Lesson 20
Mosiah 25–28; Alma 36

To help keep track of the chronology, Arthur Bassett has constructed this approximate chronology. The dates in bold are those that he feels are probably most accurate, based on information in the Book of Mormon itself. Of course, all dates are BC rather than AD.

200 The Zeniff colony leaves the land of Zarahemla and moves back to the land of Nephi.

173 Alma is born after the colony has lived twenty-seven years in Nephi.

160 Noah becomes the king. Alma is thirteen years old.

154 Mosiah is born in the land of Zarahemla. Alma is nineteen.

150 Abinadi appears in the land of Nephi. Alma is twenty-three, “a young man” (Mosiah 17:2), and Mosiah is four.

148 Martyrdom of Abinadi. Alma is twenty-five, and Mosiah is six.

147 Alma moves to the Waters of Mormon (he is twenty-six, and Mosiah is seven) and then to Helam, where he and his colony are later taken into captivity.
by the priests of Noah and the Lamanites, under the
direction of Amulon, one of Noah’s original priests.

124 Mosiah becomes the king in Zarahemla. He is
thirty, and Alma is forty-nine.

121 Benjamin dies; Ammon sets out on his mission to
Nephi. Limhi returns to Zarahemla some unspecified
time later. Mosiah is thirty-three, and Alma is fifty-two.

120 Alma returns to Zarahemla. Mosiah is thirty-four,
and Alma is fifty-three.

120–100 Rebellion in the land of Zarahemla, culmi-
nating in the conversion of Alma the Younger and the
sons of Mosiah. Alma ages from fifty-three to seventy-
three, and Mosiah ages from thirty-four to fifty-four.

92 The sons of Mosiah leave for a twenty-year mis-
son to the Lamanites. Mosiah is sixty-two; Alma is
eighty-one.

91 Mosiah and Alma the Elder die. Alma the Younger
becomes the first chief judge. Mosiah dies at the age of
sixty-three and Alma the Elder at the age of eighty-two.

Mosiah 25

Verses 1–3: To which groups do “people of Nephi” and
“people of Zarahemla” refer? Why is it important for us to
know that the Nephites were a minority, a smaller group
than the people of Zarahemla, and that the two groups to-
gether were much smaller than the Lamanites? What might
account for those relative differences in size?
**Verses 5–11:** How do you account for the see-saw of emotions that we see here? What effect do you think that see-saw would have?

**Verse 19:** (See also Mosiah 26:8.) How can a king decide who has authority over the church? What does your answer to that question tell us about Mosiah and Alma’s society?

**Verse 22:** What is the point of the remark that the groups of believers were called churches?

**Mosiah 26**

**Verse 1:** Why is it so important for the young people to understand King Benjamin’s words? Is there something about that specific sermon that is essential to them?

We are given two reasons that the young people could not understand the sermon: they were young when Benjamin gave it, and they didn’t believe the tradition of their fathers. The implication is that because they were young they couldn’t understand the sermon, so the alternative was to learn what it meant from the tradition of their parents, which didn’t happen.

What does the word *tradition* mean? What tradition could their parents have given them that would have taught them what Benjamin meant? Can we teach our children the meaning of Benjamin’s sermon by our tradition? How?

**Verse 3:** Notice that in order to understand the scriptures we must believe.

**Verse 4:** Flattery is often mentioned by the Book of Mormon in connection with people being deceived into leaving
the church. How does that happen? What kind of flattery is involved?

**Verses 10–12:** Why do Alma and Mosiah each seem to shirk judging the people who have been brought before them?

**Verse 17:** What does it mean that Alma’s people shall be the Lord’s people? How does this tie in with King Benjamin’s sermon? Does it help explain why that sermon was so important? How is it important to us?

**Verse 20:** Three things occur in this verse: the Lord calls Alma his servant, the Lord covenants that Alma will have eternal life, and the Lord says that Alma will serve him. (This rhetorical pattern, a cousin of chiasmus, is called inclusion.) How are these things connected to one another?

Why is the covenant sandwiched between the descriptions of Alma as a servant? What does the arrangement tell us?

What is a covenant? (It is more than a contract or mutual promise.) What does this covenant mean? What does it mean to have eternal life?

**Verse 29:** Alma asked what to do about the transgressors in verses 13–14. Not until verse 29 does he receive an answer. Before giving Alma the answer to his prayer, the Lord blesses Alma, reaffirms the covenant relation with him, and tells Alma about the Atonement and the final judgment. Why that long interlude between Alma’s question and the Lord’s answer?

**Verse 31:** This verse suggests that we are to take the word of the person who tells us that he or she has repented. Why?
Mosiah 27

**Verse 3**: Not only are the nonmembers forbidden to persecute the members, but the members are forbidden to persecute one another. How might members do that? How might we persecute each other today?

The members are also told that there should be equality among all men. What does *equality* mean in this instance? In what or in what way are people supposed to be equal? Equality is grammatically parallel to the absence of persecution. Does that tell us something about what each means?

**Verse 4**: Does this explain at least some of what it means to not persecute and to be equal?

**Verse 8**: This verse says that Alma was idolatrous. What does that mean? Does Mosiah 28:4 explain this remark?

Notice that there is no description in the Book of Mormon of what we usually think of as idol worship. Does that mean that the Nephites didn’t have a problem with idol worship or just that it isn’t mentioned? Why might it not be mentioned?

Alma leads people away by flattery, something mentioned frequently in the Book of Mormon in this connection. What kind of flattery might he be using? How would flattery get people to follow him in sin? Where might we see such flattery in our own lives?

**Verse 10**: Why do Alma the Younger and the sons of Mosiah do what they do secretly? Why does it say that the king had forbidden what they are doing? It is against the law to persecute the saints, but is it against the law to flatter...
people into unbelief? Or might there be some connection between flattery and persecution? What might that be?

**Verse 11:** What do we learn from being told that they were rebelling against God? What are the connotations of that word? What is the significance of the way the angel appears to them: “as it were in a cloud” and “as it were with a voice of thunder”? What are we to envision? Is any connection being made to other appearances of heavenly beings, either by comparison or by contrast?

**Verse 13:** The angel has appeared to all five of them. Why does he address only Alma? If the only thing that can overthrow the church is the transgression of the members, Alma has been on the right path for his purposes, persuading people to become sinners.

**Verse 14:** Alma the Elder has prayed that his son might come to know the truth. What does this mean? Surely his father has taught him. And we know from verse 11 that he was rebelling, but you can’t rebel against something if you don’t know what it is. What is it Alma the elder wants him to know that he doesn’t yet know? Whatever it is, it is something he learns in this experience.

**Verse 16:** Did the angel come to save Alma the Younger and the sons of Mosiah? Notice that the angel uses the type of Israel in captivity to Egypt and then freed by God’s power, and he applies that type to Alma the Younger’s life: remember when you were in captivity and the great things that the Lord has done for you in freeing you from bondage.
Why is that type so important for Alma the Younger? In what ways it is important to our understanding of the gospel? To our understanding of our own lives?

**Verse 21:** Alma the Elder uses his son as a testimony of God’s power. Notice that he calls people to see “what the Lord had done for his son.” At this point, what had the Lord done besides frighten him into unconsciousness?

The angel commanded Alma the Younger to stop destroying the church, even if he himself wanted to be destroyed. He said nothing to him or to the sons of Mosiah about being converted. How can his father be so confident that he will be saved?

**Verse 23:** Notice that “after two days and two nights” means the same as “on the third day.” What is the significance of rising on the third day? What does it mean to be of good comfort? What does the word *comfort* mean in this context?

**Verse 24:** What does it mean to repent? What does the word *redeemed* mean? What does it mean to be redeemed by the Lord? What does it mean to be born of the Spirit?

**Verse 25:** Notice that “born of God,” “changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness,” “redeemed of God,” and “becoming his sons and daughters” are parallel. How does this compare to what King Benjamin taught about becoming sons and daughters of God (Mosiah 5:7; see also Romans 8:14)?

What do the scriptures tell us it means to be a son or daughter of God? How is that related to the doctrine that we are the literal spiritual offspring of God?
Why is the word *changed*—in the phrase “changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness”—passive?

**Verse 26:** What does the word *creature* mean? (Look at the first five letters of the word to see its etymology.) What does it mean to become a new creature? Does being a new creature help explain the use of the passive voice (verse 25)?

**Verse 28:** What does it mean to repent “nigh unto death”? What does it mean to be snatched from an everlasting burning? (D&C 19:6–12 may be relevant here.)

**Verse 29:** What is gall? What is “the gall of bitterness”?

What does it mean to be racked?

What does he mean when he says, “I am snatched”? Why does he put that in the present tense rather than the past?

**Verse 35:** They explained the prophecies and scriptures to all who would hear them. What might this say about their childhood training? Had they been taught in their youth? If so, why didn’t they understand the prophecies and scriptures before? What made the difference? (Mosiah 26:3 seems relevant here.)

What difference would explain why Alma the Younger went through such a horrible experience and the sons of Mosiah don’t seem to have? Both he and they seem equally converted. Why would he have to experience such torment and not they?

As you think about the story of Alma’s conversion, think about the difference between his experience before an an-
gel and Laman and Lemuel’s experience before one. Why
do we have such a dramatic difference between the results
of the two?

Mosiah 28

Verse 3–4: Verse 4 says the feelings described in verse 3 are
given by the Spirit of the Lord. Would the Spirit give any-
one the same feelings? (If so, the absence of such feelings
indicates the absence of the Spirit.) Alma the Younger had
endured endless torment (Mosiah 27:29), but there is no
indication that the sons of Mosiah had, even though they
did suffer. What might give them the feelings described
in verse 3?

Verse 18: Reading of a group of people who were destroyed
might sober us or even make us sad, but it usually wouldn’t
make us “mourn exceedingly.” Why do you think Mosiah’s
people reacted in this way? What kind of knowledge did
they get that caused them to rejoice?

Alma 36

Verse 2: What is the significance of what Alma asks Helaa-
man to remember? (Compare Mosiah 27:16.)

Verse 3: Why do you think Alma bears this particular testi-
mony to Helaman: “whosoever shall put their trust in God
shall be supported in their trials, and their troubles, and
their afflictions, and shall be lifted up at the last day”? Why
this rather than something else?
**Verses 6–30:** Appendix 2 has a side-by-side comparison of the three accounts of Alma the Younger’s conversion. Compare the three and ask yourself how to explain the differences between them. What does each version do that the others do not?

**Verse 14:** Why do you think Alma describes what he had done as murder? (Compare Alma 5:23 and Matthew 10:28. What does it mean to destroy both soul, i.e., spirit, and body in hell?)

**Verses 18–19:** Why does Alma’s cry in verse 18 bring the results in verse 19? How is this connected to King Benjamin’s teaching in Mosiah 4?

Is it significant that Benjamin delivered that address to a people who were diligent in keeping the commandments but that it also seems to apply to someone like Alma who has openly rebelled against those commandments?

**Verse 19:** Since Alma is here telling us about the pains he experienced, what can he mean when he says, “I could remember my pains no more”?

**Verse 22:** Why does Alma have a vision of Lehi at this point?

**Verse 28:** Is this verse parallel to verse 2? Why would Alma begin and end the account of his conversion by reminding Helaman of this scriptural type?

**Verse 30:** How are verses 28–29 (and, therefore, also verse 3) a type for what Alma says in this verse?

See appendix 2 for an outline of Alma the Younger’s conversion.

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