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**Abstract** According to the Book of Mormon, men must obey the commandments of God in order to gain eternal life. And yet men are incapable of yielding full obedience to God because of the carnal nature they inherit from the fallen Adam and Eve. To overcome this carnal nature, God has provided a way, through the atonement of his Son, whereby men may be redeemed from the carnal state to a spiritual state. If men are to be redeemed, they must call upon the Lord in the spirit of true humility, faith, and repentance. If they do so, God will redeem them by the power of the Holy Ghost. A covenant of obedience is frequently associated with the redemption process.

# **Cry Redemption: The Plan of Redemption as Taught in the Book of Mormon**

Corbin T. Volluz

**Abstract:** According to the Book of Mormon, men must obey the commandments of God in order to gain eternal life. And yet, men are incapable of yielding full obedience to God, due to the carnal nature they inherit from the fallen Adam and Eve. To overcome this carnal nature, God has provided a way, through the atonement of his Son, whereby men may be redeemed from the carnal state to a spiritual state. If men are to be redeemed, they must call upon the Lord in the spirit of true humility, faith, and repentance. If they do so, God will redeem them by the power of the Holy Ghost. Frequently associated with the redemption process is a covenant of obedience.

## **I. The Problem of Perfection**

### **Man Must Keep the Commandments of God in Order to Gain Eternal Life**

The Book of Mormon teaches that a person must be morally perfect and without sin in order to gain eternal life. Nephi said, "The kingdom of God is not filthy, and there cannot any unclean thing enter into the kingdom of God" (1 Nephi 15:34). Alma<sup>2</sup> put it this way: "And [God] doth not dwell in unholy temples,

neither can filthiness or anything which is unclean be received into the kingdom of God" (Alma 7:21). The resurrected Savior commanded the Nephites to "be perfect even as I, or your Father who is in heaven is perfect" (3 Nephi 12:48).<sup>1</sup>

The perfection required by God extends not just to one's acts. According to the Book of Mormon, improper thoughts and desires can also prohibit one from entering into the presence of God.

King Benjamin said, "If ye do not watch yourselves, and your *thoughts*, . . . ye must perish" (Mosiah 4:30). Alma<sub>2</sub> said, "For our words will condemn us, yea, all our works will condemn us; we shall not be found spotless; and our *thoughts* will also condemn us" (Alma 12:14).<sup>2</sup> In counseling his wayward son, Corianton, Alma<sub>2</sub> said,

Therefore, all things shall be restored to their proper order. . . . The one raised to happiness according to his *desires* of happiness, or good according to his *desires* of good; and the other to evil according to his *desires* of evil; for as he has desired to do evil all the day long even so shall he have his reward of evil when the night cometh. (Alma 41:4-5)

Being judged according to our desires, even if those desires are not acted upon, is the brunt of the message delivered to the Nephites by the resurrected Lord:

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<sup>1</sup> Further references on the matter include the following: "If ye shall be obedient to the commandments, and endure to the end, ye shall be saved at the last day" (1 Nephi 22:31). Nephi's brother, Jacob, said, "But wo unto him that has the law given, yea, that has all the commandments of God, like unto us, and that transgresseth them, and that wasteth the days of his probation, for awful is his state!" (2 Nephi 9:27). Joseph Smith made the point clear beyond dispute when he said, "I . . . spoke to the people, showing them that to get salvation we must not only do some things, but *everything* which God has commanded" (TPJS, 332, emphasis added).

<sup>2</sup> Mormon indicated that being judged according to one's thoughts was doctrinal hyperbole: "Wherefore, should he be cut off while in the *thought* [that little children need baptism to be saved], he must go down to hell" (Moroni 8:14).

Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, and it is also written before you, that thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment of God;

But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment. (3 Nephi 12:21–22)

And again, “Behold, it is written by them of old time, that thou shalt not commit adultery; But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman, to lust after her, hath committed adultery already in his heart” (3 Nephi 12:27–28). Then, lest anyone think purity of desire to be merely an ideal, and not truly a commandment, the Savior added, “Behold I give unto you a *commandment*, that ye suffer none of these things to enter into your heart; For it is better that ye should deny yourselves of these things, wherein ye will take up your cross, than that ye should be cast into hell” (3 Nephi 12:29–30).

Thus we see that, according to the Book of Mormon, purity of act, thought, and desire is essential to salvation. And yet, the Book of Mormon, corroborated by common experience, teaches us that for man to obey all the commandments of God is simply not possible. No matter how good a man’s intentions may be, he will inevitably fall into sin. This is due to the flaw in man’s character, put there for a wise purpose in God, called the carnal nature.

### **Because of the Carnal Nature, Man Is Incapable of Keeping the Commandments of God**

According to Abinadi, the fall of Adam and Eve “was the cause of all mankind becoming carnal, sensual, devilish, knowing evil from good, subjecting themselves to the devil” (Mosiah 16:3–4). From this passage, we learn several things: (1) *all* men are carnal in their nature; (2) the cause of all men being carnal in their nature is directly traceable to the fall of Adam and Eve; and, (3) all men are not only carnal, but sensual, devilish and they all subject themselves to the devil. This “subjecting themselves to the

devil" that "all mankind" does is synonymous with sin.<sup>3</sup> As King Benjamin put it, "For the natural [carnal] man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam" (Mosiah 3:19). It would be hard to put it any more forcefully than that. Nephi comes close when he says, "Wherefore, *all* mankind were in a lost and fallen state" (1 Nephi 10:6).

Fallen man is "lost" due to his inability to fully obey the commandments of God. This accounts for Lehi's statement,

And the law is given unto men. And by the law *no* flesh is justified; or, by the law men are cut off. Yea, by the temporal law they were cut off; and also, by the spiritual law they perish from that which is good, and become miserable forever. (2 Nephi 2:5)

If men could keep the law, whether temporal or spiritual, they would be justified by it. But because man in his natural state cannot keep the commandments, Lehi is correct in stating categorically that "by the law *no* flesh is justified," whether that law be temporal or spiritual (a possible allusion to the Mosaic law and the Law of the Gospel respectively).

The effects of this carnal state which all men inherit are not pleasant. "Remember, to be carnally-minded is death, and to be spiritually-minded is life eternal" (2 Nephi 9:39). Abinadi is more explicit:

But remember that he that persists in his own carnal nature, and goes on in the ways of sin and rebellion against God, remaineth in his fallen state and the devil hath all power over him. Therefore he is as though there was no redemption made, being an enemy to

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<sup>3</sup> This is why the Apostle Paul was able to state unequivocally, "For *all* have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). And again, "There is *none* righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10). John the Beloved expressed the same concept, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John 1:8). And hence the prophet Isaiah wrote, "But we are *all* as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Isaiah 64:6).

God; and also is the devil an enemy to God. (Mosiah 16:5)<sup>4</sup>

As Alma<sub>2</sub> put it,

All men that are in a state of nature, or I would say, in a carnal state, are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity; they are without God in the world, and they have gone contrary to the nature of God. (Alma 41:11)

So we see that, due to the fall, all men inherit a carnal nature, one that is completely aligned with the devil in his warfare against God. All men are an "enemy to God; and also is the devil an enemy to God" (Mosiah 16:5). All men "subject themselves to the devil," and hence they all sin and thereby make themselves unworthy to enter the kingdom of God. As the brother of Jared said, "Because of the fall our natures have become evil *continually*" (Ether 3:2).

As strong as this doctrine may be, the Book of Mormon goes further still. Not only does the Book of Mormon teach that fallen man is incapable of doing *all* good, it also teaches that fallen man is incapable of doing *any* good.

### Because of the Carnal Nature, Man Is Incapable of Doing Any Good Whatsoever

As quoted above, the brother of Jared proclaimed to the Lord that "because of the fall our natures have become *evil* continually" (Ether 3:2). Mormon drove the point home when he taught, "Wherefore, a man being evil [which his nature is continually, according to the brother of Jared] *cannot* do that which is good" (Moroni 7:10; see also Moroni 7:6). Man is incapable of doing good, or in other words, of being an independent source of good. This is evident from the scriptural verity that the source of all good is God. The Lord is quoted in the book of Ether as saying,

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<sup>4</sup> C. S. Lewis expressed a similar view to that of Abinadi: "Fallen man is not simply an imperfect creature who needs improvement: he is a rebel who must lay down his arms" (C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* [New York: Collier, 1960], 59).

“For good cometh of *none* save it be of me. I am the same that leadeth men to *all* good” (Ether 4:12). And returning to Mormon’s sermon, we find: “Wherefore, *all* things which are good cometh of God” (Moroni 7:12).

It seems, then, that the phrase, “good works,” as used in the Book of Mormon is a term of art. It does not simply mean a work that is beneficial to others. Carnal men do such beneficial works all the time. Rather, a “good work” can only be done by a “good man.” And no man is good while in his fallen state.<sup>5</sup> Mankind, in its fallen and carnal state, is possessed of a nature which is “evil continually” and therefore incapable of doing good works.<sup>6</sup> Why? Because, to use Mormon’s analogy, “a bitter fountain cannot bring forth good water” (Moroni 7:11).

Without the redemption of Christ, available through the administration of the gospel, man must remain forever in his lost and fallen state, incapable of doing good (1 Nephi 10:6). It is for this reason that Moroni, in prophesying of a future apostasy, wrote,

And now I speak unto all the ends of the earth—  
that if the day cometh that the power and gifts of God  
shall be done away among you, it shall be because of  
unbelief.

And wo be unto the children of men if this be the  
case; *for there shall be none that doeth good among  
you, no not one.* (Moroni 10:24–25)

According to Moroni, without faith, accompanied as always by the “power and gifts of God,” there can be no good works. There may be beneficial works, as there have always been in all ages of the world, but there may be no “good works” in the gospel sense (i.e., beneficial works performed by good men).

Similarly, Moroni quotes his father, Mormon, as follows:

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<sup>5</sup> As the Savior himself proclaimed during his mortal ministry, “There is none good but one, that is, God” (Matthew 19:17).

<sup>6</sup> If only those who have been redeemed may do good works, it is possible that the oft-repeated concept that men shall be judged by their works, whether they be good or evil (Mosiah 16:10; Alma 41:3–4; 3 Nephi 26:4; Mormon 3:20) may simply mean that men will be judged according to whether they have been redeemed or not.



And behold, there were divers ways that [God] did manifest things unto the children of men, which were good; and all things which are good cometh of Christ; *otherwise men were fallen, and there could no good thing come unto them.* (Moroni 7:24)

As we have seen, the Book of Mormon teaches that all mankind is carnal, devilish, and sensual due to the fall. They subject themselves to the devil. They are, together with the devil, enemies to God. Their natures have become evil continually. They are incapable of keeping all the commandments of God. In fact, in their fallen state, they are incapable of doing any good whatsoever.

And yet the Book of Mormon is equally clear that God requires perfect obedience to his will of those who would enter his kingdom. How then can anyone be saved? When asked a similar question by his disciples, the mortal Messiah responded, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26).

The good news of the gospel, as proclaimed in the Book of Mormon, is that God has provided a way through his Son whereby men may be redeemed from their lost and fallen state to a state of righteousness; to a spiritual state as opposed to a carnal, natural state; to a state wherein they *are* able to keep the commandments of God; to a state where the whole desire of their heart is to keep the commandments of God and to eschew evil. The way that God has provided to accomplish this miraculous transformation is called the plan of redemption. The balance of this paper will examine what carnal man must do in order to experience this redemptive process.

## II. The Remedy of Redemption

In order to provide a way for men to escape the consequences of the fall and their carnal and evil nature, God provided a Redeemer, through whom men could be redeemed, or bought back, from the carnal state to a spiritual state. The Book of Mormon is rife with examples of individuals and whole groups of persons who experienced this redemptive process.

Consider the conversion of Alma<sup>2</sup>. Scrutiny of his experience reveals that, after arising from his death-like trance, he was redeemed from the carnal state. Said he:

I have repented of my sins, and have been *redeemed* of the Lord; behold I am born of the Spirit.

And the Lord said unto me: Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men and women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, must be born again; yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters;

And thus they become new creatures; and unless they do this, they can in no wise inherit the kingdom of God. (Mosiah 27:24–26)

From this key passage, we learn a number of things relevant to our discussion of the plan of redemption:

- “All mankind” must be “changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness” in order to “inherit the kingdom of God.”

- Several synonyms for this change from the carnal and fallen state to a state of righteousness are introduced:

1. “Redeemed of God”;
2. “Born of the Spirit”;
3. “Born of God”;
4. “Born again”;
5. “Becoming [God’s] sons and daughters”; and,
6. “Becom(ing) new creatures.”

The first phrase, “redeemed of God,” is clearly used as an equivalent expression for the change from the carnal state to the spiritual state. The last five phrases, too, are synonymous with this redemptive change, and suggest the taking place of a divine regeneration, or *renascence*. These synonyms for redemption are helpful in identifying other instances in the Book of Mormon where persons experienced this profound change in their natures and were redeemed of God.

For example, the people of King Benjamin experienced this change as well, and said of it:

Yea, we believe all the words which thou hast spoken unto us, and also, we know of their surety and truth, because of the Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent, which has wrought a *mighty change* in us, or in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually. (Mosiah 5:2)

And of his people, King Benjamin said:

Ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath *spiritually begotten you*; for ye say that your *hearts are changed* through faith on his name; therefore, ye are *born of him* and have become *his sons and his daughters*. (Mosiah 5:7)

Here, too, we note the language of spiritual renascence so reminiscent of the statements made by the Lord to Alma<sub>2</sub> regarding the status of the redeemed (Mosiah 27:25–26). There can be little doubt but that the people of King Benjamin were also redeemed from the carnal state to a spiritual state, becoming the sons and daughters of Christ, even as Alma<sub>2</sub>. Additionally, a new synonym of some importance is added. King Benjamin says his peoples' "hearts are changed" (Mosiah 5:7). This echoes the earlier cry of his people that "a mighty change" had been wrought in them, and is likely referring to the "change" from a "carnal and sinful state, to a state of righteousness" that the Lord told Alma<sub>2</sub> "all mankind" must experience in order to "inherit the kingdom of God" (Mosiah 27:25–26).

It is significant that the hearts of King Benjamin's people were changed such that they had "no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually" (Mosiah 5:2). Note that this is precisely the opposite of the carnal nature, which is "evil continually" (Ether 3:2). (Inasmuch as God has stated we will be judged not only by our actions, but by our desires as well, such a fundamental change in disposition of the carnal man is essential to make him a candidate for salvation.)

In addition to Alma<sub>2</sub> and the people of King Benjamin, we may add the following examples of persons in the Book of Mormon who were redeemed. After Alma<sub>2</sub> was redeemed, he did a great deal of missionary work and converted a great many people. Of those converted through his endeavors, he explained to his son Helaman that he had “labored without ceasing . . . that they might also be *born of God*” and that, indeed, “many have been *born of God*” (Alma 36:24–26).

We also learn from Alma<sub>2</sub> that his father, Alma<sub>1</sub>, after being converted by the words of Abinadi in King Noah’s court, had “a mighty change wrought in *his heart*” (Alma 5:11–12). Alma<sub>1</sub> then began preaching the gospel of Abinadi to others and established a church in the wilderness, and “a mighty change was also wrought in *their hearts*” (Alma 5:7, 13).

From this, we may conclude that not only were Alma<sub>1</sub> and the church he organized by the waters of Mormon redeemed, but so was Abinadi himself who taught the message in the first place. It would be strange for Abinadi to teach the message of redemption if he had not himself experienced the “mighty change of heart.”

At one point in his career, Alma<sub>2</sub> left the office of chief judge to devote himself exclusively to the ministry of the office of high priest (Alma 4:20). He instituted a revival throughout the land, beginning in the city of Zarahemla, whose inhabitants had fallen into wickedness. Of them he asked:

And now behold, I ask of you, my brethren of the church, have ye *spiritually been born of God*? Have ye received his image in your countenances? Have ye experienced this *mighty change in your hearts*? (Alma 5:14)

That many in Zarahemla accepted Alma<sub>2</sub>’s challenge and were redeemed is indicated in a subsequent sermon by Alma<sub>2</sub> in the city of Gideon, which states that they were “established again in the way of his righteousness” (Alma 7:4).

The Book of Mormon records many instances in which Lamanites, too, were redeemed. Ammon preached the plan of redemption, beginning at the fall of Adam, to King Lamoni (Alma 18:36–39). King Lamoni subsequently “fell unto the earth, as if he were dead” (Alma 18:42) and remained in that state for three

days. After he arose, he claimed to have “seen my *Redeemer* . . . and he shall *redeem* all mankind” (Alma 19:13). King Lamoni then swooned again, this time joined by the queen and Ammon (Alma 19:13–14). Subsequently, King Lamoni’s servants also fell to the earth (Alma 19:15–16).

When Ammon arose he also administered unto [the assembled multitude], and also did all the servants of Lamoni; and they did all declare unto the people the self-same thing—that their *hearts had been changed*; that they had no more desire to do evil. (Alma 19:33)<sup>7</sup>

King Lamoni’s father (unnamed in the text), the king of all the Lamanites, also experienced redemption through a similar scenario to that of his son. Aaron taught him concerning “the fall of man . . . and their carnal state and also the plan of redemption” (Alma 22:13). Aaron further explained that “since man had fallen he could not merit anything of himself” (Alma 22:14). In response, the king asked Aaron,

What shall I do that I may have this eternal life of which thou hast spoken? Yea, what shall I do that I may be *born of God*, having this wicked spirit [carnal nature/spirit of the devil] rooted out of my breast, and receive his Spirit, that I may be filled with joy, that I may not be cast off at the last day? (Alma 22:15)

In a dramatic fashion reminiscent of his son, the king of the Lamanites then swooned and, upon arising, we are told that “the king had been converted unto the Lord, and all his household” (Alma 23:3).

Samuel the Lamanite said that all the Lamanites who were “brought to the knowledge of the truth” experienced a “*change of heart*” to the extent that they “fear to sin — for behold they

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<sup>7</sup> It may be significant that, shortly after King Lamoni’s redemption, Ammon refers to him as an “innocent man” (Alma 20:18). It appears that the only other persons described as “innocent” in the Book of Mormon are Adam and Eve before the fall (2 Nephi 2:23), Abinadi just prior to his execution (Mosiah 17:10), and converts of Alma<sub>2</sub> at Ammonihah as they were being burned to death for their testimony of Jesus (Alma 14:11). As we have seen, all of these (with the exception of Adam and Even before the fall) were likely redeemed.

will suffer themselves that they be trodden down and slain by their enemies, and will not lift their swords against them” (Helaman 15:7–9). (It is not clear from this passage whether Samuel is describing the people of Ammon of a century or so earlier or a different but similar group of Lamanites living at his time.)<sup>8</sup>

Nephi and Lehi, sons of Helaman, went among the Lamanites to preach the gospel. They were thrown in prison and released in a miraculous manner. As a result, “about three hundred” Lamanites were redeemed (Helaman 5, esp. 5:49). Of this mass conversion, Moroni wrote:

Behold, it was the faith of Nephi and Lehi that wrought *the change* upon the Lamanites, that they were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost. (Ether 12:14)<sup>9</sup>

Thus we see that the Book of Mormon contains numerous examples of individuals and large groups of persons who experienced the redemptive process, having been born again, and who received the “mighty change of heart.”

An examination of the circumstances surrounding these redemptive occurrences reveals the divine prerequisites with which those who were redeemed complied. These three prerequisites are (1) calling upon the name of the Lord for mercy; (2) faith, humility, and repentance; and (3) entering into a covenant of obedience to God.

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<sup>8</sup> It would seem reasonable that the people of Ammon, too, would have been redeemed when they accepted the gospel as taught by Ammon, inasmuch as King Lamoni and his court were redeemed when they accepted the same gospel, taught by the same missionary.

<sup>9</sup> Apparently, Moroni recognized that the Lamanites converted by Nephi and Lehi were in fact redeemed, having experienced for themselves “the change.” Note that, as of the time Moroni wrote at the end of the Nephite civilization, the redemptive “change of heart” had become so much a part of the common understanding and vernacular of the plan of redemption, it was referred to simply by the familiar phrase, “the change.”

## Calling upon the Lord

Using the people of King Benjamin as our paradigm, we note that, immediately before their redemption, they all "*cried aloud with one voice,*" saying,

O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified; for we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who created heaven and earth, and all things; who shall come down among the children of men. (Mosiah 4:2)

Later on in the book of Mosiah, we read that the "rising generation" after King Benjamin would not understand or believe his words and were therefore not redeemed:

And they would not be baptized; neither would they join the church. And they were a separate people as to their faith, and remained so ever after, even in their carnal and sinful state; *for they would not call upon the Lord their God.* (Mosiah 26:4)

The link between redemption from the carnal state and calling upon the Lord is clear from this passage.

The act that precipitated the redemption of Alma<sub>2</sub> was his calling upon the Lord for deliverance:

Now, as my mind caught hold upon this thought [the memory of his father's teachings concerning Jesus Christ], I cried within my heart: O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me, who am in the gall of bitterness, and am encircled about by the everlasting chains of death. (Alma 36:18)

Alma<sub>2</sub> reports that, once he had thought this, "I could remember my pains no more; yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more" (Alma 36:19). As we have seen

previously, Alma<sub>2</sub> was redeemed through this experience. (Mosiah 27:24).<sup>10</sup>

Alma<sub>1</sub> and his people were converted by the message of Abinadi (Alma 5:11–13). Speaking of those who would be damned, Abinadi said:

Having gone according to their own carnal wills and desires; *having never called upon the Lord* while the arms of mercy were extended towards them; for the arms of mercy were extended towards them, *and they would not.* (Mosiah 16:12)

Therefore, for Alma<sub>1</sub>, his people, and Abinadi himself to have escaped damnation, they must have “called upon the Lord.”

Before King Lamoni fell to the earth to experience the redemptive process, he began to “cry unto the Lord,” saying:

O Lord, have mercy; according to thy abundant mercy which thou hast had upon the people of Nephi, have upon me, and my people. (Alma 18:41)

Of King Lamoni’s servants, who were also redeemed, it is written:

And it came to pass that they did *call on the name of the Lord*, in their might, even until they had all fallen to the earth. (Alma 19:16)

King Lamoni’s father asked Ammon what he needed to do to “be born of God” (Alma 22:15). Ammon responded:

If thou desirest this thing, if thou wilt bow down before God, yea, if thou wilt repent of all thy sins and will bow down before God, *and call on his name* in faith, believing that ye shall receive, then shalt thou receive the hope which thou desirest. (Alma 22:16)

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<sup>10</sup> Redemption in the Book of Mormon appears to be instantaneous, once the divine prerequisites are fulfilled. As Amulek said to the Zoramites, “Now is the time and the day of your salvation; and therefore, if ye will repent and harden not your hearts, *immediately* shall the great plan of redemption be brought about unto you” (Alma 34:31).



For his part, King Lamoni's father did just as directed, and cried:

O God, Aaron hath told me that there is a God; and if there is a God, and if thou art God, wilt thou make thyself known unto me, and I will give away all my sins to know thee, and that I may be raised from the dead, and be saved at the last day. (Alma 22:18)<sup>11</sup>

The Lamanites redeemed through the preaching of Nephi and Lehi, sons of Helaman, were initially overshadowed by a cloud of darkness and rendered immobile. They called to Aminadab, an inactive Nephite, as to what they should do. Even the inactive Aminadab was able to give them the correct answer:

Ye must repent, and *cry unto the voice* [of God], even until ye shall have faith in Christ, . . . and when ye shall do this, the cloud of darkness shall be removed from overshadowing you. (Helaman 5:41)

In response, the Lamanites did "*cry unto the voice* of him who had shaken the earth; yea, they did *cry* even until the cloud of darkness was dispersed" (Helaman 5:42). As a result, "the change" was wrought upon these Lamanites and they were redeemed (Ether 12:14).

Thus we see the Book of Mormon describes the act of "calling upon the Lord" or "crying unto the Lord" as an essential prerequisite to being redeemed.<sup>12</sup> But this "calling upon the Lord" must be of a certain type and quality. The request may not be insincere or the by-product of idle curiosity. In order to be

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<sup>11</sup> During Alma<sub>2</sub>'s preaching to the people at Ammonihah, he made this prophetic statement relative to the redemption of the Lamanites: "And at some period of time [the Lamanites] will be brought to believe in [God's] word, and to know of the incorrectness of the traditions of their fathers; and many of them will be saved, for *the Lord will be merciful unto all who call on his name*" (Alma 9:17).

<sup>12</sup> Though not found in the text of the Book of Mormon, it is worth noting that, immediately before Adam was baptized in water and the Spirit, thus becoming a "son of God" (a synonym for being redeemed), he, too, "cried unto the Lord" (Moses 6:64-68).

effective, the cry must be the natural culmination and consummation of three qualities: humility, faith, and repentance.

### Humility, Faith, and Repentance

In the context of the plan of redemption, *humility* means to understand that men are incapable, in their fallen state, of being obedient to God's will—that they are totally dependent upon God to redeem them to a state of righteousness. In the words of Nephi, they must rely “wholly upon the merits of him who is mighty to save” (2 Nephi 31:19). *Faith* means not only that men believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, but that they believe he can redeem them from their fallen state, and that he *will* redeem them if they but do what he has asked them to do. *Repentance* means that men desire, with all their hearts, to turn away from sin and to turn to God and the path of righteousness, all the while humbly recognizing their own inability to do so, but with faith that Christ can transform them so that they may be able to do so.<sup>13</sup> In the

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<sup>13</sup> It appears that Mormon taught these same concepts in the sermon recorded in Moroni 7. Mormon identifies charity as, among other things, that quality which “thinketh no evil” (Moroni 7:45). We can see that, if one who has charity thinks no evil, only those redeemed from the carnal state which is “evil continually” (Ether 3:2) can have charity. There seems, then, to be a similarity between one who has charity and one who is redeemed.

Mormon tells us the way to obtain this charity is by calling upon the Lord: “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, *pray unto the Father* with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become *the sons of God*” (Moroni 7:48). So in order to become a “son of God” (i.e., be redeemed) and obtain charity, one must call upon the Lord in fervent prayer.

Additionally, Mormon lists three qualities of character that must precede the obtaining of charity. These are faith, hope, and humility (Moroni 7:38–44). The quality of hope is directly comparable to the quality of repentance, inasmuch as hope is defined by Mormon as being a desire “to be raised unto life eternal” (Moroni 7:41). This may be equivalent to the “turning unto God” associated with repentance.

If this is so, Mormon's sermon teaches that men must have faith, hope/repentance, and humility. Once they have developed these qualities, they must fervently call upon the Lord, and the Lord will bestow upon them the quality of charity, making them a “son of God,” or, in other words, redeem them from the fall.

Book of Mormon examples of redemption, we find these three characteristics time and time again in those who are born again.

Once more returning to King Benjamin's people as the paradigm, we read that "they had viewed themselves in their own carnal state, even less than the dust of the earth" (Mosiah 4:2). In other words, they possessed the necessary *humility*. The great change occurred in the peoples' hearts after they called upon the Lord, but their redemption was also caused by "the exceeding *faith* which they had in Jesus Christ" (Mosiah 4:3). The *repentance* of the people of King Benjamin was manifest in their prayer, "that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be purified" (Mosiah 4:2). They desired to forsake their sins and do the will of God (Mosiah 4:10; 5:5).<sup>14</sup>

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This process is remarkably similar to the process seen in the examples of redemption examined in this paper.

<sup>14</sup> It is not surprising that King Benjamin's people manifested the traits of humility, faith, and repentance in their redemption, inasmuch as King Benjamin's sermon delivered immediately prior to their redemption seems designed to inculcate these virtues in its listeners.

As to the quality of faith in Jesus Christ, King Benjamin spends the bulk of Mosiah 3 setting forth the mortal birth and ministry of the Savior and the manner and means of the atonement. It is in the middle of this chapter that King Benjamin informs his people of the cornerstone of redemption: "For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit, and putteth off the natural man and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord" (Mosiah 3:19).

As to the quality of humility, King Benjamin makes an all-out effort in Mosiah 2:19–26 to imbue his people with this attribute, telling his people such things as, "And now I ask, can ye say aught of yourselves? I answer you, Nay. Ye cannot say that ye are even as much as the dust of the earth; yet ye were created of the dust of the earth; but behold, it belongeth to him who created you" (Mosiah 2:25).

As to the quality of repentance, King Benjamin reminds his people in Mosiah 2:32–40 of the "guilt, and pain, and anguish, which is like an unquenchable fire, whose flame ascendeth up forever and ever" that shall be kindled in the hearts of those who die in their sins (Mosiah 2:38). King Benjamin continues in this vein in Mosiah 3:24–27, speaking of the "state of misery and endless torment" the wicked inherit (Mosiah 3:25). But King Benjamin doesn't stop there. In order to get his people to turn away from sin and turn to God with full purpose of heart, thus accomplishing true repentance, he also speaks of the "blessed and happy state of those that keep the commandments of God" (Mosiah 2:41). The

Humility, faith, and repentance are present in other redemption stories in the Book of Mormon as well. Alma<sub>2</sub> displayed *humility* by recognizing that his redemption (and spiritual knowledge received thereafter) was not due to any “worthiness” of himself (Alma 36:5). It was his *faith* on the words of his father that gave him a basis from which to cry unto the Lord (Alma 36:17–18). At the moment he arose from his three-day “coma,” Alma<sub>2</sub> announced he had *repented* of his sins (Mosiah 27:24).

Alma<sub>1</sub> taught the redemptive message of Abinadi to his followers. “According to [Alma<sub>1</sub>’s] *faith* there was a mighty change wrought in his heart” (Alma 5:12). Similarly, Alma<sub>1</sub>’s followers “*humbled* themselves and put their *trust* [faith] in the true and living God” (Alma 5:13). Abinadi’s words themselves contain the injunction to “*repent* of your sins” (Mosiah 16:13). Alma<sub>1</sub> at the waters of Mormon did “teach [his followers], and did preach unto them *repentance*, and redemption, and *faith* on the Lord” (Mosiah 18:7).

When teaching King Lamoni, Ammon strategically taught of the fall of man before he taught of the plan of redemption (Alma 18:36, 39). King Lamoni “believed all [Ammon’s] words,” thus showing *faith* (Alma 18:40). Referring to this incident, Mormon editorialized, “We see that [God’s] arm is extended to all people who will *repent* and *believe* on his name” (Alma 19:36). King Lamoni’s humility is indicated by his “marveling” over Ammon’s supernatural abilities to defend the royal flocks and also to “discern [the king’s] thoughts” (Alma 18:14–18).

Similarly, Aaron told the father of King Lamoni that, to be “born of God,” he had to “bow down before God [*humility*],” “*repent* of all thy sins,” and “call on his name in *faith*” (Alma 22:15–16). The redemption of the Lamanites referred to by Samuel the Lamanite was predicated upon a knowledge of the true gospel, “which leadeth them to *faith* on the Lord, and unto *repentance*, which faith and repentance bringeth a change of heart unto them” (Helaman 15:7). Aminadab told the 300 Lamanites overshadowed and immobilized by the cloud of darkness that they

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use of these two extremes could be described as the “carrot-and-stick method” of inducing repentance. It is used throughout the Book of Mormon.

"must *repent*, and cry unto the voice, even until ye shall have *faith* in Christ" (Helaman 5:41).

### Redemption Accomplished through Ministration of Holy Ghost

The ultimate source of power by which redemption is made possible is the atonement of the Savior (Mosiah 3:17; 16:6; Alma 21:9; etc.). The active force by which this redemptive power is ministered in the lives of men, however, is the Holy Ghost.

The people of King Benjamin were transformed by the "Spirit of the Lord" immediately after making their verbal plea for mercy (Mosiah 4:3). They later claimed that the "Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent" had wrought a "mighty change" in their hearts such that they had "no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually" (Mosiah 5:2).<sup>15</sup>

Alma<sub>2</sub> declared he was "born of the *Spirit*" (Mosiah 27:24). Subsequently, Alma<sub>2</sub> "labored without ceasing" that others might be "born of God; and be filled with the *Holy Ghost*" (Alma 36:24). When Alma<sub>1</sub> baptized his people at the waters of Mormon, it was done as a precondition that God "may pour out his *Spirit* more abundantly upon you" (Mosiah 18:10).

King Lamoni and his wife were "overpowered by the *Spirit*" at the time of their redemption (Alma 19:13).<sup>16</sup> Lamoni's father inquired of Aaron what he should do to be "born of God, having this wicked spirit rooted out of my breast, and receive *his Spirit*" (Alma 22:15).

The 300 Lamanites converted by Lehi and Nephi, sons of Helaman, were redeemed when "the *Holy Spirit of God* did come down from heaven, and did enter into their hearts, and they were filled as if with fire" (Helaman 5:45).

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<sup>15</sup> As King Benjamin preached to his people immediately prior to their redemption, "The natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be forever and ever, *unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Ghost*" (Mosiah 3:19).

<sup>16</sup> It was from this point in time that "the Lord did begin to pour out his *Spirit* upon [the Lamanites]" (Alma 19:36).

## Covenant of Obedience

A covenant of obedience to God's will also appears to be a necessary condition to redemption.<sup>17</sup>

After King Benjamin's people called upon the Lord for mercy and had been redeemed, they proclaimed their willingness "to enter into a covenant with our God to do his will, and to be obedient to his commandments in all things that he shall command us, all the remainder of our days" (Mosiah 5:5). King Benjamin said that it was "*because of the covenant*" his people made that they "shall be called the children of Christ," thus indicating the necessary condition of making the covenant to being redeemed (Mosiah 5:7).

Alma<sub>1</sub> put his people under covenant through baptism at the waters of Mormon to "serve [God] and keep his commandments" (Mosiah 18:10, 13). Of the vast numbers of Lamanites converted by Alma<sub>2</sub> and the four sons of King Mosiah, we are told that "as many as did believe were baptized."<sup>18</sup> Presumably the baptism of the Lamanites fulfilled the same covenant-making purpose as those administered by Alma<sub>1</sub>.

Thus we see that the making of a covenant of obedience to God's will, frequently made in the waters of baptism, was intimately associated with the redemptive process.<sup>19</sup>

## Conclusion

Due to the fall, all mankind inherits a carnal nature. Because of this carnal nature, men are incapable of being obedient to God, no matter how good their intentions. In order for men to

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<sup>17</sup> The covenant does not seem to be a necessary precondition to redemption, inasmuch as it sometimes occurs subsequent to the redemptive process, as in the case of King Lamoni and his court.

<sup>18</sup> A similar comment is made concerning the preaching of Nephi, son of Nephi, son of Helaman, "that there were none who were brought unto repentance who were not baptized with water" (3 Nephi 7:24).

Also, though baptized subsequent to redemption, it may be noted that King Lamoni's plea to the Lord was itself a covenant of obedience (Alma 22:18).

<sup>19</sup> See also Jennifer Clark Lane, "The Lord Will Redeem His People: Adoptive Covenant and Redemption in the Old Testament and Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2/2 (1993): 39.

overcome the carnal nature and be born again with a spiritual nature that is not predisposed to evil, God provided a plan of redemption through his Son, Jesus Christ. Unless men are redeemed, "they can in no wise inherit the kingdom of God" (Mosiah 27:26).<sup>20</sup>

The experiences of hundreds and perhaps thousands of individuals as related in the pages of the Book of Mormon demonstrate a consistent pattern of what is required of fallen man in order to be redeemed. After having developed the necessary humility, faith, and repentance, he must call upon the Lord for mercy. The Lord will then redeem the carnal man by the power of the atonement, through the ministration of the Holy Ghost. Associated with the redemptive process is the requirement that the

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<sup>20</sup> In a much misunderstood passage, Amulek taught that the determining factor in whether a person was saved or damned was whether he was possessed of the Spirit of the Lord at the time of his death: "Ye cannot say, when ye are brought to that awful crisis [death], that I will repent, that I will return to my God. Nay, ye cannot say this; for that same spirit [whether God's or the devil's] which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world.

"For behold, if ye have procrastinated the day of your repentance even until death, behold, ye have become subjected to the *spirit of the devil*, and he doth seal you his; therefore, the *Spirit of the Lord* hath withdrawn from you, and hath no place in you, and the devil hath all power over you; and this is the final state of the wicked" (Alma 34:34-35).

As has been seen, the Book of Mormon consistently describes redemption as taking place by the power of the Holy Ghost. It is this infusion of the Spirit of the Lord at the time of redemption that alters the carnal state of men to a spiritual state wherein they "have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually" (Mosiah 5:2). Lamoni's father contrasted the two spirits with which a man may be possessed when he told Aaron of his desire to be "born of God, having this *wicked spirit* rooted out of my breast, and receive [God's] Spirit" (Alma 22:15). Mormon, in commenting on the fifth year of the reign of the judges in which "thousands and tens of thousands of souls" were "sent to the eternal world," stated that they would "reap their rewards according to their works, whether they were good or whether they were bad, to reap eternal happiness or eternal misery, according to the spirit which they listed to obey, whether it be a good spirit or a bad one" (Alma 3:35-26). And as Alma<sub>2</sub> says elsewhere, either God is our shepherd, or the devil. There is no other alternative (Alma 5:39-40).

It therefore appears that Amulek is teaching that whether one is saved or damned eternally depends on whether one is in a redeemed state, being "born of the Spirit" (Mosiah 27:24), at the moment of death. This also seems to be the teaching the Lord gave Alma<sub>1</sub> in Mosiah 27:24-26.

redeemed individual enter into a covenant with the Lord to be obedient to his will.<sup>21</sup>

## Historical Parallels to the Destruction at the Time of the Crucifixion

John A. Tvedtnes

Abstract: To the nonbeliever, the wide variety of destructive forces unleashed in the New World at the time of Christ's crucifixion seems preposterous or, at the very least, unscientific. The account in 3 Nephi 8-9 mentions the simultaneous occurrence of earthquakes, fire, strong winds, extensive flooding, the complete burial of cities, and thick darkness. An examination of known great natural disasters in historical times reveals that the Book of Mormon in no way exaggerates. All of the destructive forces mentioned in 3 Nephi 8-9 can be readily explained in terms of the tectonic forces that result from the encounter of the plates on which the continents and the oceans lie. The complex variety of destructive forces that we normally consider to be separate phenomena of nature is, in reality, strong evidence for the historicity of the Book of Mormon account.

The great destructions which took place among the Nephites and Lamanites at the time of Christ's crucifixion can be likened to the effects of hurricanes and tsunamis as well as tectonic activity such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. The cataclysm began with a "great storm, such as never had been known in all the land," followed by "a great and terrible tempest," and "terrible thunder" that "did shake the whole earth as if it was

<sup>21</sup> Although the natural man recognizes he is unable to keep the commandments of God due to his carnal nature, he nevertheless has faith that God is able to redeem him to a spiritual state wherein he may, in fact, obey all the commandments of God. Thus, the making of a covenant of obedience by the natural man is itself an act of faith in God.