

**Alma 34:1-8**1 **Law of Witness**

2 Corinthians 13:1 – “. . . In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.”

1. Alma
2. Zenos
3. Zenock
4. Moses
5. Amulek
6. Today—“The Living Christ,” January 1, 2000

**Alma 34:9**2 **It is expedient that an atonement should be made**

The atonement was not simply a nice thing, a sweet offering of a gentle and kind man; it was and is absolutely necessary. Though Christ's atonement was a voluntary offering, though he suffered and laid down his life of his own free will, what he did needed to be done; all eternity hung in the balance until it was an accomplished reality. Had there been no atonement, no amount of goodness, no amount of caring and concern, no amount of human strength could have made up the difference. We are forever indebted to him who bought us with his blood.

Millet & McConkie, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol 2, p. 246

3 **All are hardened; yea, all are fallen and are lost.**

Because of the fall of Adam and Eve, all the children of men inherit the condition of mortality, including a fallen nature. They are oblivious to things of righteousness, are hardened and insensitive to matters spiritual, are lost and alienated from the family of God. “Adam fell,” Elder Bruce R. McConkie has written. “We know that this fall came because of transgression, and that Adam broke the law of God, became mortal, and was thus subject to sin and disease and all the ills of mortality. We know that the effects of his fall passed upon all his posterity; all inherited a fallen state, a state of mortality, a state in which spiritual and temporal death prevail. In this state all men sin. All are lost. All are fallen. All are cut off from the presence of God.... Such a way of life is inherent in this mortal existence.” Further : “Spiritual death passes upon all men when they become accountable for their sins. Being thus subject to sin they die spiritually; they die as pertaining to the things of the Spirit; they die as pertaining to things of righteousness; they are cast out of the presence of God. It is of such men that the scriptures speak when they say that the natural man is an enemy to God.” (*Promised Messiah*, pp.244, 350)

Ibid. p. 247

**Alma 34:10**4 **A great and last sacrifice.**

Christ's atonement was great and last in terms of its spiritual significance, its impact, its timelessness and eternal and everlasting relevance, not necessarily in terms of its chronology. John the Baptist, as part of his prayer of ordination upon the heads of Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, explained that the Aaronic Priesthood “shall never be taken again from the earth, *until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness!*” (*Messenger and Advocate*, vol. 1 [October 1834], pp. 14-16, italic added; cited in 1981 ed. of the Pearl of Great Price, p. 59.) Likewise, a modern revelation speaks of the sons of Moses and the sons of Aaron offering an acceptable sacrifice in the temple to be erected in Independence, Jackson County, Missouri (see D&C 84:31)

Joseph Smith taught: “The offering of sacrifice has ever been connected and forms a part of the duties of the Priesthood. It began with the Priesthood, and will be continued until after the coming of Christ.... *These sacrifices, as well as every ordinance belonging to the Priesthood, will, when the Temple of the Lord shall be built, and the sons of Levi be purified, be fully restored and attended to in all their powers, ramifications, and blessings.* This ever did and ever will exist when the powers of the Melchizedek Priesthood are sufficiently manifest; else how can the restitution of all things spoken of by the Holy Prophets be brought to pass? It is not to be understood that the law of Moses will

be established again with all of its rites and variety of ceremonies; this has never been spoken of by the prophets; but *those things which existed prior to Moses' day, namely, sacrifice, will be continued.* It may be asked by some, what necessity for sacrifice, since the Great Sacrifice was offered? In answer to which, if repentance, baptism, and faith existed prior to the days of Christ, what necessity for them since that time?" (*Teachings*, pp. 172-173, italics added.) It may be that such a sacrifice, as a part of the restitution of all things, will be instituted one final time to point toward the great and last sacrifice of Jesus the Lamb (see Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation* 3:94; Bruce R. McConkie, *Mortal Messiah* 1:128).

ibid. pp.247-248

- 5 Elder M. Russell Ballard has taught that "the word *sacrifice* means literally 'to make sacred,' or 'to render sacred'" ("The Law of Sacrifice," *Ensign*, Oct. 1998, 8). The words *sacred* and *sacrifice* come from the same root. One may not have the sacred without first sacrificing something for it. There can be no sacredness without personal sacrifice. Sacrifice sanctifies the sacred.

Dennis B. Neuenschwander, in Conference Report, Apr. 2003 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003], 74

### **Alma 34:10-14**

- 6 *Sacrifice - infinite*  
Sacrifice

**What?** Bible Dictionary, "Sacrifice" p. 765, 766

**Why?** "There are several reasons why Jesus was the only person who could be our Savior. One reason is that Heavenly Father chose him to be the Savior. He was the Only Begotten Son of God and thus had power over death. . . . Jesus also qualified to be our Savior because he was the only person who ever lived on the earth who did not sin. This made him a worthy sacrifice to pay for the sins of others."

*Gospel Essentials*, p. 73

**How?** "No mortal being had the power or capability to redeem all other mortals from their lost and fallen condition, nor could any other voluntarily forfeit his life and thereby bring to pass a universal resurrection for all other mortals. Only Jesus Christ was able and willing to accomplish such a redeeming act of love. We may never understand nor comprehend in mortality how He accomplished what He did, but we must not fail to understand why He did what He did. Everything He did was prompted by His unselfish, infinite love for us."

Ezra Taft Benson, "Jesus Christ—Our Savior and Redeemer," *Ensign*, June 1990, p. 4

- 7 Because of the importance of the doctrinal concept contained herein, it seems appropriate to quote from an earlier volume of the commentary. "The atonement of Jesus Christ is infinite and eternal. First, it is infinite in the sense that it is timeless—embracing past, present, and future. Our Savior is the Lamb 'slain from the foundation of the world' (Revelation 13:8), and the effects of his atonement reach back to Eden and forward to the Millennium's end. Adam and Eve were taught to call upon God in the name of the Son for a remission of their sins, by virtue of an atonement which would be worked out some four thousand years hence (Moses 5:8). Enoch saw and bore witness some three thousand years before the events of Gethsemane and Calvary: 'The Righteous is lifted up, and the Lamb is slain from the foundation n of the world' (Moses 7:47). Jesus Christ offered himself a ransom for sin in one singular moment in earth's history, so 'that as many as would believe and be baptized in his holy name, and endure in faith to the end, should be saved—not only those who believed after he came in the meridian of time, in the flesh, but all those from the beginning, even as many as were before he came, who believed in the words of the holy prophets...., as well as those who should come after, who should believe in the gifts and callings of God by the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of the Father and of the Son' (D&C 20:25-27; cf. Alma 39:17-19). Those who lived before the meridian of time were taught to repent and believe in the name of the Holy One, 'to look forward unto the Messiah, and believe in him to come as though he already was' (Jarom 1:11).

“Second, the atonement of Jesus Christ is infinite in the sense that it conquers the most universal reality in mortal existence—death. The earth and every plant and animal upon it—all forms of life—are subject to death through the Fall. The light of the Atonement must shine upon all who were previously shadowed by the effects of the Fall. An infinite atonement must bring life to all that is subject to death.

“Third, the Atonement is infinite in that it encompasses all the worlds Christ created. Jesus Christ, as Jehovah advanced and progressed in the premortal existence to the point at which he, under the direction of Elohim, became the creator of countless worlds (Moses 1:33; 7:30) and became known as the Lord Omnipotent. In speaking of those orbs formed by the Lord Jehovah, God said to Moses: ‘And by *the word of my power*, have I created them, *which is mine only Begotten Son*, who is full of grace and truth. And worlds without number have I created; and I also created them for mine own purpose; and by the Son I created them, which is mine Only Begotten.’ And then, in discussing the role of the Son in the redemption and glorification of these worlds (their passing away), the divine word continued: ‘But only an account of this earth and the inhabitants thereof, give I unto you. For behold, there are *many worlds that have passed away by the word of my power*. And there are many that now stand, and innumerable are they unto man; but all things are numbered unto me, for they are mine and I know them.’ (Moses 1:32-33, 35.) Likewise, in the Vision of the Glories, the Lord explained that by Christ, ‘and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God’ (D&C 76:24; cf vv. 40-42). In 1843 Joseph Smith prepared a poetic version of the Vision: the verses associated with the above passage read as follows:

And I heard a great voice, bearing record from heav’n,  
 “He’s the Saviour, and only begotten of God—  
 By him, of him, and through him, the worlds were all made,  
 Even all that careen in the heavens so broad,

*‘Whose inhabitants too, from the first to the last,  
 Are sav’d by the very same Saviour of ours;  
 And, of course, are begotten God’s daughters and sons,  
 By the very same truths and the very same pow’rs.  
 (Times and Seasons 4:82-83.)*

Fourth, the atonement of Jesus Christ is infinite because Christ himself is an infinite being. From his mother, Mary—a mortal woman—he inherited mortality, the capacity to die. On the other hand, he inherited from his Father, the Almighty Elohim, immortality, the power to live forever. The suffering and sacrifice in Gethsemane and on Golgotha were undertaken by a being who was greater than man, one possessing the powers of a God. This was no human sacrifice, not even simply an act of a wise and all-loving teacher. It was more, infinitely more, than an example of submission or a model of humanitarianism. He did for us what no other being could do. Yes, it is true that ‘there was no other good enough to pay the price of sin. He only could unlock the gates of heav’n and let us in.’ (“There is a Green Hill Far Away,’ *Hymns*, no. 19.) But it equally true that what Jesus of Nazareth accomplished in and through the awful atonement is beyond human comprehension; it is the work of an infinite personage.”

Millet & McConkie, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol 3, pp. 248-250

## 8 **Alma 34:13-14**

These (blood) sacrifices, as well as every ordinance belonging to the Priesthood, will, when the Temple of the Lord shall be built, and the sons of Levi purified, by fully restored and attended to in all their powers, ramifications, and blessings. This ever did and ever will exist when the powers of the Melchizedek Priesthood are sufficiently manifest; else how can the restitution of all things spoken of by the Holy Prophets be brought to pass. It is not to be understood that the law of Moses will be established again with all its rites and variety of ceremonies; this has never been spoken of by the prophets; but those things which existed prior to Moses’ day namely, sacrifices, will be continued.

It may be asked by some, what necessity for sacrifice, since the Great Sacrifice was offered? In answer to which, if repentance, baptism, and faith existed prior to the days of Christ, what necessity for them since that time? The Priesthood has descended in a regular line from father to son, through their succeeding generations. (See book of Doctrine and Covenants) (October 5, 1840.) (D.H.C. 4:207-212). [TPJS, 173]

### **Alma 34:15-16**

#### 9 ***Mercy & Justice***

All too often, the justice of God seems to be relegated to the back burner, while the mercy of God seems to get the lion's share of attention. I presume this is true because we are all hoping for mercy and trying to avoid justice if at all possible. But it is a fact that God is just, and mercy cannot rob justice. Justice will have her due! It is also a fact that mercy, while it cannot rob justice, can satisfy the demands of justice in one instance and one instance only....

Only in the instance where we exercise faith in Jesus Christ unto repentance.

Hartman Rector, Jr., in Conference Report, Oct. 1985 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985], 98

### **Alma 34:16**

10 Justice may be satisfied in two ways: (1) keeping the law perfectly; or (2) suffering the effects of a broken law. Christ satisfied the demands of justice in both of these ways; he kept the law perfectly for himself and suffered in the Garden of [Gethsemane] and on the cross for and in behalf of those of us who repent. Those who refuse to repent are exposed to the "whole law of the demands of justice," that is, they must face without divine aid the consequences of willful sin. They therefore lose the opportunity for that rehabilitative redemption which can only come through Christ's enabling power. Bruce C. Hafen has provided the following thoughtful insight: "I once wondered if those who refuse to repent but who then satisfy the law of justice by paying for their own sins are then worthy to enter the celestial kingdom. The answer is no. The entrance requirements for celestial life are simply higher than merely satisfying the law of justice. For that reason, paying for our sins will not bear the same fruit as repenting of our sins. Justice is a law of balance and order and it must be satisfied, either through our payment or his. But if we decline the Savior's invitation to let him carry our sins, and then satisfy justice by ourselves, we will not yet have experienced the complete rehabilitation that can occur through a combination of divine assistance and genuine repentance. Working together, those forces have the power permanently to change our hearts and our lives, preparing us for celestial life." (The Broken Heart, pp. 7-8)

Joseph Fielding McConkie, Robert L. Millet, Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 3, pp. 251-252

#### 11

- There are two aspects of justice:

1. Obedience to the law results in blessings that bring joy (see D&C 130:20-21).
2. Disobedience to law results in punishments that bring sorrow (see Alma 42:22).

- There are two ways to satisfy justice:

1. Never violate the law.
2. If you do violate the law, pay the penalty.

*Problem:* No flesh is justified by the law (see 2 Nephi 2:5); everyone has sinned (see Romans 3:23). Thus, a penalty must be paid.

- There are two effects of sin:

1. By temporal law we are cut off—justice is violated (see Alma 42:14).
2. By spiritual law we perish—"there cannot any unclean thing enter in the kingdom of God" (1 Nephi 15:34).

Jesus "offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law" (2 Nephi 2:7).

- Christ initiated the law of mercy, but how?

1. He kept the law perfectly and was without sin. He was justified by the law.

2. In the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross, He suffered and paid the price for the penalty as though He was guilty of every sin ever committed.
3. He is our Advocate with the Father (see Alma 33:11; D&C 45:3-5).

BYU Book of Mormon Student Manuel, Religion 120-121, 2009

### **Alma 34: 15-17**

#### 12 *Faith unto repentance*

“Just how much faith do I need for the atonement of Christ to work for me?” In other words, how much faith do I need to receive salvation? In the book of Alma... we find the answer. The prophet Amulek taught this simple but grand principle: “The Son of God... bringeth about means unto men that they may have *faith unto repentance*” (Alma 34:14-15); emphasis added).

Please note those three words: *faith unto repentance*. That is the clue. Four times in three verses he uses that expression (Alma 34:15-16)....

So the combination of faith in Christ plus *faith unto repentance* is vitally important. That concept is one of the greatest insights we have into the importance of simple, clear faith—faith sufficient to repent. Apparently faith great enough to move mountains is not required; faith enough to speak in tongues or to heal the sick is not needed; all that we need is just enough faith to recognize that we have sinned and to repent of our sins, to feel remorse for them, and to desire to sin no more but to please Christ the Lord. Then the greatest miracle of all, the Atonement, whereby Christ rescues us from our deserved punishment, is in effect in our behalf.

Robert E. Wells, “

The Liahona Triad,” in Bruce A. Van Orden and Brent L. Top, ed., *Doctrines of the Book of Mormon: The 1991 Sperry Symposium* [1992], 6-7).

#### 13 A man we were teaching on the island of Maui had come to believe the gospel was true, but he couldn't find the strength to repent. He would make promises to change his ways, to get rid of habits very harmful to himself and his family, but he would break his promises and then suffer terribly from guilt. He felt ashamed, not good enough for Christ, and too weak to become good.

We tried all kinds of ways to help him be strong.... Nothing worked, and his family, who had joined the Church, and we missionaries were all near despair. Then I remembered Joseph Smith's claim that the Book of Mormon was “the most correct book” in the world and that its principles provided the best way to get near to God (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. By Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938], 194....

Then we read the main passages about Christ from the Book of Mormon with our friend, and he felt the spirit of complete love from his Savior. I remember when we came to the sermon of Amulek, in Alma 34, where he teaches that the suffering of Christ brings about the bowels of mercy, enough to break through the bands of justice and give us the means to have enough faith to repent. This was exactly what our friend needed --and as he read the Book of Mormon passages he finally understood and *felt* it and thus was able to accept Christ's love and repent.... The turning point was when he felt love from Christ, conveyed by the promises and spirit of the Book of Mormon. He said “If Christ can have this kind of love for me, who am I to refuse to accept it—and not accept myself.” With this new strength, he became a new person, almost overnight.

Eugene England, *Converted to Christ through the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989], 1—2

#### 14 **Alma 34:18-27**

##### *Prayer*

How many families in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have regular night and morning family prayer? Those who neglect to do so are displeasing the Lord and are entitled to the same rebuke which the Lord gave some of the leading elders of the Church in the early days. No parent should depend solely on the organizations of the Church for training of the children. They should be taught to pray regularly, secretly as well as in the family circle. The counsel that Alma and Amulek gave to the straying Zoramites is just as essential to the Latter-day Saints today as it was two thousand years ago.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions* (1972), 5:48

- 15
1. **When should we pray?**  
Morning, midday, and evening
  2. **Where can we pray?**  
In our fields (at our work)  
In our homes  
In our closets or secret places
  3. **For what can we pray?**  
Mercy from Christ  
Our fields and flocks (our work)  
Our households (family)  
Power against our enemies  
Power against the devil  
Our welfare and others'

Brian J. Garner, *Search these things diligently*, pp. 213-214

- 16 Prayer should be direct and simple as of spoken to our earthly father. Routine forms of prayer should be avoided. The words spoken are less important than the humble faith in which they are uttered. "Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed." It is the spirit of prayer that gives life to our desires. The direct simplicity of the Lord's prayer should be kept in mind.

John A. Widtsoe, *Evidences and Reconciliations* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft 1987] 316

- 17 "It is not such a difficult thing to learn how to pray. It is not the words we use particularly that constitute prayer. Prayer does not consist of words, altogether. True, faithful, earnest prayer consists more in the feeling that rises from the heart and from the inward desire of our spirits to supplicate the Lord in humility and in faith, that we may receive His blessings. It matters not how simple the words may be, if our desires are genuine and we come before the Lord with a broken heart and a contrite spirit to ask Him for that which we need."

Joseph F. Smith, Conference Report, Oct. 1899, p. 69

- 18 "No man can retain the Spirit of the Lord, unless he prays. No man can have the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, unless in his heart is found this spirit of prayer. . . . And if a man will pray as he is commanded to do in this passage of scripture which I have read [Alma 34:18-27], then he more than likely will be found in all things righteously keeping the commandments of the Lord. He will not be found scheming to take advantage of his neighbor in some trade of bargain, but in all things dealing justly, because he has prayed in the morning and has in his heart the spirit of prayer throughout the day, that the Lord will bless him in the increase of his goods, of his fields, of his flocks, or whatever it may be he is engaged in."

Joseph Fielding Smith, Conference Report, Oct. 1919, pp. 142-143

- 19 In the summer of my thirteenth year,... I eagerly joined some neighborhood friends to light fireworks.... Not all of our fireworks worked as they should have.... We set the duds aside until we had tried to light all of the fireworks. We had so many defective ones remaining, we wondered what to do. We couldn't just throw them away. What if we emptied the powder from all of them into the cardboard box? We could toss a match and have one gigantic blast! ... The match was tossed; we quickly ran away and waited. Nothing happened.... We tried a second time, using a makeshift fuse of rolled-up newspaper.... Again, to our good, nothing happened.... Foolishly, we gave it one more try.... Then it happened! The "gigantic blast" we thought we wanted exploded with fury into our faces. The force of the explosion knocked us off our feet, and flames from the ignited powder burned us severely .... Our

friend's mother gathered us into her home. "First, we will pray," she said, "and then we will call the doctor." That was the first of many prayers I remember being offered for us. Soon after, I felt my face, hands, and arms being wrapped in bandages. I heard the voices of my father and my doctor administering a priesthood blessing to me. I heard my mother's voice many times, pleading with Heavenly Father to please let her son see again.... I had felt with a surety that I would be healed. From the moment that first prayer was offered in my friend's home, I felt a comforting peace.... Each day when the doctor changed my bandages, my mother would ask, "Can he see?" For many days the answer was the same: "No, not yet." Finally, when all the bandages were permanently removed, my eyesight began to return.... The peace and comfort I had earlier felt gave me assurance that all would be well. However, when my vision cleared enough for me to see my hands and face, I was shocked, unprepared for what I saw.... Seeing my scarred and disfigured skin brought great fear and doubt into my mind. I can remember thinking, nothing can help this skin be healed—not even the Lord. Gratefully, as my prayers and the prayers of others continued, I felt the gifts of faith and peace restored, and then, in time, my eyesight and my skin were healed.... May we always seek to obtain the Lord's miraculous gift of peace through prayer.

Rex E. Pinegar, *Ensign*, May 1993 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1993], 65-68

- 20 The Saints of the Most High have a constant prayer in their hearts, a perpetual yearning for the things of God. It is not that they are expected to be uttering prayers beneath their breath every minute of the day, for such could rapidly turn to a meaningless and empty ritual. Rather, in addition to regular prayers in our minds, we are asked to think wholesome thoughts and ponder on worthwhile matters. "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8). The Lord has thus commanded us to "let the solemnities of eternity rest upon your minds" (D&C 43:34). Compare Alma 37:36-37; Proverbs 3:5-6.

Millet & McConkie, *Doctrinal Commentary on Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, p. 253

21 **Alma 34:28-29**  
*The Royal Law*

We must have this law in mind in all that we do in our welfare work. We must love our neighbor as ourselves. The Savior put this law second only to the love of God....

Marion G. Romney, in Conference Report, Apr. 1978 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1978], 142.

- 22 One cannot ask God to help a neighbor in distress without feeling motivated to do something oneself toward helping that neighbor.

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Ensign*, Feb. 1991 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1991], 2-5.

- 23 To worthy causes and needy people, we can give time if we don't have money, and we can give love when our time runs out. . . . Sister Drusilla Hendricks and her invalid husband, James, who had been shot by enemies of the Church in the Battle of Crooked River, arrived with their children at a hastily shaped dugout in Quincy, Illinois, to live out the spring of that harrowing year. Within two weeks the Hendrickses were on the verge of starvation, having only one spoonful of sugar and a saucerful of cornmeal remaining in their possession. In the great tradition of LDS women, Drusilla made mush out of it for James and the children, thus stretching its contents as far as she could make it go. When that small offering was consumed by her famished family, she washed everything, cleaned their little dugout as thoroughly as she could, and quietly waited to die. Not long thereafter the sound of a wagon brought Drusilla to her feet. It was their neighbor Reuben Allred. He said he had a feeling they were out of food, so on his way into town he'd had a sack of grain ground into meal for them. Shortly thereafter Alexander Williams arrived with two bushels of meal on his shoulder. He told Drusilla that he'd been extremely busy but the Spirit had whispered to him that 'Brother Hendricks' family is suffering, so I dropped everything and came [running]. . . . May [we] hear the whispering of the Holy Spirit when any neighbor anywhere 'is suffering,' and . . . 'drop everything and come running.'"

Jeffrey R. Holland, *Ensign*, May 1996, pp. 30-31

24 How well I remember my father, the bishop of our ward, filling my small red wagon with food and clothing and then directing me—as a deacon in the Church—to pull the wagon behind me and visit the homes of the needy in our ward.

Often, when fast-offering funds were depleted, my father would take money from his own pocket to supply the needy in his flock with food that would keep them from going hungry. Those were the days of the Great Depression, and many families were suffering.

I remember visiting one family in particular: a sickly mother, an unemployed and discouraged father, and five children with pallid faces, all disheartened and hungry. I remember the gratitude that beamed in their faces when I walked up to their door with my wagon nearly spilling over with needed supplies. I remember how the children smiled. I remember how the mother wept. And I remember how the father stood, head bowed, unable to speak.

These impressions and many others forged within me a love for the poor, a love for my father who served as a shepherd to his flock, and a love for the faithful and generous members of the Church who sacrificed so much to help relieve the suffering of others.

Brothers and sisters, in a sense, you too can bring to a needy family a wagon brimming with hope. How? By paying a generous fast offering.

Joseph B. Wirthlin, *Ensign*, May 2001 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2001], 74

25 “The subject of the talk I have prepared is ‘The Royal Law.’ Defining it, the apostle James said, ‘If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well.’ (James 2:8.) We must have this law in mind in all that we do in our welfare work. We must love our neighbors as ourselves. The Savior put this law second only to the love of God....

“The caring for the poor and the handicapped and those who need our help is a main purpose and an absolute requirement in fulfilling the royal law of loving our neighbors as ourselves. You will remember the great sermon of Amulek on prayer, in which he tells the people to pray and tells them how often to pray—morning, night, and noon—and tells them where to pray and how to pray and what to pray for. He goes into great detail and then he says that ‘after ye have done all these things, if ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart of your substance, if ye have, to those who stand in need—I say unto you, if ye do not any of these things, behold, your prayer is vain, and availeth you nothing, and ye are as hypocrites who do deny the faith.’ (See Alma 34:17-38.)

Marion G. Romney, Conference Report, Apr. 1978, p. 142

26 I love that man better who swears a stream as long as my arm yet deals justice to his neighbors and mercifully deals his substance to the poor, than the long smooth-faced hypocrite.

Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980], 5:401.

27 **Alma 34:31**

The promise is unto all who repent whether living or dead, that they shall not be deprived of the opportunity of hearing and accepting the truth. Therefore, there must be a time for teaching the dead who died without the privilege of hearing and receiving the gospel when they were here on the earth. This wonderful doctrine was revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, and he was given the divine authority to have the ordinances performed for the dead in the temples built for that purpose. This is a just principle filled with the spirit of mercy, love, and justice.

That every soul shall have his chance is one of the greatest principles of the gospel. It is merciful and it is just, but these Zoramites could not see it because they had rebelled against the truth and had turned to the worship of false gods and thus had placed themselves on the border where there would be no hope if they continued in their evil course. So we see that there is no conflict between Amulek’s teachings and the doctrine of the loss of salvation for the dead who turn away in this life and place themselves beyond hope of their redemption.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions* [1963], 4:3-4.

28 If the time comes when you have done all that you can to repent of your sins, whoever you are, wherever you are, and have made amends and restitution to the best of your ability; if it be something that will affect your standing in the Church and you have gone to the proper authorities, then you will want that confirming answer as to whether or not the Lord has accepted of you. In your soul-searching, if you seek for and you find that peace of conscience, by that token you may know that the Lord has accepted of your repentance. Satan would have you think otherwise and sometimes persuade you that now having made one mistake, you might go on and on with no turning back. That is one of the great falsehoods. The miracle of forgiveness is available to all of those who turn from their evil doings and return no more.

Harold B. Lee, *Stand Ye in Holy Places*, p. 185.

**Alma 34:31-34**

29 *Do Not Procrastinate*

All men know that they must die. And it is important that we should understand the reasons and causes of our exposure to the vicissitudes of life and of death, and the designs and purposes of God in our coming into the world, our sufferings here, and our departure hence. What is the object in our coming into existence, then dying and falling away, to be here no more? It is but reasonable to suppose that God would reveal something in reference to the matter, and it is a subject we ought to study more than any other. We ought to study it day and night, for the world is ignorant in reference to their true condition and relation. If we have any claim on our Heavenly Father for anything, it is for knowledge on this important subject. [TPJS, 324].

As a person puts off his repentance until later, he learns to his dismay that the power to change is inversely proportional to the power of habit: the greater the strength of habit, the lesser the strength to change.

Millet and McConkie, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, p. 255

30 We should take warning and not wait for the death-bed to repent, as we see the infant taken away by death, so may the youth and middle-aged, as well as the infant be suddenly called into eternity. Let this, then, prove as a warning to all not to procrastinate repentance, or wait till a death-bed, for it is the will of God that man should repent and serve Him in health, and in the strength and power of his mind, in order to secure his blessing, and not wait until he is called to die.

*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. by Joseph Fielding Smith [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976], 197.

31 Procrastination .... Is the thief of eternal life.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Way to Perfection*, 202

32 It is true that the great principle of repentance is always available, but for the wicked and rebellious there are serious reservations to this statement. For instance, sin is intensely habit-forming and sometimes moves men to the tragic point of no return.... As the transgressor moves deeper and deeper in his sin, and the error is entrenched more deeply and the will to change is weakened, it becomes increasingly near-hopeless, and he skids down and down until either he does not want climb back or he has lost the power to do so.

Spencer W. Kimball, *Miracle of Forgiveness*, 117.

33 A man may receive the priesthood and all its privileges and blessings, but until he learns to overcome the flesh, his temper, his tongue, his disposition to indulge in the things of God has forbidden, he cannot come into the celestial kingdom of God—he must overcome either in this life or in the life to come. But this life is the time in which men are to repent. Do not let any of us imagine that we can go down to the grave not having overcome the corruptions of the flesh and then lose in the grave all our sins and evil tendencies. They will be with us. They will be with the spirit when separated from the body.

It is my judgment that any man or woman can do more to conform to the laws of God in one year in this life than they could in ten years when they are dead. The spirit only can repent and change, and then the battle has to go forward with the flesh afterwards. It is much easier to overcome and serve the Lord when both flesh and spirit are

combined as one. This is the time when men are more pliable and susceptible. When clay is pliable, it is much easier to change than when it gets hard and sets.

This life is the time to repent. That is why I presume it will take a thousand years after the first resurrection until the last group will be prepared to come forth. It will take them a thousand years to do what it would have taken, but three score years and ten to accomplish in this life.

*Missionary Services of Melvin J. Ballard, (1949), 240-241.*

34 One of the most serious human defects in all ages is procrastination, an unwillingness to accept personal responsibilities *now*...

There are even many members of the Church who are lax and careless and who continually procrastinate....

One Church member of my acquaintance said, as she drank her coffee: "The Lord knows my heart is right and that I have good intentions, and that I will someday get the strength to quit." But will one receive eternal life on the basis of good intentions? ... Samuel Johnson remarked that "[the road to} hell is paved with good intentions," The Lord will not translate one's good hopes and desires and intentions into works. Each of us must do that for himself. Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], 7-8.

35 "I believe, to use an insurance phrase, we must pay the deductible. We must experience sorrow enough, suffering enough, guilt enough so we are conscious and appreciative of the heavier burden borne by the Savior. My soul pains when His atonement is treated lightly, when the blessing of repentance is reduced to simply 'taking care of it with the bishop,' when there is brief confession without humility or godly sorrow. This attitude of entitlement rather than privilege was recently expressed by a young Church member who wrote: 'I have done bad things that I knew were bad because I've been taught that ever since I can remember. . . . I know repentance is a great gift. Without it I would be lost. I am not ready to repent of my sins; but I know that when I am ready, I can.' Such indulgence in premeditated sin shows pitiful misunderstanding of repentance."

J. Richard Clarke, *Ensign*, May 1993, p. 10

36 "We are concerned that some young people who are anticipating serving a mission or being married in the temple have a very lax attitude toward sin. 'I'll just have a few free ones,' they say, 'and then I'll repent quickly, and go on my mission (or get married in the temple), and everything will be alright.' . . . Such persons want the present convenience or enjoyment of sin and the future effects of righteousness, in that order. They want to experience the sin, but avoid its effects. . . . There is something very peculiar about the state of mind or heart of the person who deliberately commits sin in the expectation that he or she will speedily and comfortably repent and continue as a servant of God, preaching repentance and asking others to come unto Christ. . . . Am I suggesting that the benefits of the atonement are not available for the person who heedlessly sins? Of course not. But, I am suggesting that there is a relationship between sin and suffering, that is not understood by people who knowingly sin in the expectation that all the burden of suffering will be borne by another, that the sin is all theirs, but the suffering is all His. That is not the way. Repentance, which is an assured passage to an eternal destination, is nevertheless not a free ride."

Dallin H. Oaks, *BYU Fireside*, Aug. 5, 1990

37 Yes, one can repent of ... transgression. The miracle of forgiveness is real, and true repentance is accepted of the Lord. But, it is not pleasing to the Lord to sow one's wild oats, to engage in... transgression of any nature and then expect that *planned* confession and quick repentance will satisfy the Lord.

*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], 70.

38 It is my judgment that some of our youth *do not believe* that repentance for serious transgression "is difficult and painful and may take a long time." Where has this grave misunderstanding come from? To you young people, if any of us who are older have given you the impression that it isn't too serious to disobey the commandments of God, forgive us.... Priesthood leaders, let us be careful that we do not permit young missionaries to go into the mission

field with unresolved transgression. It is literally like going into battle without helmet, sword, or shield. Let us remember that it takes time to develop the power to resist the fires of temptation. It takes time to receive the sweet comfort that always comes to the heart of the truly penitent. Allow them sufficient time.

L. Aldin Porter, *Ensign*, May 1992 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1992], 46.

39 “As the time of repentance is procrastinated, the ability to repent grows weaker; neglect of opportunity in holy things develops inability.”

James E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith*, p. 114

40 **Alma 34:32-33**

*Can you repent after death*

We know not fully on what terms repentance will be obtainable in the hereafter; but to suppose that the soul who has willfully rejected the opportunity of repentance in this life will find it easy to repent there is contrary to reason. To procrastinate the day of repentance is to deliberately place ourselves in the power of the adversary.

James E. Talmage, *Articles of Faith* [London: the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1962], 115.

41 “Now I have read to you the scripture (Alma 34:30-35). I believe it is the word of God ‘with the bark on it,’ where the prophet of the Lord declared unto apostates and those who have heard the gospel that if they did not repent and come into the Church now, in this day of repentance, but continued to procrastinate their repentance unto the end, that the night would come when no work could be done for them, and their souls would be lost. I think that is pretty good scripture. I do not know how the Lord could do otherwise in justice.”

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. by Bruce R. McConkie [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1955], 2:189.

42 “You can progress much more rapidly here on earth with your mortal body in this environment of good and evil than you will as a spirit in the spirit world.”

Richard G. Scott, *Ensign*, May 1997, p. 54

43 If the repentance of the wayward children does not happen in this life, is it still possible for the cords of the sealing to be strong enough for them yet to work out their repentance? In the Doctrine and Covenants we are told:

“The dead who repent will be redeemed, through obedience to the ordinances of the house of God.

“And after they have paid the penalty of their transgressions, and are washed clean, shall receive a reward according to their works, for they are heirs of salvation” (D&C 138:58-59).

We remember that the prodigal son wasted his inheritance, and when it was all gone he came back into the family, but his inheritance was spent (Luke 15:11-32). Mercy will not rob justice, and the sealing power of faithful parents will claim wayward children only on the condition of their repentance and Christ’s Atonement. Repentant wayward children will enjoy salvation and all the blessings that go with it, but exaltation is much more. It must be fully earned. The question as to who will be exalted must be left to the Lord in His mercy.

There are very few whose rebellion and evil deeds are so great that they have “sinned away the power to repent” (Alonzo A. Hinckley, in Conference Report, Oct. 1919, 161). That judgment must also be left up to the Lord....

Perhaps in this life we are not given to fully understand how enduring the sealing cords of righteous parents are to their children.

James E. Faust, in Conference Report, Apr. 2003 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2003], 68.

44 After a person has been assigned to his place in the kingdom, either the telestial, the terrestrial, or the celestial, or to his exaltation, he will never advance from his assigned glory to another glory. That is eternal! That is why we must make our decisions early in life and why it is imperative that such decisions be right!

Spencer W. Kimball, *Teachings*, 50

45 It has been asked if it is possible for one who inherits the celestial glory to advance in time to the celestial glory? The answer to this question is, *No!*

...Those who do not comprehend the word of the Lord argue that... in time they will get where God was, but he will have gone on to other heights. *This is false*  
Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:31; emphasis in original.

46 **Alma 34:34**  
**That same spirit which doth possess your bodies**

Amulek is here making use of the word *spirit* to refer to one's disposition, attitude, proclivity, spiritual direction. Men and women will not have an immediate reversal of attitude at the time of death. If they have desired evil things; if they have sold their souls for attention and applause and acclaim; if they have craved carnal pleasures alone—if their lives have followed this course, they need not expect to inherit spirituality in the world to come. This is in harmony with what Alma will later call the doctrine of restoration (see Alma 41). In the words of Jacob: "Wo unto all those who die in their sins; for they shall return to God, and behold his face, and remain in their sins" (2 Nephi 9:38). In the positive vein, if a person leaves this life loving the Lord, questing for the Spirit, striving for truth and light, he will continue in that same direction in the world of spirits among persons of like disposition. He will go on to gain eternal life.

Millet & McConkie, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol 3, p. 256.

47 **That eternal world**

This is a specific reference to the spirit world and not to life in the kingdoms of glory. As we have seen already (see Elder Ballard's words in commentary on verse 33), all persons will repent. The only questions are where and under what circumstances they will repent and thus what degree of glory they will obtain. There are no murderers and liars and whoremongers in the celestial kingdom, only repentant murderers, liars, and whoremongers. See Alma 3:26; 48:23.

Ibid.p. 257

48 **Alma 34:34-35**  
*Attitudes after we die*

Suppose, then, that a man is evil in his heart—wholly given up to wickedness, and in that condition dies, his spirit will enter into the spirit world intent upon evil. On the other hand, if we are striving with all the powers and faculties God has given us to improve upon our talents, to prepare ourselves to dwell in eternal life.... With what disposition will our spirits enter their next state? They will be still striving to do the things of God, only in a much greater degree—learning, increasing, growing, in grace and in the knowledge of the truth.

If we are faithful to our religion, when we go into the spirit world, the fallen spirits—Lucifer and the third part of the heavenly hosts that came with him, and the spirits of wicked men who have dwelt upon the earth, the whole of them combined will have no influence over our spirits. Is not that an advantage? Yes. All the rest of the children of men are more or less subject to them, and they are subject to them as they were here in the flesh.

*Discourses of Brigham Young*, comp. by John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1954], 379.

49 The wicked spirits that leave here and go into the spirit world, are they wicked there? Yes.  
*Teachings of Presidents of the Church—Brigham Young* [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1997], 279

50 A righteous man or woman cannot take a backward step spiritually after death; in short, the righteous have completed their days of probation in mortality. Amulek informs us that our disposition here will be our disposition hereafter (See Alma 34:32-35). Such is the case with regard to little children [who die before the age of accountability]. They were pure in this existence, will be pure in the world of spirits, and will come forth in the resurrection of the pure in heart at the appropriate time.

Robert L. Millet, *The Book of Mormon: Fourth Nephi through Moroni, from Zion to Destruction* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995], 13

51 The active, intelligent... organization that inhabited the body does not descent with it into the grave... but it goes to the spirit world....

Suppose, then, that a man is evil in his heart—wholly given up to wickedness, and in that condition dies, his spirit will enter the spirit world intent upon evil. On the other hand, if we are striving with all the powers and faculties God has given us to improve upon our talents, to prepare ourselves to dwell in eternal life, and the grave receives our bodies...we...will be still striving to do the things of God, only in a much greater degree—learning, increasing, growing in grace and in the knowledge of the truth.

Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot, 1860], 7:333

52 No one can repent on the cross, nor in prison, nor in custody. One must have the opportunity of committing wrong in order to be really repentant. The man in handcuffs, the prisoner in the penitentiary, the man as he drowns, or as he dies—such a man certainly cannot repent totally. He can wish to do it, he may intend to change his life, he may determine that he will, but that is only the beginning.

That is why we should not wait for the life beyond but should abandon evil habits and weaknesses while in the flesh on the earth. Elder Melvin J. Ballard pinpointed this problem:

...This life is the time in which men are to repent. Do not let any of us imagine that we can go down to the grave not having overcome the corruptions of the flesh and then lose in the grave all our sins and evil tendencies. They will be with us. They will be with the spirit when separated from the body (Ballard, "Three Degrees of Glory").

Clearly it is difficult to repent in the spirit world of sins involving physical habits and actions. There one has spirit and mind but not the physical power to overcome a physical habit. He can desire to change his life, but how can he overcome the lusts of the flesh unless he has flesh to control and transform? How can he overcome the tobacco or the drink habit in the spirit world where there is no liquor nor tobacco and no flesh to crave it? Similarly with other sins involving lack of control over the body.

Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1969], 167-168.

53 A man may receive the priesthood and all its privileges and blessings, but until he learns to overcome the flesh, his temper, his tongue, his disposition to indulge in the things God has forbidden, he cannot come into the celestial kingdom of God—he must over either in this life or in the life to come. But this life is the time in which men are to repent. Do not let any of us imagine that we can go down to the grave not having overcome the corruptions of the flesh and then lose in the grave all our sins and evil tendencies. They will be with us. They will be with the spirit when separated from the body.

It is my judgment that any man or woman can do more to conform to the laws of God in one year in this life than they could in ten years when they are dead. The spirit only can repent and change, and then the battle has to go forward with the flesh afterwards. It is much easier to overcome and serve the Lord when both flesh and spirit are combined as one. This is the time when men are more pliable and susceptible. We will find when we are dead every desire, every feeling will be greatly intensified. When clay is pliable, it is much easier to change than when it gets hard and sets.

This life is the time to repent. That is why I presume it will take a thousand years after the first resurrection until the last group will be prepared to come forth. It will take them a thousand years to do what it would have taken but three score years and ten to accomplish in this life.

You remember the vision of the redemption of the dead as given to the Church through the late President Joseph F. Smith. President Smith saw the spirits of the righteous dead before their resurrection and the language is the same as one of the Prophet Joseph's revelations—that they, the righteous dead, looked upon the absence of their spirits from their bodies as a bondage.

I grant you that the righteous dead will be at peace, but I tell you that when we go out of this life, leave this body, we will desire to do many things that we cannot do at all without the body. We will be seriously handicapped, and we will long for the body, we will pray for that early reunion with our bodies. We will know then what advantage it is to

have a body.... The point I have in mind is that we are sentencing ourselves to long periods of bondage, separating our spirits from our bodies, or we are shortening that period, according to the way in which we overcome and master ourselves.

Melvin J. Ballard, *The Three Degrees of Glory*, pp. 11-13.

54 **Alma 34:35**

**This is the final state of the wicked.**

Telestial persons shall, as we have noted above, eventually repent of their sins, and thus being subject to Satan is not exactly their final state: They shall inherit a kingdom of glory. This verse seems to apply more directly to the sons of perdition, those who have lost all desire and disposition to repent, who have gone beyond the point of no return, who shall be resurrected but to a kingdom of no glory. Such is their final state.

Millet & McConkie, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 3, p. 257

55 **Alma 34:37**

**Work out your salvation**

In the strictest sense, no one can work out his own salvation. No person can create himself, resurrect himself, ransom himself from sin, or cleanse his own heart from the taints of the world. These are the actions of a God, or an infinite being. We can seek and ask and petition and supplicate. We can apply his blood, take his name, accept his enabling power, and acquire his nature, but we cannot save ourselves. The Saints of God seek above all things for the sanctifying powers of the Spirit in their lives. Through this process they have their hearts changed, and by means of that Spirit they are motivated to righteous works, the works of God. In that sense, Christ has begun to live in them (see Galatians 2:20). Thus Paul implored: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." And now note the Apostle's words: "*For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*" (Philippian 2:12-13, italics added.)

Ibid. p. 258

56 **Alma 34:39**

*Prayer of Protection against Satan*

Let us all revive our individual and family prayers. Prayer is an armor of protection against temptation and I promise you that if you will teach your children to pray, fervently and full of faith, many of your problems are solved before they begin.

Spencer W. Kimball, *Teachings*, 117.

57 **Alma 34: 40-41**

*Patience in affliction*

Sometimes we pray for the strength to endure yet resist the very things that would give us that strength. Too often we seek the easy way, forgetting that strength comes from overcoming things that require us to put forth more effort than we normally would be inclined to do.

John H. Groberg, *Ensign*, Nov. 1993 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1993], 26.

58

*It is easy enough to be pleasant,  
When life flows by like a song,  
But the man worth while is one who will smile,  
When everything goes dead wrong,  
For the test of the heart is trouble,  
And it always comes with the years,  
And the smile that is worth the praises of earth*

*Is the smile that shines through tears.*

Ella Wheeler Wilcox; as quoted in Thomas S. Monson, *Ensign*, Nov. 1993 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1993], 71

- 59 [A portion of a letter from Mary Fielding Smith from Commerce Illinois to her brother in England, June 1839.]  
I do not feel in the least discouraged.... We have been enabled to rejoice, in the midst of our privations and persecutions, that we were counted worthy to suffer these things, so that we may, with the ancient saints who suffered in like manner, inherit the same glorious reward. If it had not been for this hope, I should have sunk before this; but, blessed be the God and rock of my salvation, here I am, and am perfectly satisfied and happy, having not the smallest desire to go one step backward.  
Don Cecil Corbett, *Mary Fielding Smith: Daughter of Britain* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1974], 100.
- 60 No other dispensation has had the gospel without any challenge, without any opposition or resistance, without persecution from the world, and to expect that we shall be without such conditions is to expect that which will never be. We do not hold membership in the Church and its blessings without paying a price for it.  
*Memorable Stories and Parables by Boyd K. Packer* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997], 76.
- 61 Religious faith gives confidence that human tragedy is not a meaningless sport of physical forces. Life is not what Voltaire called it, 'A bad joke,' it is really a school of discipline whose author and teacher is God."  
Hugh B. Brown, Conference Report, Oct. 1969, p. 105-107
- 62 "The great challenge in this earthly life is not to determine how to escape the afflictions and problems, but rather to carefully prepare ourselves to meet them. I say prepare ourselves because it demands persistent effort to develop patience as a personal attribute. In practicing patience, one comes to understand it and to acquire it. . . . We must have patience in order to withstand pain and grief without complaint or discouragement, which detract from the Spirit. . . . We are not talking here about a passive patience which waits only for the passing of time to heal or resolve things which happen to us, but rather a patience that is active, which makes things happen. . . . (Rom. 2:7; 1 Peter 2:20). Patience in affliction and adversity means to persist firmly and never forsake that which we know to be true, standing firm with the hope that in the Lord's due time we will gain an understanding of that which we do not understand now and which causes us suffering. . . . The faithful Latter-day Saint—instead of despairing because a goal on his or her agenda was not realized, because his or her timetable does not bring a solution to the problems, or because comfort does not come to calm the troubles of today—waits patiently for fulfillment of promises, according to the Lord's timetable."  
*Angel Abrea*, Conference Report, Apr. 1992, pp. 34-37
- 63 "When we are pushed, stung, defeated, embarrassed, hurt, rejected, tormented, forgotten—when we are in agony of spirit crying out 'why me?' we are in a position to learn something. Inner resources can be stirred under such stress. Hidden strengths awaken that can be a blessing to others."  
Elaine Cannon, *Adversity*, p. 20
- 64 "No pain that we suffer, no trial that we experience is wasted. It ministers to our education, to the development of such qualities as patience, faith, fortitude and humility. All that we suffer and all that we endure, especially when we endure it patiently, builds up our characters, purifies our hearts, expands our souls and makes us more tender and charitable, more worthy to be called the children of God, . . . and it is through sorrow and suffering, toil and tribulation, that we gain the education that we come here to acquire."  
Orson F. Whitney, *Improvement Era*, Mar. 1966, p. 211

**Alma 34 - Conclusion****65 Amulek's Teachings**

The Lord said, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established" (D&C 6:28). Following Alma's teachings to the Zoramites, Amulek rose to bear a second witness of the truth. His comments emphasized the atonement of Christ, the center of the gospel plan. Amulek taught that—

1. An atonement would be made for the sins of men (see Alma 34:8).
2. The sacrifice of Christ would be infinite and eternal (see vv. 10-12).
3. The fulfillment of the law of Moses would be through a "great and last sacrifice" (v. 13). That sacrifice would be the Son of God (see v. 14).
4. The sacrifice of Christ brings about mercy, "which overpowereth justice, and bringeth about means unto men that they may have faith unto repentance" (v. 15).
5. He who exercises "faith unto repentance" (v. 15) is encircled "in the arms of safety, while he that exercises no faith unto repentance is exposed to the whole law of the demands of justice" (v. 16).
6. Men must call upon God in all places and under all conditions, both for themselves and for others (see vv. 17-29).
7. Men must be willing to assist the poor and the needy and comfort the afflicted (see vv. 28-29).
8. Men must repent when the opportunity is presented, for "now is the time and the day of your salvation" (v. 231), and "this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God" (v. 32).
9. If men procrastinate their repentance and fail to "prepare for eternity, . . . the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed" will overtake them (v. 33)/
10. The same sinful habits and desires a person allows to maintain control over his spirit in this life "will have power to possess [his] body in that eternal world" (v. 34).
11. Procrastinating repentance until death is evidence that a person has subjected himself to the devil and that the Spirit of the Lord has withdrawn from him (see vv. 35-36).
12. Men should work out their salvation "with fear before God" (v. 37), take upon themselves the name of Christ, humble themselves in worship before God, "live in thanksgiving daily" (v. 38), and "be watchful unto prayer continually" (v. 39) as a defense against the devil.

BYU Book of Mormon Student Manual, 1980, p. 301-302.

# **The Living Christ**

## **The Testimony of the Apostles**

### **The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints**

As we commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ two millennia ago, we offer our testimony of the reality of His matchless life and the infinite virtue of His great atoning sacrifice. None other has had so profound an influence upon all who have lived and will yet live upon the earth.

He was the Great Jehovah of the Old Testament, the Messiah of the New. Under the direction of His Father, He was the creator of the earth. "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" ([John 1:3](#)). Though sinless, He was baptized to fulfill all righteousness. He "went about doing good" ([Acts 10:38](#)), yet was despised for it. His gospel was a message of peace and goodwill. He entreated all to follow His example. He walked the roads of Palestine, healing the sick, causing the blind to see, and raising the dead. He taught the truths of eternity, the reality of our premortal existence, the purpose of our life on earth, and the potential for the sons and daughters of God in the life to come.

He instituted the sacrament as a reminder of His great atoning sacrifice. He was arrested and condemned on spurious charges, convicted to satisfy a mob, and sentenced to die on Calvary's cross. He gave His life to atone for the sins of all mankind. His was a great vicarious gift in behalf of all who would ever live upon the earth.

We solemnly testify that His life, which is central to all human history, neither began in Bethlehem nor concluded on Calvary. He was the Firstborn of the Father, the Only Begotten Son in the flesh, the Redeemer of the world.

He rose from the grave to "become the firstfruits of them that slept" ([1 Cor. 15:20](#)). As Risen Lord, He visited among those He had loved in life. He also ministered among His "other sheep" ([John 10:16](#)) in ancient America. In the modern world, He and His Father appeared to the boy Joseph Smith, ushering in the long-promised "dispensation of the fulness of times" ([Eph. 1:10](#)).

Of the Living Christ, the Prophet Joseph wrote: "His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was

white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:

"I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father" ([D&C 110:3-4](#)).

Of Him the Prophet also declared: "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—

"That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God" ([D&C 76:22-24](#)).

We declare in words of solemnity that His priesthood and His Church have been restored upon the earth—"built upon the foundation of ... apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" ([Eph. 2:20](#)).

We testify that He will someday return to earth. "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together" ([Isa. 40:5](#)). He will rule as King of Kings and reign as Lord of Lords, and every knee shall bend and every tongue shall speak in worship before Him. Each of us will stand to be judged of Him according to our works and the desires of our hearts.

We bear testimony, as His duly ordained Apostles—that Jesus is the Living Christ, the immortal Son of God. He is the great King Immanuel, who stands today on the right hand of His Father. He is the light, the life, and the hope of the world. His way is the path that leads to happiness in this life and eternal life in the world to come. God be thanked for the matchless gift of His divine Son.