

**Alma 30:2****1** *Difference Between Righteous and Unrighteous Mourning?*

“Wholesome and proper mourning—mourning based on sound gospel knowledge—is a profitable and ennobling part of life. Men are commanded to fast, and pray, and mourn: all these are essential parts of true worship (Alma 30:2; Helaman 9:10). . .

“Mourning takes place in unrighteousness, and is displeasing to the Lord, when bereaved persons refuse to find comfort and solace in the gospel teachings. Excessive sorrow over the death of a loved one shows spiritual instability. It appears, for example, that the daughters of Ishmael permitted themselves to mourn inordinately over the death of their father (1 Nephi 16:35-36). Certainly most of the ritualistic mourning, the elaborate displays of sorrow, the hiring of special mourners, the cutting of the flesh as a sign of sorrow (Lev. 19:28), and so on, are all outside the bounds of decent and dignified mourning. The true gospel perspective is seen in Job’s statement: ‘The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord’ (Job 1:21).”

Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 518-19

**Alma 30:6****2** *Anti-Christ*

An antichrist is an opponent of Christ; he is one who is in opposition to the true gospel, the true Church, and the true plan of salvation. (1 John 2:19; 4:4-6.) He is one who offers salvation to men on some other terms than those laid down by Christ. Sherem (Jac. 7:1-23), Nehor (Alma 1:2-16), and Korihor (Alma 30:6-60) were antichrists who spread their delusions among the Nephites.

“Many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.” (2 John 7.) “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?” John asked. “He is an antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.” (1 John 2:22.) Though many modern day religionists profess to believe in Christ, the fact is they do not accept him as the literal Son of God and have not turned to him with the full knowledge and devotion necessary to gain salvation. “Whosoever receiveth my word receiveth me,” he said, “and whosoever receiveth me, receiveth those, the First Presidency, whom I have sent, whom I have made counselors for my name’s sake unto you.” (D&C 112:20.)

The saints in the meridian of time, knowing there would be a great apostasy between their day and the Second Coming of our Lord, referred to the great apostate church as the anti-Christ. “Little children, it is the last time,” John said, “and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.” (1 John 2:18.) “And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.” (1 John 4:3.) This great antichrist which is to stand as the antagonist of Christ in the last days, and which is to be overthrown when he comes to cleanse the earth and usher in millennial righteousness, is the church of the devil (Rev. 13:17), with the man of sin at its head. (2 Thess. 2:1-12.)

*Mormon Doctrine*, 2d ed. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966], 39-40.

**3** *....[T]he Book of Mormon exposes the enemies of Christ. . . . It fortifies the humble followers of Christ against the evil designs, strategies, and doctrines of the devil in our day. The type of apostates in the Book of Mormon is similar to the type we have today. God, with his infinite foreknowledge, so molded the Book of Mormon that we might see the error and know how to combat false educational, political, religious, and philosophical concepts of our time.”*  
Ezra Taft Benson, *A Witness and a Warning*, p. 3

4 In our day we would speak of an anti-Christ as one who denies the divine birth of Jesus; who downplays the significance of his teachings; who claims that Jesus' sufferings, death, and resurrection have no significance for mankind. Many in this dispensation have been seduced into the damnable heresy that Jesus was merely a good man, a brilliant speaker, and a loving and tender example of mercy and forgiveness—these things alone. The restored gospel—especially as made known through the Book of Mormon—testifies that Jesus Christ was and is divine, that he is God.

McConkie, Joseph Fielding, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 3, p. 201

5 It is a real travesty today when we hear the voices of the atheist, the godless, and the anti-Christ who would deny us the right of public expression of our worship of the Master. First they moved against the long-established institution of prayer in our public schools. They would remove any vestige of Christianity or worship of the Savior of mankind in our public gatherings; they would remove the long-established tradition of prayer in our Congress, remove the “In God We Trust” insignia from our nation’s emblems and seals and from our national coins.

The latest move of these anti-Christes would prohibit our own children from singing the beautiful and inspiring Christmas carols, relating to the Savior’s birth or divinity, or “the heavenly angels singing” from our public schools. *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, edited by Edward L. Kimball [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982], 411-12

6 We’re facing the same situation today in the world with anti-Christes as we did with Satan in the preexistence. G. Homer Durham, *N. Eldon Tanner, His Life and Service* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1982], 316.

7 Thus Korihor’s life teaches us that having the truths of the gospel and being a covenant servant of Christ are in nowise guarantees of salvation. We are also reminded that the most powerful opposition to the work of the Savior on this earth comes from those who know the truth and them deliberately turn from it and seek to destroy others....

In every generation Korihor takes his toll of those who will not get themselves founded on the Rock. Chauncey C. Riddle, *The Book of Mormon: It Begins with a Family* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983], 134, 142.

8 ....If they [Mormon & Moroni] saw our day, and chose those things which would be of greatest worth to us, is not that how we should study the Book of Mormon? We should constantly ask ourselves, “Why did the Lord inspire Mormon (or Moroni or Alma) to include that in his record? What lesson can I learn from that to help me live in this day and age?”

*A Witness and a Warning*, pp. 19-20

9 I bless you with increased discernment to judge between Christ and anti-Christ. I bless you with increased power to do good and to resist evil. I bless you with increased understanding of the Book of Mormon. I promise you that from this moment forward. If we will daily sup from its pages and abide by its precepts, God will pour out upon each child of Zion and the Church a blessing hitherto unknown....

Ezra Taft Benson, *Ensign*, May, 1986, p. 78.

### **Alma 30:7-11**

10 *Agency to choose how to worship*

“If I bow the knee and confess that he is that Saviour, the Christ, to the glory of the Father, will you let me go home and be a Presbyterian?” “Yes.” “And not persecute me?” “Never.” “Won’t you let me go home and belong to the Greek Church?” “Yes.” “Will you allow me to be a Friend Quaker, or a Shaking Quaker?” “O yes, anything you wish to be, but remember that you must not persecute your neighbors, but must mind your own business, and let your neighbors alone, and let them worship the sun, moon, a white dog, or anything else they please, being mindful that every knee has got to bow and every tongue confess. When you have paid this tribute to the Most High, who

created you and preserves you, you may then go and worship what you please, or do what you please, if you do not infringe upon your neighbors.” (In *Journal of Discourses*, 2:317).

Brigham Young also taught that the kingdom of God will be the means of protecting this freedom of worship  
Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 6:344-45.

### **Alma 30:10**

#### 11 *Capital Punishment*

We solemnly make the following declarations, the Church’s position on capital punishment:… That this Church views the shedding of human blood with the utmost abhorrence. That we regard killing of human beings, except in conformity with the civil law, as a capital crime which should be punished by shedding the blood of the criminal, after a public trial before a legally constituted court of the land.... The revelations of God to this Church make death the penalty for capital crime, and require that offenders against life and property shall be delivered up to and tried by the laws of the land.

Official Declaration, *Millennial Star*, 20 Jan. 1890, 33-34.

12 This divine law for shedding the blood of a murderer has never been repealed. It is a law given by the Almighty and not abrogated in the Christian faith. It stands on record for all time—that a murderer shall have his blood shed. He that commits murder must be slain. “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.” I know there are some benevolent and philanthropic people in these times who think that capital punishment ought to be abolished. Yet I think the Lord knows better than they. The law he ordained will have the best results to mankind in general.

Charles W. Penrose; as quoted in Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1957] 1:189-199.

### **Alma 30:12-28**

#### *Philosophy of Korihor*

13 The philosophy of Korihor, with its naturalism, materialism, and moral relativism, is the prevailing philosophy of our own day, as was foreseen in the Book of Mormon: “Yea . . . there shall be great pollutions upon the face of the earth . . . when there shall be many who will say, Do this, or do that, and it mattereth not, for the Lord will uphold such at the last day. But wo unto such, for they are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity” (Mormon 8:31). Enormously proud of their accomplishments, “the Gentiles are lifted up in the pride of their eyes, and have stumbled, because of the greatness of their stumbling block” (2 Nephi 26:20). Their own expertise is the highest court of appeal, as they “preach up unto themselves their own wisdom and their own learning, that they may get gain and grind upon the faces of the poor” (2 Nephi 26:20). The theologians “set themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world” (2 Nephi 20:29), as they “contend one with another, teach with their learning, and deny the Holy Ghost” (2 Nephi 28:4).

*Hugh Nibley, Since Cumorah, pp. 416-18*

**Korihor the Anti-Christ**

14	References	Argument	Rationale	Conclusion
	30:13-14	No man can know of things to come	Prophecies are foolish Traditions	No revelation
	30:15	You can now know of things you can not see	No one has seen Christ	No Christ
	30:16-17	A remission of sins is not needed	Sin in the effect of a frenzied mind	No atonement
	30:17	Whatever a man does is no crime	Every man prospers according to his genius, etc.	No sin
	30:18	When a man is dead, that is the end	Leads women and men to commit whoredoms	No resurrection

Monte S. Nyman, *Book of Mormon Commentary, The Record of Alma*, Vol. 3, p. 366

15 Sometimes we hear someone refer to a division in the church. In reality, the Church is not divided. It is simply means that there are some who, for the time being at least, are member of the Church but are not in harmony with it. These people have a temporary membership and influence in the Church; but unless they repent, they will be missing when the final membership records are recorded.

It is well that our people understand this principle, so they will not be misled by those apostates within the Church who have not yet repented or been cut off. But there is a cleansing coming. The Lord says that his vengeance shall be poured out “upon the inhabitants of the earth... And upon my house shall it begin, and from my house shall it go forth, saith the Lord; First among you, saith the Lord, who have professed to know my name and have not known me...” (D&C 112:24-26). I look forward to that cleansing; its need within the Church is becoming increasingly apparent.

The Lord strengthened the faith of the early apostles by pointing out Judas as a traitor, even before this apostle had completed his iniquitous work. So also in our day the Lord has told us of the tares within the wheat that will eventually be hewn down when they are fully ripe. But until they are hewn down, they will be with us, amongst us...

Yes, within the Church today there are tares among the wheat and wolves within the flock. As President Clark stated, “The ravaging wolves are amongst us, from our own membership, and they, more than any others, are clothed in sheep’s clothing because they wear the habiliments of the priesthood... We should be careful of them...” *Improvement Era*, May 1949, 268.

**Alma 30:12, 15**

16 *No Christ*

Without acknowledgment of Deity, without recognition of the Almighty as the ruling power of the universe, the all-important element of personal and national accountability shrinks and dies. I am satisfied that this is one of the reasons for the great host of social problems with which we deal these days. Teen pregnancy, abandoned families, failure to recognize the property and rights of others, and many other problems, have resulted, in substantial part at least, from failure to recognize that there is a God to whom someday each of us must give an accounting.

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997], 57-58.

17 Secularism is expanding in much of the world today. Secularism is defined as “indifference to or rejection or exclusion of religion and religious considerations” (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 11<sup>th</sup> ed. [2003], “secularism,” 1123). Secularism does not accept many things as absolutes. Its principal objectives are pleasure and self-interest. Often those who embrace secularism have a different look about them. As Isaiah observed, “The show of their countenance doth witness against them.”

James E. Faust, *Ensign*, Nov. 2005 {Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2005}, 20.

18 For a good while, there has been going on in this nation a process that I have termed the secularization of America. The single most substantial factor in the degeneration of the values and morals of our society is that we as a nation are forsaking the Almighty, and I fear that He will begin to forsake us. We are shutting the door against the God whose sons and daughters we are.

I have heard Margaret Thatcher, former Prime Minister of Great Britain, say on more than one occasion, “You use the name of Deity in the Declaration of Independence and in the Constitution of the United States, and yet you cannot use it in the schoolroom.” Her words are a rebuke and in indictment of America....

Several years ago, the state of New Jersey passed a law banishing the mention of God from state courtroom oaths. Following this action by the New Jersey legislature, a county judge decided to ban Bibles for such oaths “because you-know-Who is mentioned inside.” And in recent years, the Boy Scouts of America have been attacked because of the language in the Scout Oath: “On my honor, I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country.”

Contrast such attitudes with that of George Washington, expressed more than two hundred years ago in his First Inaugural Address:

“It would be peculiarly improper to omit, in this first official act, my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being, who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations, and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that His benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States a government instituted by themselves for these essential purposes.

People who carry in their hearts a strong conviction concerning the living reality of the Almighty and their accountability to Him for what they do with their lives are far less likely to become enmeshed in problems that inevitably weaken society. The loss of the conviction, the almost total secularizing of our public attitudes, has been largely responsible for the terrible social illnesses now running rampant among us...

*Divine law* has become a meaningless phrase. What was once so commonly spoken of as sin is now referred to as nothing more than poor judgment. Blatant dishonesty is openly referred to and excused as “misleading others.” Virtue is too often neglected, if not scorned or ridiculed as old-fashioned, confining, unenlightened. What was once considered transgression has now been labeled merely *misbehavior*, which we have come to not only tolerate but, in too many cases, rationalize, accept, and even embrace.

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Standing for Something*, [New York: Times Books, 2000], xviii-xix.

## 19 **Alma 30:13-15**

*Revelation – foolish tradition*

This position is a radical form of empiricism, a pure naturalism. To state it in another way: “If I cannot see it, it does not exist. I can only deal with that which is seen or felt or heard by the physical senses.” From the world’s perspective, seeing is believing. From the gospel perspective, believing is seeing.

Millet & McConkie Commentary, Vol. 3, p. 204

20 Korihor was arguing, as men and women have falsely argued from the beginning of time, that to take counsel from the servants of God is to surrender God-given rights of independence. But the argument is false because it misrepresents reality. When we reject the counsel which comes from God, we do not choose to be independent of outside influence. We choose another influence. We reject the protection of a perfectly loving, all-powerful, all-

knowing Father in Heaven, whose whole purpose, as that of His Beloved Son, is to give us eternal life, to give us all that He has, and to bring us home again in families to the arms of His love. In rejecting His counsel, we choose the influence of another power, whose purpose is to make us miserable and whose motive is hatred. We have moral agency as a gift of God. Rather than the right to choose to be free of influence, it is the inalienable right to submit ourselves to whichever of those powers we choose.

Henry B. Eyring, *Ensign*, May 1997, p. 25

21 There have been those who have held an extremely low view of Scripture. They have considered it as nothing more than the national literature of the Hebrews, a purely human literary production of antiquity. This position is unsatisfactory because it is in basic error. It regards the Bible as a book of only human origin, whereas, as a matter of fact, the Bible is basically a book of divine origin.

There are those who, in their study of introduction, wish to limit themselves to the human element in the Bible. They apparently believe that it is possible to neglect entirely the question of the inspiration and divinity of the Bible, and to limit their consideration to what might be called an 'empirico scientific method.' Let it be said with all positiveness that this cannot satisfactorily be done, and those who adopt such a method find themselves in essential agreement with those who badly assert that the Bible is only a human production and nothing more.

Edward J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids, Mich., Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., [1960], 27.

22 We begin with Korihor's argument for naturalistic empiricism (the belief that it is possible to *know* all truth through the senses—by experience and observation)....

Now, it is plain that empiricism has value. It is good for us to observe our surroundings carefully and to appreciate our sensations.... Sense experience is indeed a valuable part of this life; the error comes in supposing that it is the *only* way of knowing what we know....

None of the more important questions we ask can be solved or answered by depending solely on sensation. Is there a God? Is man immortal? Is it good to be honest? What should I do next in my life?.... Every man answers these questions and makes the great decisions of his life on the basis of his belief in and acceptance of someone or something he cannot see....

The answer to Korihor is plain and simple: Our initial acceptance of Christ is not empirical, for we do not see him. But we have received into our lives a Holy Spirit that teaches us to understand the scriptures about Christ and to believe that he lives....

Korihor might by his argument be able to confuse someone who had never had revelation, but his contention is only a pathetic childishness to those who enjoy the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

Chauncey C. Riddle, *The Book of Mormon: It Begins with a Family* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983], 135-136.

23 I wish to say a few words on intellectualism—that quality which some say we deny in our work. A so-called scholar recently expressed the view that the Church is an enemy of intellectualism....If he meant by intellectualism that branch of philosophy which teaches "the doctrine that knowledge is wholly or chiefly derived from pure reason" and "that reason is the final principle of reality," then, yes, we are opposed to so narrow an interpretation as applicable to religion (see *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. [1987], "intellectualism," 990).

Such an interpretation excludes the power of the Holy Spirit in speaking to and through man. Of course we believe in the cultivation of the mind.... But the intellect is not the only source of knowledge. There is a promise, given under the inspiration of the Almighty, set forth in these words: "God shall give unto you knowledge by his Holy Spirit, yea, by the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost" (D&C 121:26).

The humanists who criticize us, the so-called intellectuals who demean us, speak only from ignorance of this manifestation. They have not heard the voice of the Spirit. They have not heard it because they have not sought

after it and prepared themselves to be worthy of it. Then, supposing that knowledge comes only of reasoning and of the workings of the mind, they deny that which comes by the power of the Holy Ghost.

The things of God are understood by the Spirit of God. That Spirit is real. To those who have experienced its workings, the knowledge so gained is as real as that received through the operation of the five senses....

Do not be trapped by the sophistry of the world, which for the most part is negative and which seldom, if ever, bears good fruit. Do not be ensnared by those clever ones whose self-appointed mission it is to demean that which is sacred.

*Discourses of President Gordon B. Hinckley*, [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2005], 2:287-388.

## 24 **Alma 30:16-17**

*No sin = no need for atonement*

Some of the world's most highly talented individuals believe, self-servingly, that mortals "[farer] in this life," prosper, and conquer according to their "genius" and strength (Alma 30:17). A few freewheelers even believe that whatsoever people do it "no crime," hurrying on to pleasure because they believe "when a man was dead, that was the end thereof" (Alma 30:17-18). Such selfish views are clearly not a climate in which the second commandment flourishes.... Pride is then mistaken for genuine individuality.

Neal A. Maxwell, *Whom the Lord Loveth* Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2003], 55-56.

25 Some of the selfish wrongly believe that there is no divine law anyway, so there is no sin (see 2 Nephi 2:13). Situational ethics are thus made to order for the selfish. So in the management of self, one can conquer by his genius and strength, because there really is no crime whatsoever (see Alma 30:17).

Unsurprisingly, therefore, selfishness leads to terrible perceptual and behavioral blunders. For instance, Cain, corrupted by his seeking of power, said after slaying Abel, "I am free" (Moses 5:33; see also Moses 6:15). One of the worst consequences of severe selfishness, therefore, is this profound loss of proportionality, like straining at gnats while swallowing camels (see Matthew 23:24; see also Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 23:21, footnote 24a). Today there are, for example those who strain over various gnats but swallow the practice of partial-birth abortions. Small wonder, therefore, that selfishness magnifies a mess of pottage into a banquet and makes 30 pieces of silver look like a treasure trove.

Conference Report, Apr. 1999, 29; or *Ensign*, May 1999, 24.

26 One of Satan's frequently used deceptions is the notion that the commandments of God are meant to restrict freedom and limit happiness. Young people especially sometimes feel that the standards of the Lord are like fences and chains, blocking them from those activities that seem most enjoyable in life. But exactly the opposite is true. The gospel plan is the plan by which men are brought to a fullness of joy. The gospel principles are the steps and guidelines which will help us find true happiness and joy.

*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p. 357

27 Isn't it interesting that these groups consider it 'freedom of expression' to profane the Lord's name and use obscenities, but oppose prayer in public places. These groups combat public faith and prayer yet uphold the right of anyone to have an abortion.

Joseph B. Wirthlin, *Ensign*, March 1993, p. 72

28 There are some who would have us believe there is no right or wrong—that everything is relative. We must never allow ourselves to think proper conduct and decision making are found in a convenient path somewhere between right and wrong.

Marvin J. Ashton, in Conference Report, Apr. 1982 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982], 11-12.

29 Relativism involves the denial of the existence of absolute truths and, therefore, of an absolute truthgiver, God. Relativism has sometimes been a small, satanic sea breeze, but now the winds of relativism have reached gale proportions. Over a period of several decades relativism has eroded ethics, public and personal, has worn down the will of many, has contributed to a slackening sense of duty, civic and personal. The old mountains of individual morality have been worn down. This erosion has left mankind in a sand-dune society, in a desert of disbelief where there are no landmarks, and no north, no east, no west, and no south! There is only the dust of despair.  
Joseph Fletcher and John Warwick Montgomery, *Situation Ethics: True or False?* Minneapolis: Dimension Books, 1972], 55; as quoted in *Selected Writings of Gerald N. Lund* Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999], 127.

30 [Joseph Fletcher, a former dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in Cincinnati and a professor of social ethics at the Episcopal Theology School in Cambridge, Massachusetts.] Dr. Fletcher argues that love is the highest good and that what determines whether something is right or wrong is simply whether or not it is the "loving thing" to do. Here are some excerpts from his book *Situation Ethics: True or False?*  
"Whether we ought to follow a moral principle or not *would always depend upon the situation....*In some situations unmarried love could be infinitely more moral than married unlove. Lying could be more Christian than telling the truth.... Stealing could be better than respecting private property.... *No action is good or right of itself.* It depends on whether it hurts or helps.... We are... obliged in conscience sometimes to tell white lies, as we often call them, then in conscience we might be obliged sometimes to engage in white thefts and white fornications and white killings and white breakings of promises and the like."  
*Selected Writings of Gerald N. Lund* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999], 126.

31 A third argument used by Korihor is that of relativism: "...and whatsoever a man did was no crime" (Alma 30:17). There are, of course, many versions of relativism.... One version encourages enjoyment of the Church social organization without getting uptight about theology or religious commandments. Another kind of relativism says that the commandments are great but open to broad private interpretation. A third acknowledges that there are commandments, but allows indulgence in sin since "nobody's perfect." A fourth version says that the commandments were okay when they were given, but they have become superfluous in our enlightened age. A fifth kind of relativism, that used by Korihor, says that the commandments were bad from the first; they are inhibitions on the soul of man that actually prevent him from ever achieving happiness. A sixth type, also used by Korihor, says that since one act is indifferent from another, it doesn't matter what we do.

The great power of all relativistic approaches is that they allow the individual to judge his own actions. This is why almost any of the approaches strikes a responsive, sympathetic chord in all other relativists....

In stark contrast to the virtually infinite number of personal choices available in the broad way of relativism is the way of the Savior. That strait and narrow way is to do as he did....

Now, it is little wonder that Korihor found much success in commending relativism to the members of the Church in his time. For while the Church is true, the members of the Church here on the earth have not yet overcome the world, although most are still trying. For many, the effort is hard, the price too great. Whether they leave the Church or not, they abandon the narrow way and settle for some variety of relativism.

Chauncey C. Riddle, *The Book of Mormon: It Begins with a Family* Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983], 137-139.

32 **Alma 30:18**  
*Lift up their heads in wickedness*

This is not just wickedness, it is wickedness in which people take pride. They lift up their heads in it. And why shouldn't they? Korihor has provided the ultimate rationalization—there is no God; there is no ultimate right or wrong; man is the supreme being. All the guilt and shame people feel (psychological hang-ups) are simply the result of the foolish teachings of their parents or the designs of evil religious leaders.

*Selected Writing of Gerald N. Lund* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999], 123.

33 **Alma 30:20-23**

If we are teaching mathematics, or if we are teaching languages, we will use the learning of the world. The Lord has not given any revelation through our prophets as to how to teach mathematics or how to teach languages, or geography, or history. The Lord has not given us any revelations with respect to atomic power, nuclear submarines, or sending missiles to the moon. The world has developed much knowledge in that respect and the world is the only source of knowledge for us; therefore we use it. Based on the best authorities we can find, we may teach things in our colleges and universities. We do this on the basis of the learning of men.... You and I must follow the revelations which God has given, because he has given revelation on the Church doctrine we teach. He may not have given revelation on the atomic warfare, but he has given revelations on doctrine. Therefore, we are to follow the revealed word of God, you and I, in our teaching; and we must be very wary of the teachings of men so that the wisdom and the teachings of men do not take us off on a tangent that will get us into difficulty.

We must in our line of work avoid sectarianism—avoid the philosophies and doctrines of men which were so denounced by the Lord in the first vision to the Prophet Joseph Smith. Just because we have an avid desire for learning is no reason we can set to one side any of the things which the Lord has said and decide that some worldly cleric is greater authority and we must determine to avoid bringing sectarianism into our instruction. That is vital... As teachers in this great Church we must hold to our one fundamental premise. We must never depart from it. We must hold to the one and only concept of the Gospel and there can be no variance. We cannot take liberties with it, not even under the guise of academic freedom, for in teaching the Gospel there is no academic freedom. *I would like to repeat that in teaching the Gospel there is no academic freedom.* There is only fundamental orthodox doctrine and truth.

Mark E. Peterson, Address given to seminaries and institutes, BYU-Provo, June 22, 1962.

## 34

*President Joseph Fielding Smith* (quotes the following letter received from a member of the Church): “There are in our community, and I suspect in other places, men who are instructing in our quorums and other organizations who teach false doctrine, and the craziest imaginations, and almost invariably they are brethren who are *not in line*. They have brilliant, trained minds, sometimes with pleasing, influential personalities, but lacking the spirit of truth that comes by obedience. You cannot give what you do not possess. In my humble opinion only those who believe in, and can prove their teaching by their works, should be instructing in our quorums and other organizations.”

That remark of his I fully endorse, and I so am expressing these thoughts particularly to our bishops, presidents of stakes, superintendents of Sunday Schools and Mutuals and those who have charge of priesthood quorums and other organizations of the Church, to see to it that in the choosing of teachers they use wisdom and seek for the guidance of the spirit of the Lord that these men spoken of here in this communication, brilliant, outstanding personalities, but without faith, are not called to teach.... We want men who are trained in the principles of the gospel and who have faith and a testimony of the truth. We have them.

Because a man has great schooling, is educated according to the ideas of the world, is not sufficient reason why he should be called to take charge of a class... Now, if he has scholastic ability and training, along with it has faith in the principles of the gospel and in the mission of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Prophet Joseph Smith, all well and good. But if he is filled with all kinds of philosophy and notions and cannot accept the doctrines in the standard works of the Church, we do not want him, whether it is in our auxiliaries or the priesthood, or in our seminaries or institutes, that are given for the teaching of our religious principles and to instill faith in the hearts of our young people.

It makes no difference who the teacher is, if he teaches false doctrine, if he teaches that which has been condemned by the Lord, that is contrary to what is written in the revelations given to the Church, then he should not teach.

Joseph Fielding Smith, CR, Oct. 1954, 21-22.

35 Korihor was arguing, as men and women have falsely argued from the beginning of time, that to take counsel from the servants of God is to surrender God-given rights of independence. But the argument is false because it misrepresents reality. When we reject the counsel which comes from God, we do not choose to be independent of outside influence. We choose another influence. We reject the protection of a perfectly loving, all-powerful, all-knowing Father in Heaven, whose whole purpose, as that of His Beloved Son, is to give us eternal life, to give us all that He has, and to bring us home again in families to the arms of His love. In rejecting His counsel, we choose the influence of another power, whose purpose is to make us miserable and whose motive is hatred. We have moral agency as a gift of God. Rather than the right to choose to be free of influence, it is the inalienable right to submit ourselves to whichever of those powers we choose.

Another fallacy is to believe that the choice to accept or not accept the counsel of prophets is no more than deciding whether to accept good advice and gain its benefits or to stay where we are. But the choice not to take prophetic counsel changes the very ground upon which we stand. It becomes more dangerous. The failure to take prophetic counsel lessens our power to take inspired counsel in the future. The best time to have decided to help Noah build the ark was the first time he asked. Each time he asked after that, each failure to respond would have lessened sensitivity to the Spirit. And so each time his request would have seemed more foolish, until the rain came. And then it was too late.

Henry B. Eyring, *Ensign*, May 1997, p. 25

### 36 Alma 30:25

*Anti-Christ Often Use Half Truths*

A common tactic used by those who are trying to destroy faith is called a “straw man” argument. This is done by setting up a false image—a straw man—of the truth and then attacking the false image in order to convince others the true image is false. A simple example of this is a child accusing parents who won’t let him play until he gets his work done of not wanting him to have any fun. This is faulty reasoning, but it is often used to deceive others.

Sometimes others claim that Latter-day Saints believe something that we don’t believe. They claim that the false belief is false and then show that it is false. It has nothing to do with what we really believe but is an attempt to make us seem to be in error. Korihor did this to Giddonah: “This argument is called a straw man. That is, he attributed to Giddonah something that Giddonah does not believe—the idea that children inherit guilt through Adam’s transgression. Korihor knows that he cannot fight truth fairly and come off victorious, so he attributes bad doctrine to Giddonah, a straw man to which he can give a good verbal licking”

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Sustaining and Defending the Faith* [1985], 90; *BYU Book of Mormon Student Manual 2003*, pp.216-217

### 37 Alma 30:28

Satan, with an illusion, leads a man to puff himself up with pride to say, “I am my own man. I know the Lord lives, but he expects me to handle this particular matter on my own and not bother him with any details.” Not being familiar with the scriptures, the man may not know that Satan teaches the world there is no God. But to the saints he simply says, “There is a God. But he is only *generally* involved in your life. He would not *specifically* help you today.” Or he teaches the world not to pray, but to the Saints he simply says, “Don’t pray now. You don’t feel like praying right now” (see 2 Ne. 32:8-9). The net effect is the same.

Gene R. Cook, in Conference Report, Apr.1982 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982], 36.

***The Teachings of Korihor  
In Alma 30:12-28***

38

Anti-Christian	“there should be no Christ”	12
Negativism	“bound down under a foolish and vain hope”	13
Agnosticism	“no man can know of anything which is to come”	13
Empiricism	“ye cannot know of things which ye do not see”	15
Psychological Explanation	“it is the effect of a frenzied mind”	16
Positivism	“a belief of things which are not so”	16
Sophism	“every man fares in this life according to the management of the creature”	17
Naturalism	“every man prospers according to his genius”	17
Egoism	“every man conquers according to his strength”	17
Relativism	“whatsoever a man does is no crime”	17
Hedonism	“lift up their heads in wickedness”	18
Nihilism	“when a man dies, that is the end thereof”	18
Anti-Religion	“priests usurp power and authority over people”	23
Skepticism	“ye do not know that they are true”	24
Atheism	“a being who never has been seen or known, who never was nor ever will be”	28

*Prepared by John W. Welch and Gregory Welch, from Charting the Book of Mormon*

39 **Alma 30:29**  
*Avoid Arguments*

Let the Elders be exceedingly careful about unnecessarily disturbing and harrowing up the feelings of the people. Remember that your business is to preach the Gospel in all humility and meekness, and warn sinners to repent and come to Christ. Avoid contentions and vain disputes with men of corrupt minds, who do not desire to know the truth. Remember that “it is a day of warning, and not a day of many words.” If they receive not your testimony in one place, flee to another, remembering to cast no reflections, nor throw out any bitter sayings. If you do your duty, it will be just as well with you, as though all men embrace the Gospel.

Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:468.

40 **Alma 30:30**  
*Blaspheme*

Among a great host of impious and sacrilegious speaking that constitute blasphemy are such things as: Taking the name of God in vain; evil-speaking about the Lord’s anointed; belittling sacred temple ordinances, or patriarchal blessings, or sacramental administrations; claiming unwarranted divine authority; and promulgating with profane piety a false system of salvation.

Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 90.

41 **Alma 30:31-34**  
*No paid ministry*

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has no paid ministry. As an example: The bishops of the wards throughout the Church are laymen and arrange their time and affairs so that they can provide and care for their families and still shepherd the flocks over which they are placed.

Franklin D. Richards, in Conference Report, April 1964, 66

42 **Alma 30: 39**

Korihor ridiculed the “foolish... [and] silly traditions” of believing in a Christ who should come.

Korihor’s arguments sound very contemporary to the modern reader, but Alma used a timeless and ultimately undeniable weapon in response—the power of personal testimony. Angry that Korihor and his like were essentially against happiness, Alma asked, “Why do you teach this people that there shall be no Christ, to interrupt their rejoicings?” [Alma 30:22] “I know there is a God.”

*Christ and the New Covenant* [1997], 121.

43 **Alma 30:40**  
*Burden of Proof*

The position of the agnostic is “I don’t know whether or not there is a God, but I don’t believe there is, furthermore, I don’t believe anyone can *know* that there is a God.” The atheistic position is “I *know* there is not a God.” This position cannot be defended by reason of logic, for how can a person *know* there is no God?.... Korihor’s position in Alma 30:48 is essentially that of the agnostic: “I do not deny the existence of a God, but I do not believe that there is a God.”

...It is impossible to prove there is *not* a God.

Daniel H. Ludlow, *Companion*, 211-12; emphasis in original.

44 When questioned, Korihor categorically denies that he believes there is a God. Alma then asks, “What evidence have ye that there is no God, or that Christ cometh not? I say unto you that ye have none, save it be your word only.” (Alma 30:40.)

It is an inspired insight on Alma’s part. Korihor is not consistent in his own thinking. If we truly can know only those things for which we have empirical evidence, then we cannot teach there is no God unless we have evidence for that belief. And Korihor has no evidence.

Korihor will consider only evidence that can be gathered through the senses. In such a system, it is much easier to prove there is a God than to prove there is not a God. To prove there is a God, all it takes is for person to see, hear, or otherwise have an experience with God, and thereafter the existence of God cannot be disproved. But here is what it would take to *prove* there is no God: Since God is not confined to this earth, we would have to search throughout the universe for him. We assume God is able to move about, so it would not be enough to start at point A in the universe and search through to point Z. What if after we leave point A, God moves there and stays there for the rest of the search?

In other words, for Korihor to say that there is no God, based on the very criteria he himself has established, he would have to perceive every cubic meter of the universe simultaneously. This creates a paradox: In order for Korihor to prove there is no God, *he would have to be a god* himself! Therefore, in declaring there is no God, he is acting on “faith,” the very thing for which he so sharply derides the religions leaders!

Gerald N. Lund, “Countering Korihor’s Philosophy,” *Ensign*, July 1992, 21.

45 At this point Alma, himself a judge and a man who knows the rules of evidence, teaches us a great lesson in responding to the challenges of our adversaries. He asked Korihor if he believed that there was a God. Korihor responded that he did not. Alma then gave Korihor his day in court—he invited him to produce whatever evidence he could to prove the nonexistence of God (v. 40). He did not himself assume the obligation to prove to Korihor that God existed. Rather he challenged Korihor to prove that God did not. He who asserts must prove. Such is the rule of law. If I offer you money in payment of a debt and you refuse to accept it on the pretense that it is counterfeit, the burden of proof is yours. You must prove it counterfeit; it is not my obligation to prove it is genuine.

Now, we ask, have the united efforts of all the Korihors the world has ever known successfully proved that there is no God? Have they proved that Jesus was not the Christ, the promised Messiah? Where is the man that can refute the testimony of those humble shepherds who heard the heavenly host sing, and who found the infant child wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger? Who is it that can come forth and refute the testimony of the wise men who followed the star and paid homage to the Christ child? Who is it that can discredit the testimony of John that the heavens were opening to him and that he heard a voice saying, “This I my beloved son”?

Can the combined wisdom of the ages refute the reality of the resurrection? How can anyone prove that Christ did not break the bands of death? And what of the testimony of Peter who said of himself and his fellow Apostles: “We are witnesses of all things which he did both in the land of the Jews, and in Jerusalem; whom they slew and hanged on a tree: Him God raised up the third day, and shewed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead” (Acts 10:39-42).

And what of the testimony of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon that the heavens were opened to them: “And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives! For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father” (D&C 76:22-23). Who with authority can deny such a testimony? What evidence does one present to an unbiased jury to prove that on a beautiful spring morning in the year of 1820 the heavens were not opened, that the Father and the Son did not appear to the youthful Joseph Smith? How does one disprove the testimony of a prophet? “I had seen a vision,” Joseph testified; “I knew it, and I knew that God knew it, and I could

not deny it, neither dared I do it; at least I knew that by so doing I would offend God, and come under condemnation” (JS-H 1:25).

We accept the feelings of the Spirit or we reject them. But we do not argue them. The Sadducees and Pharisees taunted Jesus for proof, yet when it was presented in overwhelming abundance they continued to disbelieve. Be assured that when such people seek proof, that proof is the last thing in the world that they really want. As to the Korihors, we need not assume the burden of proof that is rightly theirs. If they assert we are without a God, without prophets, and without revelation, it is for them to prove it. We await that proof as have the Saints of God from the days of Adam.

*Robert L. Millet, Sustaining and Defending the Faith, Joseph Fielding Smith, pp. 92-94*

#### 46 **Alma 30:41**

Can any man who has walked beneath the stars at night, can anyone who has seen the touch of spring upon the land doubt the hand of divinity in creation? So observing the beauties of the earth, one is wont to speak as did the Psalmist: “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.” (Ps. 19:1-2.)

“All of beauty in the earth bears the fingerprint of the Master Creator”

In Conference Report, Apr. 1978, 90; or *Ensign*, May 1978, 59

#### 47 **Alma 30:42, 47** *Lying spirit*

Not long ago a troubled friend of mine who has long suffered and continues to suffer the pains of a victim entrapped in his own snare of lies said, “I have been living lies for so long and have told so many over the years that, frankly, I don’t really know when I am telling the truth.” When I first heard this, I was moved with compassion; but a second thought had me wondering if this too wasn’t just another lie. Lying has filled this friend’s life full of trouble....

He who lies is the servant of the lie. He who tells the lie must live with the results... No man will ever be totally free who is living a lie.... A wrong isn’t right just because many people do it. A wrong deed isn’t right just because it hasn’t become visible.

Marvin J. Ashton, in Conference Report, Apr. 1982 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982], 13-14.

#### 48 **Alma 30:43** *Show me a sign*

“I will give you one of the Keys of the mysteries of the Kingdom. It is an eternal principle, that has existed with God from all eternity: That man who rises up to condemn others, finding fault with the Church, saying that they are out of the way, while he himself is righteous, then know assuredly, that that man is in the high road to apostasy; and if he does not repent, will apostatize, as God lives. The principle is as correct as the one that Jesus put forth in saying that he who seeketh a sign is an adulterous person; and that principal is eternal, undeviating, and firm as the pillars of heaven; for whenever you see a man seeking after a sign, you may set it down that he is an adulterous man.

*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 156-57*

*Sign seeking may be an attempt to gain faith and knowledge without humility, obedience and paying the price.*

49 In a world filled with skepticism and doubt, the expression ‘seeing is believing’ promotes the attitude, ‘You show me, and I will believe.’ We want all of the proof and all of the evidence first. It seems hard to take things on faith. When will we learn that in spiritual things it works the other way about—that believing is seeing? Spiritual belief precedes spiritual knowledge. When we believe in things that are not seen but are nevertheless true, then we have faith.

*Boyd K. Packer, Faith, p. 43*

50 Show me Latter-day Saints who have to feed upon miracles, signs and visions in order to keep them steadfast in the Church, and I will show you members of the Church who are not in good standing before God, and who are walking in slippery paths. It is not by marvelous manifestations unto us that we shall be established in truth, but it is by humility and faithful obedience to the commandments and laws of God. When I as a boy first started out in the ministry, I would frequently go out and ask the Lord to show me some marvelous thing, in order that I might receive a testimony. But the Lord withheld marvels from me, and showed me the truth, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, until he made me to know the truth from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet, and until doubt and fear had been absolutely purged from me. He did not have to send an angel from the heavens to do this, nor did he have to speak with the trump of an archangel. By the whisperings of the still small voice of the Spirit of the living God, he gave to me the testimony I possess. And by this principle and power he will give to all the children of men a knowledge of the truth. . . . And no amount of marvelous manifestations will ever accomplish this. Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, p. 7

51 “Some great examples of this can be found in Church history. Ezra Booth, in company with others (including Mrs. John Johnson), visited Joseph Smith at his home in Kirtland in 1831. While there Ezra Booth witnessed a miracle. Mrs. Johnson, who had had a lame arm for a number of years, was healed by the Prophet Joseph. Booth was so awe-struck by this that he joined the Church. It was not long, however, until his faith waned and he finally apostatized and wrote a series of letters against the Church (See History of the Church, 1:215-217). Another example is that of Simonds Ryder, who joined the Church after what he felt was a supernatural experience. A short time later, he left after his name was misspelled in an inspired mission call. ‘He thought if the Spirit through which he had been called to preach could err in the matter of spelling his name, it might have erred in calling him to the ministry as well’ (History of the Church, 1:261). Having lost whatever faith he had, and encouraged by Booth’s letters, Simonds Ryder led a mob against the Prophet Joseph at Father Johnson’s home where Joseph and Sidney Rigdon were tarred and feathered. This incident also caused the death of one of Joseph and Emma’s adopted children (see History of the Church, 1:261-265). Whenever we base our belief on miracles, we must constantly be fed by miracles or our belief grows weak. . . . Perhaps some members of the Church today are troubled with a less dramatic form of sign seeking. In section 121 of the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord refers to members aspiring to the honors of men. One of the reasons we aspire to position is that we somehow feel that being called to a high position is a ‘sign’ that the Lord approves of our efforts and that if we are not called, we have failed to measure up.” Michael K. Parson, *Book of Mormon Symposium*, Aug. 1982, pp. 73-75

52 A Campbellite preacher . . . came to Joseph Smith, I think his name was Hayden. He came in and made himself known to Joseph, and said that he had come a considerable distance to be convinced of the truth. ‘Why,’ said he, ‘Mr. Smith, I want to know the truth, and when I am convinced, I will spend all my talents and time in defending and spreading the doctrines of your religion, and I will give you to understand that to convince me is equivalent to convincing all my society, amounting to several hundreds.’ Well, Joseph commenced laying before him the coming forth of the work, and the first principles of the Gospel, when Mr. Hayden exclaimed, ‘O this is not the evidence I want, the evidence that I wish to have is a notable miracle; I want to see some powerful manifestation of the power of God, I want to see a notable miracle performed; and if you perform such a one, then I will believe with all my heart and soul, and will exert all my power and all my extensive influence to convince others; and if you will not perform a miracle of this kind, then I am your worst and bitterest enemy.’ ‘Well,’ said Joseph, ‘what will you have done? Will you be struck blind, or dumb? Will you be paralyzed, or will you have one hand withered? Take your choice, choose which you please, and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ it shall be done.’ ‘That is not the kind of miracle I want,’

said the preacher. 'Then, sir,' replied Joseph, 'I can perform none; I am not going to bring any trouble upon any body else, sir, to convince you.'

George A. Smith, *Journal of Discourses* 2:326

- 53 A Relief Society president or a bishop, you may someday have to remove a diabolical doubter, just as Ammon had Korihor carried to the edge of town. Korihor could not be allowed to spread the cancer of his doubt, or the responsibility would have been Ammon's.... Korihor got what he thought he needed, a physical sign—he was struck dumb. But you remember what Alma taught us and taught him: the terrible evidence of even that rebuke did not change Korihor's heart.

Henry B. Eyring, *To Draw Closer to God* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997], 145

- 54 Here is the distinction between testimony-seeking and sign-seeking: the sign-seeker wants to keep his disobedient life and still have spiritual power.... The testimony-seeker wants to submit to God, repent, and live by the light that the Lord gives through the Holy Ghost.

Catherine Thomas; as quoted in *Studies in scriptures*, ed. By Kent P. Jackson [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988], 8:275.

- 55 It is common in our secular world to say that "seeing is believing,"... The way of the Lord is best defined by a different maxim: "Believing is seeing," Faith in the Lord is the premise, not the conclusion. We *know* He lives, *therefore*, we trust Him to bless us according to His divine will and wisdom. This childlike confidence in the Lord is known in scripture simply as the "sacrifice... of a broken heart and a contrite spirit" (D&C 59:8).

Lance B. Wickman, in Conference Report, Oct. 2002 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2002], 33.

- 56 **Alma 30:44**

*All things denote God, even the earth*

Can any man who has walked beneath the stars at night, can anyone who has seen the touch of spring upon the land doubt the hand of divinity in creation? So observing the beauties of the earth, one is wont to speak as did the Psalmist: 'The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge' (Psalms 19:1-2).

All of beauty in the earth bears the fingerprint of the Master Creator.

Gordon B. Hinckley, Conference Report, April 1978, p. 90

- 57 Just a bit nearer to the sun, and Planet Earth's seas would soon be boiling; just a little farther out, and the whole world would become a frozen wilderness. . . . 'If our orbit happened to be the wrong shape . . . then we should alternately freeze like Mars and fry like Venus once a year. Fortunately for us, our planet's orbit is very nearly a circle. The 21 percent of oxygen is another critical figure. Animals would have difficulty breathing if the oxygen content fell very far below that value. But an oxygen level much higher than this would also be disastrous, since the extra oxygen would act as a fire-raising material. Forests and grasslands would flare up every time lightning struck during a dry spell, and life on earth would become extremely hazardous.

Neal A. Maxwell, quoting the British scientist Alan Hayward in *First Nephi, The Doctrinal Foundation*, BYU Religious Studies Center, p. 7

- 58 God has made certain decrees which are fixed and immovable; for instance, God set the sun, the moon, and the stars in the heavens, and gave them their laws, conditions and bounds, which they cannot pass, except by His commandments; they all move in perfect harmony in their sphere and order, and are as lights, wonders and signs unto us. The sea also has its bounds which it cannot pass. God has set many signs on the earth, as well as in the heavens; for instance, the oak of the forest, the fruit of the tree, the herb of the field, all bear a sign that seed hath

been planted there; for it is a decree of the Lord that every tree, plant, and herb bearing seed should bring forth of its kind, and cannot come forth after any other law or principle.

*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976], 197-198.

59

Have you ever contemplated the wonder of yourself, the eyes with which you see, the ears with which you hear, the voice with which you speak? No camera ever built can compare with the human eye. No method voice and the ear. No pump ever built will run as long or as efficiently as the human heart. What a remarkable thing each of us is.

Look at your finger. The most skillful attempt to reproduce it mechanically has brought only a crude approximation. The next time you use your finger, look at it, and sense the wonder of it....

I believe the human body to be the creation of Divinity. George Gallup once observed, "I could prove God statistically. Take the human body alone—the chance that all the functions of the individual would just happen is a statistical monstrosity."

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, Aug. 1992 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1992], 2.

**Alma 30:39-44**

60

*Testimonies of God*

**Book of Mormon Testimonies—There is a God**

Testimony	Types of Testimony	Examples	What Prevents this Testimony
1. The Spirit	Personal Revelation	Jacob 7:5 Alma 30:41	Things pleasing to the carnal mind Alma 30:42, 53
2. Thy Brethren	Associates given as a strength, to believe on their words	Alma 30:44 D&C 46:13-14	Pride in our own success
3. All the holy prophets (living)	Special Witness of Christ	Jacob 7:5 Alma 30:39, 41	Criticism of the Brethren, <i>TPJS</i> , 156-157, Deception of the Devil, Alma 30:53
4. The Scriptures (Past Prophets)	Recorded Experiences	Alma 30:44	Our own learning, reasoning replacing scriptures, Alma 30:53, Jacob 7:19
5. The earth, its motion; the planets	Observation of God moving in his majesty and power	Alma 30:44 Mormon 9:1-6 D&C 88:47	Not search knowledge, nor understand great knowledge, 2 Nephi 32:7

Monte S. Nyman, *Book of Mormon Commentary, Record of Alma*, Vol. 3, p. 377

61

**Alma 30:52**

*Lying*

The most powerful opposition to the work of the Savior on this earth comes from those who know the truth and then deliberately turn from it and seek to destroy others.

Chauncey C. Riddle, *Ensign*, September 1977, 18.

62 The seriousness of lying is not measured only in injury or pain inflicted on the one deceived. Lying has a devastating effect also on the perpetrator. It robs the liar of self-respect, and deadens his ability to recognize the difference between truth and error. When a lie is told often enough, even the one who knowingly spread it may begin to believe it. This was the case with the antichrist Korihor in the Book of Mormon (see Alma 30:52-53).

Robert J. Matthews, "Thou Shalt Not Bear False Witness," *Ensign*, Oct. 1994, 56.

### **Alma 30: 52-53**

63 *Deception of Satan*

All Inspiration does not come from God. (See D&C 46:7.) The evil one has the power to tap into those channels of revelation and send conflicting signals which can mislead and confuse us. There are promptings from evil sources which are so carefully counterfeited as to deceive even the very elect.

Boyd K. Packer, "Revelation in a Changing World," *Ensign*, November 1989, p. 14.

64 Lucifer does not come personally to every false prophet, as he did to Korihor, any more than the Lord comes personally to every true prophet, as he did to Joseph Smith. Such an appearance—either of God on the one hand or of Satan on the other—is, however, the end result of full devotion to the respective causes involved.

Bruce R. McConkie, *Millennial Messiah*, 72.

65 The Prophet Joseph Smith has said: "No man knows the spirit of the devil, and his power and influence, but by possessing intelligence which is more than human, and having unfolded through the medium of the Priesthood the mysterious operations of his devices; without knowing the angelic form, the sanctified look and gesture, and the zeal that is frequently manifested by him for the glory of God, together with the prophetic spirit, the gracious influence, the godly appearance, and the holy garb, which are so characteristic of his proceedings and his mysterious windings.

"A man must have the discerning of spirits before he can drag into daylight this hellish influence and unfold it unto the world in all its soul-destroying, diabolical, and horrid colors; for nothing is greater injury to the children of men than to be under the influence of a false spirit when they think they have the Spirit of God."

Teachings, p. 205

66 . . . The most powerful opposition to the work of the Savior on this earth comes from those who know the truth and then deliberately turn from it and seek to destroy others.

Chauncey C. Riddle, *Ensign*, Sept. 1977, p. 18

67 "Remember that the very worst enemies that we've had are those that are within the Church. It was Judas that betrayed the Master. . . . Today it's the same. The greatest and worst enemies we have in the Church today are those within our ranks. . . ."

Harold B. Lee, *CES Address, BYU, July 8, 1966*

68 Korihor is described in the heading as an Anti-Christ, but I'm not sure that he started out that way. Have you ever thought that possibly Korihor started out as a college student with lots of questions? Although his questioning may have begun honestly, he made two really bad mistakes. First, he denied his faith. He denied the Light of Christ that had been given to him. Second, he started to preach false doctrine to others. Alma, his leader, bore his testimony to Korihor and then Korihor made another mistake. Rather than listening to his leader and listening and relying on the Spirit, he defended his position . . . and became more argumentative. He demanded that he be given a sign. . . . He perhaps didn't intend for the sign to have such an affect on him personally, but often the

consequences of our mistakes do affect us personally. Verses 52 and 53 of chapter 30 I believe are most important when Korihor acknowledges, 'I always knew that there was a God, but Satan hath deceived me.' Isn't that interesting? 'I always knew.' He had the Light of Christ in him, but Satan deceived him."

Janette C. Hales, *BYU Devotional*, March 16, 1993

**Alma 30:54-56**

69 *Real repentance*

In real repentance, there is the actual *forsaking* of sinning. "Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin" (Ez. 18:30). A suffering Korihor confessed, "I always knew that there was a God," but his turning was still incomplete (Alma 30:52); hence, "Alma said unto him: If this curse should be taken from thee thou wouldst again lead away the hearts of this people" (Alma 30:55).

Thus when "a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them" (D&C 58:43). Neal A. Maxwell, *Ensign*, Nov. 1991 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1991], 31

**Alma 30:60**

70 "Satan does not support those who follow him. He can't! It's the Lord who sustains; the Spirit sustains; righteousness sustains. That sustenance is not Satan's to give."  
Janette C. Hales, *BYU Devotional*, March 16, 1993

71 At the last day the adversary "will not support" those who followed him anyway (Alma 30:60). He cannot. Jesus will triumph majestically, and the adversary's clever constructs, "pleasing [to] the carnal mind," will also collapse, and "the fall thereof [will be] exceedingly great" (Alma 30:53; 1 Nephi 11: 36).  
Neal A. Maxwell, in Conference Report, Oct. 2003 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003], 107.

72 Among the Latter-day Saints, the preaching of false doctrines disguised as truths of the gospel may be expected from people of two classes, and practically from these only; they are:

First—The hopelessly ignorant, whose lack of intelligence is due to their indolence and sloth, who make but feeble effort, if indeed any at all, to better themselves by reading and study; those who are afflicted with a dread disease that may develop into an incurable malady—laziness.

Second—The proud and self-vaunting ones, who read by the lamp of their own conceit; who interpret by rules of their own contriving; who have become as law unto themselves, and so pose as the sole judges of their own doings. More dangerously ignorant than the first.

Beware of the lazy and the proud; their infection in each case is contagious; better for them and for all when they are compelled to display the yellow flag of warning, than the clean and uninfected may be protected.

Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine: Selections from the Sermons and Writings of Joseph F. Smith*, compiled by John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co. 1939], 373.