the scriptures don’t suggest that it would be nice; they say that it’s necessary in order for you and me to have what it is we want, which is eternal life....

The ordinances are the key to the “mighty change” spoken of in the scriptures. There may be some who feel that they’ve experienced a true spiritual rebirth without receiving those ordinances by proper authority, but they haven’t. When I was a boy, someone who held the priesthood laid his hands on my head and told me that I had the right to the companionship of the Holy Ghost. I testify to you that had that ordinance not been performed, I wouldn’t have that right today.

Henry B. Eyring, *To Draw Closer to God*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997], 105-107.

23 On the evening of 10 May 1921, as they sailed toward what is now Western Samoa, Elder McKay had the following experience:

Toward evening, the reflection of the afterglow of a beautiful sunset was most splendid! ... Pondering still upon this beautiful scene, I lay in my [bed] at ten o’clock that night...I then fell asleep, and beheld in vision something infinitely sublime. In the distance I beheld a beautiful white city. Though it was far away, yet I seemed to realize that trees with luscious fruit, shrubbery with gorgeously tinted leaves, and flowers in perfect bloom abounded everywhere. The clear sky above seemed to reflect these beautiful shades of color. I then saw a great concourse of people approaching the city. Each one wore a white flowing robe and a white headdress. Instantly my attention seemed centered upon their leader, and though I could see only the profile of his features and his body, I recognized him at once as my Savior! The tint and radiance of his countenance were glorious to behold. There was a peace about him which seemed sublime—it was divine!

The city, I understood, was his. It was the City Eternal; and the people following him were to abide there in peace and eternal happiness. But who were they? As if the Savior read my thoughts, he answered by pointing to a semicircle that then appeared above them, and on which were written in gold the words:

“These Are They Who Have Overcome the World—Who Have Truly Been Born Again!”

David O. McKay, *Teachings of Presidents of the Church*, [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003], 1-2

24 The Holy Ghost is a cure and a preventative. While you have the companionship of the Holy Ghost, the cleansing power of the Atonement is operating in your life.

Henry B. Eyring, BYU Devotional, 29 Oct. 1989

25 No person whose soul is illuminated by the burning Spirit of God can in this world of sin and dense darkness remain passive. He is driven by an irresistible urge to fit himself to be an active agent of God in furthering righteousness.

Marion G. Romney, in Conference Report, October 1941, 89. See also Mosiah 5:2

Mosiah 27:28

26 *After tribulation comes blessings*

Before	After
"Carnal and fallen," to be cast off" (Mosiah 27:25-27; Alma 36:11)	Redeemed of God, "born of the Spirit" (Mosiah 27:24-25; Alma 36:23)
"Wading through much tribulation" (Mosiah 27:28)	Snatched "out of an everlasting burning" (Mosiah 27:28)
In "the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity" (Mosiah 27:29)	"Redeemed from the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity" (Mosiah 27:29)
"In the darkest abyss" (Mosiah 27:29)	Beheld "the marvelous light of God" (Mosiah 27:29)
"Racked with eternal torment" (Mosiah 27:29)	Soul "pained no more" (Mosiah 27:29)
"Harrowed up by the memory" of his many sins (Alma 36:17)	No longer "harrowed up by the memory " of his sins (Alma 36:19)
Felt exquisite and exceeding pain (Alma 36:20-21)	Felt exquisite and exceeding joy (Alma 36:20-21)
Soul racked with horror at the thought of being in the presence of God (Alma 36:14-15)	Soul longed to be in the presence of God (Alma 36:22)

27 We learn that repentance is a very painful process. By his own admission Alma said he wandered "through much tribulation, repenting nigh unto death," that he was consumed with an "everlasting burning...I was in the darkest abyss," he said, "My soul was racked with eternal torment" (Mosiah 27:28-29)

For three seemingly endless days and nights he was torn "with pains of a damned soul" (Alma 36:16), pain so real that he was physically incapacitated and spiritually terrorized by what appeared to be his ultimate fate. No one should think that the gift of forgiveness is fully realized without significant effort on the part of the forgiven. No one should be foolish enough to sin willingly or wantonly, thinking forgiveness is easily available.

Repentance of necessity involves suffering and sorrow. Anyone who thinks otherwise has not read the life of young Alma, nor tried personally to repent. In the process of repentance we are granted just a taste of the suffering we would endure if we failed to turn away from evil. That pain, though only momentary for the repentant, is the most bitter of cups. No man or woman should be foolish enough to think it can be sipped, even briefly, without consequence....

We learn that when repentance is complete, we are born again and leave behind forever the self we once were. To me, none of the many approaches to teaching repentance falls more short than the well-intentioned suggestion that “although a nail may be removed from a wooden post, there will forever be a hole in that post.” We know that repentance (the removal of the nail, if you will) can be a very long and painful and difficult task. Unfortunately, some will never have the incentive to undertake it. We even know that there are a very few sins for which no repentance is possible. But where repentance is possible, and its requirements are faithfully pursued and completed, there is no “hole left in the post” for the bold reason that it is no longer the same post. It is a new post. We can start again, utterly clean, with a new will and a new way of life.

Jeffrey R. Holland, *However Long and Hard the Road*, [1985], 83-84

- 28 We must remember that repentance is more than just saying, “I am sorry.” It is more than tears in one’s eyes. It is more than a half a dozen prayers. Repentance means suffering. If a person hasn’t suffered, he hasn’t repented....He has got to go through a change in his system whereby he suffers.
Spencer W. Kimball, *Teachings*, 99

Mosiah 27:29

- 29 *Redeemed from the gall of bitterness*

Our first scriptural reference to gall, a bitter and poisonous herb, is found in Deuteronomy 29:18, where it is used as a metaphor to describe the spiritual state of those who turn from the God of Israel to embrace idolatry. The phrase Moses used was “gall and wormwood.” Wormwood also was a plant with a bitter taste. The doctrine being taught by Alma’s comment is that to leave righteousness and truth to embrace wickedness and falsehood embitters and poisons the soul toward those covenants that have been abandoned. Thus it is to be expected that those leaving the Church to satiate carnal appetites will not be able to remain neutral toward it but rather will be characterized by a bitter and poisonous spirit. Alma was a classic example of this sequence and here announces that he has been freed from this spirit of bitterness.

Mosiah 27:32-35

- 30 *Repair all injuries*

There are many things which a repentant soul can do to make amends. “A broken heart and a contrite spirit” will usually find ways to restore to some extent. The true spirit of repentance demands that he who injures shall do everything in his power to right the wrong.

Spencer W. Kimball, *Miracle of Forgiveness*, 192. See also Leviticus 6:4.

Mosiah 27:37

- 31 *Publish good tidings*

After conversion comes the desire to share—not so much out of a sense of duty, even though that responsibility falls on the priesthood, but out of a sincere love and appreciation for that which has been received. When such a “pearl of great price” comes into our lives, we cannot be content just to admire it by ourselves. It must be shared! And here is the great joy and happiness of the gift!

L. Tom Perry, *Ensign*, May 1984, 79.