

# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

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Semester 2, Lecture 55  
Alma 32–35  
Mission to the Zoramites

The Book of Mormon doesn't dabble around, as historical romances and things like that do. It's really to the "nitty gritty." In this chapter 34, Alma is speaking to the other Zoramites. Alma has two missions, you'll notice, with this people. The first one was a complete failure with the Zoramites proper. There are the excluded ones that are not included in this. They are another society entirely. They're not even allowed to go to these temples. You remember, he talks about the temples, their riches, their homes, and all this sort of thing. But this is where the other society doesn't even come near; they are shut out of town after dark. It's expressed here a little further on in Alma 35:3 where he says, "And it came to pass that after the more popular part of the Zoramites had consulted together concerning the words which had been preached unto them, they were angry because . . . it did destroy their craft." The more popular parts wouldn't accept it at all. Their craft, of course, was priestcraft. But these [people] are the less popular parts. In fact, they don't even have citizen's rights or anything else, as we soon find out. They met on the hill Onidah and "began to have great success among the poor class of people; for behold, they were cast out of the synagogues because of the coarseness of their apparel. . . . They were esteemed by their brethren as dross."

You see we have two different societies, the quality and the nothings—the riff-raff, the great unwashed. Of course, because of that condition "they were poor in heart." Alma spoke to a large throng of them who met on the hill Onidah. They had these general mass meetings then as now; in fact, mass meetings were much more common in ancient times than today. "Upon the hill Onidah, there came a great multitude unto him who were . . . poor in heart, because of their poverty as to the things of the world. They came to Alma, and this was their complaint. Their leader said, "Behold, what shall these my brethren do, for they are despised of all men because of their poverty, yea, and more especially by our priests; for they have cast us out of our synagogues which we have labored abundantly to build with our own hands; and they have cast us out because of our exceeding poverty, and we have no place to worship our God; and behold, what shall we do?"

The centers were everything. Recently a very important book by T. P. Culbert has come out called *The Classic Maya Collapse*. There is a series of Mesoamerican societies. Nobody knows where they came from. Some of them are spread quite far apart. They didn't just disappear by dwindling away. They suddenly collapsed and disappeared, each one of them. It's a very strange thing why this happened. It all seems to follow the same pattern, what we referred to before as a "recurrent scenario." This is the way it is described in one of these essays. This book is a large collection of essays, all discussing the reason for the collapse of various Central American civilizations. This is the one by G. R. Willey and D. B. Shimkin on the subject.<sup>1</sup> This gives us the general situation. In the Late Classical, the Classical, and the Pre-Classical periods this is what happened. We can assume going way

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<sup>1</sup> Culbert, T. Patrick, *The Classic Maya Collapse* (New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1973), 457–500. Brother Nibley quotes and paraphrases from this article.

back to Nephite and Lamanite times it happened, too. “There are indications that Late Classic society was more sharply differentiated into elite and commoner strata than had been the case in Early Classic times.” This is a process that goes on every time they go through this, and this is our Book of Mormon story. In Early Classic times as this process of an elite consolidation went on, “there was a related development of a class of bureaucrats and craft specialists” in the sixth and seventh centuries. 3 Nephi is going to tell us that people began to be distinguished by ranks, according to their riches and their chances for learning. This says they began to be distinguished as a class of bureaucrats and craft specialists. In the seventh and eighth centuries Maya civilization was integrated at the elite level in a more impressive fashion than ever before as signs of regionalism appeared.

It’s a growing process once it starts, and it has started in our own time, as you notice in the latest reports. It was amazing in the paper this morning, the division between the rich and the poor. It’s being more sharply marked everyday: “intensified competition among cities, intercity fighting, crop loss and destruction, malnutrition and disease . . . reduced population greatly.” Alma tells us the contentions did increase, that there were wars throughout all the land among them. They [the authors] say later on, the most vital aspects of the collapse are first, the roles of the elite class; second, the widening of the social gulf between the elite and the commoners (which is exactly what we are finding here); third, the competition between the various cities and centers. These sacred centers were also the markets, as you know. You notice, the people who built them weren’t allowed to go into them. This is the division of classes that is so sharply marked.

It’s mentioned here too in the same connection—“Such is an inevitable accompaniment of the evolution of ranked, and probably kin-based, society to a class structured one. . . . In some areas, it is quite possible that by the end of the Late Classic the numbers of commoners were being maintained only by recruitment and capture from other centers.” To build their centers they had to enslave people from other centers, and there was great competition to do that. “Yet the upper class continued to grow, to expand its demands for luxury and funerary splendor, [boy, do we get a Book of Mormon picture here] and to strive to compete with rival centers and aristocracies.” There were other centers the same way. They named these Book of Mormon cities and their cultural centers, and they had their towers. They had their sacred assemblies, etc., and the Zoramites had their own. This system is shown in its model form; this is state of the art here.

“The priestly leaders of these great centers [remember, Alma said, ‘and especially by their priests’] in their efforts to outdo each other, to draw more wealth and prestige to themselves, and to bring more worshippers and taxpayers into their particular orbits, must have diverted all possible labor and capital to their aggrandizement. . . . Add to all this the competition for trade, . . . and we can see the situation brought to a fighting pitch, . . . all leading to a rapid down-spiraling to extinction.” This is where it culminates in the Book of Mormon. We are approaching the long war, the great fourteen-year war. We are not going to be able to go into it this semester, if ever. They (the Maya) didn’t get anywhere. They didn’t collapse and then build up again. It was extinction in every case. The ruins of the cities were never rebuilt. That was just it; they were finished. It’s an amazing picture, and, of course, this is the amazing picture that we find in the Book of Mormon. You don’t find it in Europe; that’s not the way things go there. People go on suffering in Europe and Asia, etc. The same old cities are still there, the same old mobs, troubles, murders, etc. They continue with starvation and all the rest of it. But it’s a different pattern in the promised land here.

When he saw these people were humble, Alma was filled with great joy. “For he beheld that their afflictions had truly humbled them, and that they were in a preparation to hear the word [he had a new clientele now]. Therefore he did say no more to the other multitude.” See, there were two multitudes, two Zoramite communities. His mission was to the first. Why did he go to the first? Because they were the ones that made the trouble. Remember, the idea was he didn’t want the Zoramites to join in with the Lamanites on the other side of the Ammonites so they would have a “squeeze play.” They would break down the value of their buffer state. In order to discourage them from going away and joining the enemy, he decided, we will go and preach to them. That’s the best way he could think of. So these dangerous people were the ones he wanted to preach to—the influential ones. But he couldn’t get anywhere with them, so then he turned to what he calls “the other multitude,” making it clear that we do have two societies here. He stretched forth his hand and cried unto them and said, “Behold I say unto you, do ye suppose that ye cannot worship God save it be in your synagogues only?” Well, they certainly had that ingrained into them. The building of the holy places was of prime consideration. That’s where everything went on; that was the center of holiness. (Every Sunday we thank the Lord for our beautiful meeting houses, etc. We talked about the fashionable religion, where they met only once a week and did the right thing.)

Verse 12: “I say unto you, it is well that ye are cast out of your synagogues, that ye may be humble, and that ye may learn wisdom.” Of course, they couldn’t go in because they didn’t observe dress standards. Remember, they were cast out because of the coarseness of their apparel. The dress standards were very strict. Notice some things about the Zoramites. A lot is said from here on about the Zoramites in the Book of Mormon. Someone mentioned last time after class that Zoram was a servant of Laban. He was drafted by Lehi’s family, by Nephi especially. Being a servant of Laban, the military governor of Jerusalem, he would not be an Israelite because you can’t enslave or make a servant of an Israelite. The name *Zoram* is again one of those desert names. It’s from the eastern half of Manasseh. It means a welcome, refreshing, powerful rain. A lot of this stuff has come out of Genesis 13–14, but the people of the Near East are noted for their genealogical awareness. It’s *Ibn* so-and-so. You identify yourself as a son of so-and-so, or *Abî* so-and-so, or the father of so-and-so, or *Ibn Abû* (the son of the father). But you always trace back your relationships. They could do it many generations by memory, if not in writing. But along with that, even more easy to keep alive, are old grudges and feuds, the times you were wronged, because you had to take revenge when you were wronged. That’s the *ghāza*, revenge, the raid. So you would make your raid to get your revenge. They were honor bound to get revenge. You have the chivalric system of honor, revenge, etc. These things are endless. They have gone on how many hundreds of years in Ireland, in the Philippines, and in Lebanon.

So it is very possible that these Zoramites would keep a sort of aloofness or distinction among themselves. They were proud of their blood, etc. It was not a hundred percent [Zoramite]. They had joined with Lehi’s family and were good friends. The Zoramites were Nephites. They went along, but still they were aware of their ancestry, traditions, etc. Then the tendency comes to break up. After all, Alma started it when he moved out. Nephi started it when he moved out. That was the thing if you had a group with particular aspirations. We’ve seen numerous records of the fact that they had their own dialects, their own manner of speech. They could understand each other, but they were forming [other] languages. These Zoramites were people with their own traditions, and they were

remarkable people—you must give them that. Notice down here some of the qualities they had. Well, first they were church builders. They went to regular religious service and gave fervent testimony and thanksgiving. They were very enterprising, very sophisticated, elegant in their dress, insisted on dress standards. They were independent and went off by themselves. The best military officers were always found [among them], we are told. That's the one thing that threatened the Nephites when the Zoramites joined with the Lamanites, because the best military officers who knew all the Nephite tricks were with them. This greatly endangered the Nephite cause in the long war that followed. They were the best fighters. They certainly were proud and brave. They were hard working and made other people work hard, too, and they were highly successful. They had strict censorship and were very proper. They were ultra conservative, imposing a rule of righteousness on all, we find in chapter 35. They were determined, free enterprising, and had a perfectly beautiful self-image.

Well, what's wrong with these people? Just that contradiction. There's nothing wrong with praying and thanking the Lord for what you have. The pride they had was not wholly wrong. But to say one thing when your heart is really somewhere else. It was all on this vulgar display and how much they could pile up, this invidious comparison. This was what was wrong, and this is what sickened Alma. He said it made him sick. Anyway, he is talking to the other side, which he calls the other multitude. He said, you should be glad you are cast out of the synagogues; I have a surprise for you. You don't have to go to the sacred centers in order to worship. You are compelled to be humble, and that's good. If you're compelled to be humble you seek repentance. This verse 16 looks like an exception: "Therefore, blessed are they who humble themselves without being compelled to be humble." Is that a franchise for riches after all? It does tell us you can be humble without being poor. But remember, to seek riches is to seek power, prestige, influence and luxury, and you are not humble when you are looking for those things—if they are the things that interest you. So I must assert that I am humble if I want to feel right. If I'm too rich I have to make a big shout about being humble. I've heard a lot of that from rich friends. "Blessed are they who humble themselves without being compelled to be humble"—that's nice, and without talking about it, of course. *Humus* is the earth, and *humility* means "down to the earth." *Dhn t3* the Egyptians call it—grinding your forehead in the dirt. You are lowering yourself as low as you can get in the dust.

Verse 17: "Yea, there are many who do say: If thou wilt show unto us a sign from heaven, then we shall know of a surety." Notice, he's beginning with the fundamentals with these people. These people are practically slaves. They want to know about the gospel. They don't know anything. There are things they don't understand. All the hints they've been taking, they've been taking from the other Zoramites. They were Zoramites, too, you see. This is a sermon on faith that comes here, and it's a very important sermon on faith. He begins working from the ground up with these people. He has a new audience, his second audience, the other multitude. He says, shouldn't we begin by showing you a sign? Because that's the way it always begins in the Golden Legend and the early Christian legends of the fourth and fifth centuries. The apostles go about, and the only way they convert people is by signs—making a dead fish sign and things like that. They do this and it immediately converts everybody, and everybody becomes good Christians. This is routine. He says, "Now I ask, is this faith? Behold, I say unto you, Nay; for if a man knoweth a thing he hath no cause to believe, for he knoweth it."

Well, are knowledge and faith enemies then? If I have something, I don't have to believe and I don't have to have faith. There are some people who would tell us that knowledge is the enemy of faith. Will study weaken faith? That's thought to be so in some quarters. If you know, it's not the same thing as only believing. "And it shall be unto every man according to this work. And now as I said concerning faith—faith is not to have a perfect knowledge of things; therefore if ye have faith ye hope for things which are not seen, which are true." You hope it is true. Peter in his argument with Simon Magus says [something like this]. You can imagine an island. It's an imaginary island; you have never been there. It's a real island though. Well, you can imagine visiting Mirror Lake, what it would be like up there. It's imaginary for you. You have faith that it's there. You are imagining something that's real, but for you is only imagination. Peter says the same thing: Before I came to Caesaria I didn't know what it was like. I had an image of what it was like, which was not correct. But it was reality, and here I am [paraphrased].

Verse 22: "God is merciful unto all who believe on his name; therefore he desireth, in the first place, that ye should believe, yea, even on his word." First you believe on his name. His name is the only tie you have with him. The name is going to identify. The name is the way you "hitch in." You can start in on this with the name and with the word. "He imparteth his word by angels unto men" and women also and "little children do have words given unto them many times, which confound the wise and the learned."

In the old Joseph Smith *Lectures on Faith* the question comes, "What proof do we have in the first instance that there is a God?" The answer is, human testimony and human testimony only. It's not actually by looking at the flowers, the bees, the clouds, etc. They testify that somebody's in charge. But what we have is people who have witnessed, the people who have been in the presence. This is a very important thing.

Orson F. Whitney at Eliza R. Snow's funeral mentioned an interesting thing. You know that passage in Abraham where it says, "Now the Lord had shown unto me, Abraham, the intelligences that were organized before the world was; and among all these there were many of the noble and great ones. And God saw these souls that they were good, and he stood in the midst of them, and he said: These I will make my rulers." This was before the creation. He [Whitney] said there were just as many women in that group as there were men. He was speaking about Eliza R. Snow and why she should be one of the most gifted prophets and poets in the school—not just prophetess, but most gifted prophet. She had tremendous gifts and powers.

It comes down to this witnessing thing—how can you witness this and how do you know it? This is what you do. "For I do not mean that ye all of you have been compelled to humble yourselves." Some would be humble under any circumstances at all, which means you should be humble all the time. In Alma 34:38 and Ether 12:27, *humble* really means what it says—*humilis* "in the dust," as low as that.

Faith is not a perfect knowledge, we know that. But it's not authoritarian here. You can't command somebody to believe something; you can't twist a person's arm. Verse 27: "But behold, if ye will awake and arouse your faculties . . ." This is a famous passage. All I'm asking for you to do is to make an experiment. I'm not asking you to believe me. We talked about the kangaroo behind the desk there. If I come down and say, "I just saw a polar bear in Rock Canyon," what are you supposed to say? "If you say you saw a polar bear in Rock Canyon, Brother Nibley, I believe you." Well, that's terrible. I don't want to hear that. That takes all the wind out of my sails. I want you to go up and see for yourself.

Or you might say, "Of course, there's no polar bear. You didn't see anything of the sort. No polar bears are found below a certain latitude. Polar bears just aren't found in these regions, so you didn't see any polar bear." Well, I might have; there might have been one that escaped from the zoo. But you don't know. The thing for you to do is not just take it because I say so, or not to reject it because you are being scientific and you don't think it can be possible. Find out for yourself.

That's what he is telling us here. It turns out that faith is intellectual honesty. That's what it is. He makes this very clear a little later. He says, first you arouse your faculties, use your brains, and be willing to make an experiment. You don't accept it when you make an experiment. You're going to try it out to see if it is so. Do we have [cold] fusion or not? Some people have faith in it, and some people don't have faith. The only thing to do is to try it out and see. If you can exercise even a particle of faith, just start out with that. That's all you need. But "let this desire work in you." Then you say, "Oh, you believe it because you want to believe it." Of course, you're not going to do anything if you don't have that inducement, to want to believe in something. You say it's wishful thinking. Of course, everything you want to believe in is wishful thinking. You never discover anything unless you hope it is there or wish it is there. Here he talks about your faith being dormant, but he says don't fight it. If you have a desire to believe, don't fight it, "that ye can give place for a portion of my words." Notice that it comes by degrees; it comes by steps here. There's more and more reason why you should believe, but no reason why you should believe it completely ever. This is the interesting thing here. It's like planting a seed in your heart. If it's a true seed this is what will happen. Don't cast it out in your unbelief. Give it a chance; let it grow. It will begin to swell within your breast. Then you will feel the swelling motions. You will think something is happening here. Don't throw it away at all. If it is growing it must be good "for it beginneth to enlarge my soul [this is recognition]; yea, it beginneth to enlighten my understanding, yea, it beginneth to be delicious to me."

Each success leads to another try; it gets better and better. What do you know when you are entirely certain? (We'll look in Klein's book here; I brought it along.) You haven't got the answers, and it's not one way or the other. As long as you are in the flesh, you can always doubt it. He goes on here, if the seed grows it's good; don't cast it away. Because you have tried the experiment and planted the seed and it "swelleth, and sprouteth, and beginneth to grow, then you must needs say that the seed is good." It's not dead yet. If it doesn't work just forget it. This is the whole thing. It will cause a dullness in your breast, a stupor of thought will come over you. Remember, the Lord says if you have worked out a good plan about your fusion or something else, you ask him about it. If it is right he will cause a burning in your bosom. If it is not he will cause a dullness of spirit. This is what happens. But even though you know it's good and you are wide open for impressions, you are awaiting the next operation. It's still always on hold, "and your faith is dormant; and this because you know, for ye know that the word hath swelled your souls." That's what you do know, that something is happening, but it is still dormant. You keep it on hold. You have to take further steps than that. "Your understanding doth begin to be enlightened [notice, that faith and intelligence go together here], and your mind doth begin to expand."

Then you begin to see possibilities of other things. You ask the question, what will we be doing for the next thousand years? Well, until you get there you won't know. Until your mind has expanded to a certain degree, you don't even know what's beyond. It's

nonexistence. The Egyptians say *nt-t ĩwt-t*, “that which is and that which is not.” I live on the “that which is” side. The “that which is not” side is just as big, except I haven’t moved into it yet. You are always pushing out the borders of your knowledge. They will retreat before you. Heraclitus reminds us that they are like dogs. They will retreat before you if you walk toward them, but if you walk away from them they will chase you. If you shrink in and limit your knowledge and understanding and are willing to settle within certain bounds, then the borders will shrink to accommodate your way of life and your self-satisfaction. But as long as you continue to push the boundaries, the boundaries will retreat before you, and you find there are no boundaries. That’s what the horizon is, you see. With the Egyptians it’s the *aakhut*, the great mystery. What’s beyond the horizon? Well, there is something. The horizon is a funny thing. It doesn’t appear to us as a mist or a vague land of nothing. There’s a sharp line against the horizon, especially in the desert. It’s just drawn with a razor. You say, well, that ends it. I can see nothing beyond that line; that’s it. You go up to it and lo and behold there’s more. There’s another nice sharp line beyond, and this goes on forever. He’s talking about this, and he says, isn’t this real, what you see? With every one of these steps, you know that this is real “for ye know that the word hath swelled your souls, and . . . that your understanding doth begin to be enlightened, and your mind doth begin to expand.”

Well, if this isn’t real, nothing is real. It is something that’s discernible, this knowledge. But he says it’s not a perfect knowledge yet, of course. Verse 35: “Behold, after ye have tasted this light is your knowledge perfect? . . . Nay; neither must ye lay aside your faith [you keep exercising it all the time; you never stop] for ye have only exercised your faith to plant the seed that ye might try the experiment to know if the seed was good.” You don’t know whether it will grow or not yet. That’s what you do. We spend millions of dollars on laboratories, projects, etc. We don’t know whether they’ll work or not. If you knew whether they worked or not, you couldn’t get the money. They’d say, “Well, that’s already done; that’s no problem.” It’s the problems we are working on. “Let us nourish it with great care”—exercise control, discipline, etc., awaiting the next operation. “With much care it will get root, and grow up, and bring forth fruit.”

You must keep it up. If you neglect it, it will shrink to accommodate your own program. It’s not because the seed wasn’t good if that happens, but because your ground was barren and you would not nourish the tree. You have to create intelligence; you have to create faith. It’s a funny thing. You pull yourself up by your own bootstraps, so to speak. You must look forward with an eye of faith. As long as it hasn’t happened yet, you still have to look forward always with faith if you can ever pluck the fruit of the tree of life. You look forward to it with patience, and this goes on. The idea is to pluck the fruit which is most precious. It is worth the try. What else is there? There’s nothing else to look for. It is most precious and sweet, “and ye shall feast upon this fruit even until ye are filled, that ye hunger not, neither shall ye thirst.”

There’s a recent book by the most eminent American mathematician of our time, Morris Kline, called *Mathematics and the Search for Knowledge*. It has just been published recently by Oxford. I’m just going to read a couple of passages. (Show us a miracle; show us a sign.) He is citing Hume here: “The existence of an external world with fixed properties is really an unwarranted inference. There is no evidence that anything exists beyond the impressions and ideas that belong to nothing and represent nothing.” Then he says, experience cannot prove reality; experience is personal. You may have your experience, and I may have mine. We don’t know how they match up at all. He quotes

Einstein a lot: “The belief in an external world independent of the percipient subject is the foundation of all science [we have to assume that such a world is, but it is only assumption]. But since our sense-perceptions inform us only indirectly of this world or Physical Reality it is only by speculation that it can become comprehensible to us.” We can only know it by speculation.

There are a lot of interesting passages here. “The abandonment of physical mechanism in favor of mathematical description shocked even the great scientists. Contrary to popular belief no one has ever explained the physical reality of the force of gravitation. What science has done is to sacrifice physical intelligibility for the sake of mathematical description and mathematical prediction.” It’s just mathematics we have; we do not have physical intelligibility. You can’t describe it to me or experience it. “One cannot [no one can] visualize a four-dimensional non-Euclidian world with which they work so much today. Almost since the beginning of the work with numbers, mathematicians have carried on algebraic reasoning that is independent of any sense experience whatever.” You can’t visualize them when they talk about these things, and they can’t visualize them either. “Our models of atomic structure are not physical; they are entirely mathematical.” They are not physical, so we don’t argue on this basis. “Newton provided a theory of gravitation whose physical nature neither he nor his successors for three hundred years have explained. Sense perception in this case has proved useless. [You might say, ‘Well, anybody sees there’s gravitation.’] Modern science is gradually removing the intuitive and physical content, both of which appeal to the senses. It is eliminating matter.” This is taking us down more and more on faith all the time, isn’t it? It is utilizing concepts which we all know are mathematical laws and nothing else. Science remains only a small, though vital, contact with sense perceptions after long chains of mathematical deductions. It’s like the god that lies at the end of a chain of syllogisms is not a very convincing god; it gets very thin by that time. Well, it’s the same thing with the reality of science—the sense perceptions after long chains of mathematical deduction. “Science is rationalized fiction, rationalized by mathematics.” He defines science as “rationalized fiction,” just as I would define faith here as “intellectual honesty,” which it is.

“Today the laws of physics concern our knowledge rather than what may be true in the physical world.” That’s what your faith is. It isn’t knowledge yet. “Mathematics no longer describes the behavior of the elementary particles, but our knowledge of this behavior. The real world is not what our unchallenged senses tell us, or our unlimited perceptions, but rather what man’s major mathematical theories tell us.” It’s mathematical theories that tell us what reality is, not the sign that I give you. “A mathematical theory of the physical world is not a description of the phenomenon as we perceive it, but a bold symbolic construction.” Einstein said he will never be able to compare his picture with the real mechanism, and he cannot even imagine the possibility of the meaning of such a comparison. So if you try to imagine what heaven is like, or what something else is like, you have your own construction. He’s talking about the cosmos, just as local as our solar system, when he says he would never be able to compare his picture with the real mechanism. He can’t even imagine the possibility of the meaning of such a comparison. It’s just strictly his own.

Well, we have to move along here because Alma is going to get into a very interesting debate on some of these subjects. “They sent forth unto him desiring to know whether they should believe in one God.” They asked him questions, you see. Should they believe in one God? How should they plant the seed he talked about? They didn’t know anything. He was building from ground up, “or in what manner they should begin to

exercise their faith.” They want practical instructions here. Well, in the first place don’t worry about being cast out of your synagogues; that’s a good thing. Do you remember the words of Zenos concerning the prayer of worship? We are going to have to pass this by. This is a delightful passage from verse 4 to the end of the chapter. It’s the story of Zenos and how he was cast out. The Hodayoth text of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the *Thanksgiving Scroll*, is the testimony, witness, and thanksgiving of a man who went through exactly the same experience. He was cast out in the same way in the wilderness by his enemies, and they were turned to him. He did cry [to the Lord] in his fields and turned to his house again, to his closet “to be heard of thee and not of men.” He tried to preach in the midst of the congregations, and they threw him out. He was despised by his enemies, and his enemies sought to destroy him. This was the writer of the *Hodayoth Scroll*, the *Thanksgiving Scroll*, of the Dead Sea Scrolls. We could go through it verse by verse. Well, why would the same thing exactly happen to two men like this? We talked about that before. It is the recurrent scenario that happens. Under certain circumstances certain things are going to happen. They happen this way in the Church many times, “for thou hast turned thy judgments away from me, because of thy Son.”

He reads them that story because he was the outcast, and they were the outcasts. So he reads them the story of the outcast Zenos. Zenos was an outcast prophet who lived between Moses and Elijah. About 1906 in a work called the *Pseudo-Philo* the writings of this Zenos were discovered. I wrote quite a bit about them in *Since Cumorah*. There was a prophet called Zenos. He was cast out and he wrote a long allegory on the olive tree. When Jacob gave his long story of the olive tree, he said he was quoting Zenos. He was a real person, a prophet who was lost and was found again in the early twentieth century.

Verse 17: “And now, my brethren, ye see that a second prophet of old has testified of the Son of God.” He refers to him as a second prophet. Zenos was never popular with the doctors of the schools. That’s why he was thrown out. They weren’t going to preserve that sort of thing.

“These are not the only ones who have spoken concerning the Son of God. Behold, he was spoken of by Moses; yea, and behold a type was raised up in the wilderness, that whosoever would look upon it might live. . . . If ye could be healed by merely casting about your eyes [why] would ye rather harden your hearts in unbelief” and slothfulness—too lazy to exercise a little faith?

Now this looks like the Essene community here, and this is a very good [summary] of the gospel in a nutshell in verse 22: “begin to believe in the Son of God, that he will come to redeem his people, and that he shall suffer and die to atone for their sins; and that he shall rise again from the dead, which shall bring to pass the resurrection [for the rest of us], that all men shall stand before him, to be judged at the last and judgment day, according to their works.” The emphasis is on the works. There we have the gospel in a nutshell, which he is giving to these people. They have to be caught up in a hurry because they have gotten way behind. He says, if you plant this word in your heart you will find it begins to swell.

Then Amulek starts and he gives the testimony. He says, “My brethren, I think that it is impossible that ye should be ignorant of the things which have been spoken concerning the coming of Christ . . . [which were] taught unto you bountifully before your dissension from among us.” He is talking about the fashionable group of Zoramites who adopted their own religion. They got very smart and made improvements on it, and they adopted

some of the neighboring cults. I'm sure that's what they did because Alma and his friends were completely astounded when they saw the changes that had taken place, yet they were the changes that prevailed among the other people around there. There were other people around. So he says, it is impossible that ye should be ignorant of these things after you have been taught them before. You had them taught to you before you came out here with the other Zoramites, before your dissension from among us. The Zoramites had dissented from the Nephites, and before the dissension they were taught these things, as well as the other people they built the temples for.

“Plant the word in your hearts, that ye may try the experiment of its goodness. And we have beheld that the great question which is in your minds is whether the word be in the Son of God, or whether there shall be no Christ. . . . My brother has called upon the words of Zenos, that redemption cometh through the Son of God [and Zenock and Moses]. . . . For it is expedient that an atonement should be made . . . or else all mankind must unavoidably perish; yea, all are hardened; yea, all are fallen and are lost.”

This idea of the atonement you find everywhere because it's a basic theme. It's a theme of Greek tragedy, and it's the theme of the year rites everywhere in the world. I have been catching up on periodical literature the last few weeks. It's very interesting to see how the formulas of the year rites and the great assemblies are really being emphasized more and more today. What a great part they played, a greater part than anyone ever supposed, in the ancient societies. It was this. In a tragedy when the play begins, things have gone wrong. There is a plague or a war, something very wrong in the society, and destruction threatens. So what do you do? The king gives an opening speech, and someone must be to blame. They must explain it. They cannot stand by and see mischief wrecking things with impunity. Something must be done. Things must be set right. A price must be paid, but who is guilty? Well, we are all guilty. We cannot be probabilists because we cannot ever make payment, and we don't know how to distribute the guilt. We all share some of it. How do you distribute guilt like that? Well, you don't unless you are one of Molina's probabilists of the sixteenth century. They had quite a system of doing it to the fourth and fifth decimal place—just who had sinned how much, etc. We can't do that, so what do you do? You have to have someone pay the price. The price is demanded, and nothing short of an infinite atonement will suffice for the sins of the world. Of course, no individual or people themselves can pay that. What's going to happen? Fixing everyone's guilt won't do.

We said that faith is intellectual honesty. What is that? Know thyself. Remember, that's the creed of Delphi. Complete intellectual honesty is to know where you stand in the problem, to know your ignorance. The only way you can solve the problem is step by step unbearing and exploring your ignorance. Not what you know, but what you don't know is what you've got to get after. There's the flaw, and this is a humiliating process—a progressive unbearing of your ignorance—and most people won't stand it. They want to get a terminal degree, and from then on they're not going to be reminded of their ignorance. And knowing thyself is repentance. That's the hardest part of all. You can't separate faith and repentance. It's self-knowledge and intellectual honesty. If you are going to solve the problem, if you really want to know whether it's so or not, you'll go about the right way trying to find whether it's so or not. And you won't draw premature conclusions the way everybody does. That's the trouble with people who argue about the Book of Mormon. They'll ask very good questions, and then they'll leave the room. They don't wait for an answer. They don't want to risk an answer every time. The harder and better the question, the better the chance there is to show that the Book of Mormon is

true, that it will stand up. They don't wait for that; they walk out on it. That's a good line to leave the stage with.

Verse 16: "He that exercises no faith unto repentance is exposed to the whole law [this is showing that faith is repentance, and the same are intelligence] of the demands of justice; therefore only unto him that has faith unto repentance is brought about the great and eternal plan of redemption." He'll only have the knowledge if he has faith, and the faith must be unto repentance. He must lower himself down. He must be humble and start with the hard part of the problem.

The interesting thing about Newton, for example—he didn't like his great works he was doing. They bored and annoyed him. He was looking for proof of the gospel. I have some interesting statements from Cline about that. It was his faith that carried him on. So you cry unto him [the Savior]; this is what you do. This repeats chapter 33. This famous passage here is an important thing: "Yea, cry unto him for mercy; for he is mighty to save. Yea, humble yourselves, and continue in prayer unto him. Cry unto him when ye are in your fields, yea, over all your flocks. Cry unto him in your houses, yea, over all your household, both morning, mid-day, and evening. Yea, cry unto him against the power of your enemies. Yea, cry unto him against the devil, who is an enemy to all righteousness. Cry unto him over the crops of your fields, that ye may prosper in them." Don't be afraid of it; don't be afraid to ask God for anything. "Cry over the flocks of your fields that they may increase, . . . in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness" and also in public. You would spend a long day crying unto the Lord all day long, wouldn't you? As I say, it's like the *fatra* of the Arabs; everything they say is *Allah*. "yea, and when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you." That's what the Arabs call the *fatra*. It's a set; it's a state of mind. You can have that state of mind. Say that you are in particularly great peril. You are in very great danger and don't know if you'll be alive three minutes from now. What do you do? Well, you're praying all the time, but you don't have time to compose proper words or anything like that. You just have that feeling that's very strong; "let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare." That will draw you on.

When you have done all these things, this is very important. Remember, he is talking to the selfish Zoramites. "For 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 . . . [all these spiritual exercises aren't going to get you anywhere without charity]. Therefore, if ye do not remember to be charitable, ye are as dross [you are as nothing], which the refiners do cast out." So don't harden your hearts any longer. They had been doing that.

Now here are these great lines about life as a preparation: "For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God." That's why we don't have all the answers here. There are only two things we can do, as we said before. You can repent and you can forgive. "Yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors." This is a *kiros*, as the New Testament says. That's a special block of time set aside for some special purpose or activity. "I beseech of you that ye do not procrastinate the day of your repentance until the end." There's this urgency not to procrastinate; this is an interesting thing. "If we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed." The poets talk about the "black night of darkness," etc. But

does that mean we can't ever repent, forever after? No, it doesn't mean that, but he is going to tell us when that day comes. "Nay, ye cannot say this; for that same spirit 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."

It's as if it were being set in concrete. Make up your mind now which plane you will take, because the plane you take makes a lot of difference where you are going to end. The idea is that once you get on you are stuck. Well, I thought we were going to have eternal progression, eternal chances, and all that sort of thing. Well, that is so, but there is great emphasis on the particular purpose this short, dirty life has to perform. Unless we take it at its main purpose, there's not much point of doing it because it is not long enough for much else but just these things. We are launched fully equipped into the next phase of our existence, and we are stuck with it apparently for a long time. Notice verse 35: "Ye have become subjected to the spirit of the devil, and he doth seal you his." You are going to be sealed for a long time; you are going to be in a sealed cabin. You might be able to change later on; that's something, but for a long haul ahead we have to prepare here. We do not know what the conditions will be after this, but we do know that for some reason repentance is the one thing we are here for—to set our course for this long time ahead. It's absolutely vital. When you get there you might say, "Well, I'm a totally different person now; we can forget all that." No, that won't do. What you do [on earth] is to establish your attitude, your framework, and your aim for a long time to come.

This is what I was thinking of the other time: "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." When the devil has all power over you, the point is, that's as far as wickedness will get you. That's the final state. The wickedness will get you only as far as Vegas, we'll say, and nowhere else. That's where it will dump you forever unless you want to get out. It doesn't necessarily mean you will have to stay there forever and ever, but it does mean that being wicked can only take you so far.

We had a wonderful statement back there which I overlooked, where it tells what happened to Korihor. In Alma 30:60 Korihor was killed by a Zoramite mob. Verse 58: "And Korihor did go about from house to house, begging food for his support." Notice it tells us the Zoramites had separated themselves from the Nephites, being led by a man whose name was Zoram. So you see, they were a separatist group anyway. But here it says he was killed by the Zoramite mob. Verse 60: "And thus we see that the devil will not support his children at the last day." The libertine is the most lonesome, deserted person in the world, a pathetic, let-down person. In his life he is selfish, licentious, and self-indulgent, but he is a pitiable figure. "The devil will not support his children at the last day." We have Septimius Severus, Don Juan, Citizen Kane, and people like that, who end up not very happy people.

He [Alma] is preaching to them to establish something. Remember, what they are trying to do is lessen the danger of a major conflict between the Nephites and the Lamanites. We have an interesting and very important development here. In chapter 35 the more popular part of the Zoramites wouldn't have anything to do with him, but the others did. So they are split now. What do they do? The people who are converted of the Zoramites go over and want to join Alma and Ammon's people. They want to join the Ammonites in Jershon. But they are Zoramites, and if they go over and join the Ammonites they will be the other party. This causes great alarm, so a real cold war begins now.

Small nations drag great nations into it—like Serbia, Belgium, and Poland. Two great nations have an interest in small nations. The small nations divide into parties. The Russians support one party in this country and that country. The CIA supports the other party, and that's the way the cold wars get started. This is the way they get dragged into the war here, you see. You have the Nephites being willing to support these renegade Zoramites who had left and joined the Ammonites. The Ammonites were renegade enough; that shocked them. The Lamanites called those Ammonites traitors, we find out a little later on. On the other hand, the Nephites were giving them support, while the Lamanites were supporting the Zoramites, who were Nephite dissenters. They had gone over from the Nephites, and the Lamanites were supporting them. Then more Zoramites break off and go back to the Nephites, and the Nephites support them. You have two factions fighting each other; Nephites support one and [Lamanites] support the other. They tear everything apart, and this leads unto into fourteen years of gory war, which we are lucky to avoid this semester, aren't we?

What could they do about it? Notice it goes on here in Alma 35:13: "And the people of Ammon departed out of the land of Jershon [that was the buffer state; they were to leave it as a field of fire in case real war began], and came over into the land of Melek, and gave place in the land of Jershon for the armies of the Nephites," to give them room to maneuver. So that's what it was, a field of fire, that they might contend—the killing fields being opened up with the armies of the Lamanites and the armies of the Zoramites on the field, "and thus commenced a war betwixt the Lamanites and the Nephites, in the eighteenth year of the reign of the judges." It began with this cold war and lasted for years and years. It was a horrendous war, a great study for strategy and tactics though.

Alma and Ammon and the brethren had to pack up and go back to Zarahemla. Their mission was over; it had been frustrated. The Zoramites whom they had brought to repentance were driven out of the land. The Zoramites threw all the converts out of the land that hadn't already gone over to Ammon. Then they attacked the Ammonites for receiving them after they had driven them out. The Germans did the very same thing. They drove Jews out by the thousands. The Jews went to Holland, and then Hitler threatened the Dutch. You have taken our enemies over. That was his excuse for invading Holland, because they had given shelter to Hitler's enemies. They were German citizens who had been driven out. The same thing happened here. They drove them out of [their land], and they made a *casus belli* for their offence. The Zoramites were driven out of their land, and they went to Jershon. They took it up there. Remember, the Ammonites had vacated because they wouldn't fight, so they left it empty as a field of fire. But the Zoramites were driven out. They weren't Ammonites, so they took up arms there and were ready to defend it. Now things are being lined up, and this is what happened.

Alma was grieved about the contentions. Is this going to be the good guys against the bad guys again? Don't fool yourself; they are equally bad. They are ready for war when that happens, he says here. "Now Alma, being grieved for the iniquity of his people, yea for the wars, and the bloodsheds, and the contentions which were among them; and having been to declare the word, among all the people in every city [he made a survey of the whole nation]; and seeing that the hearts of the people began to wax hard, and that they began to be offended because of the strictness of the word [remember Alma was always very strict], his heart was exceedingly sorrowful." The people were spoiling for war, too.

The time is definitely up now. There's a complete change of pace in the next chapters. We have Alma to his sons, which are marvelous discourses preceding the war. They are really

great things. What character sketches of each type of boy! Helaman was a great guy. Shiblon was a prig; he didn't like him very much. Corianton was a wild guy, but his father had a sneaking likeness for his youngest son because he was the same sort of playboy that he had been. [There are] interesting character studies in these next three chapters.