

Link to Online Lesson: ["My Soul Is Pained No More"](#)

Class Member Reading: Mosiah 25-28; Alma 36

Mosiah 25

1 And now king Mosiah caused that all the people should be gathered together.

2 Now there were not so many of the children of Nephi, or so many of those who were descendants of Nephi, as there were of the people of Zarahemla, who was a descendant of Mulek, and those who came with him into the wilderness. [Likely because Nephites only married other Nephites while the Mulekites and Lamanites intermarried with local populations.](#)

3 And there were not so many of the people of Nephi and of the people of Zarahemla as there were of the Lamanites; yea, they were not half so numerous.

4 And now all the people of Nephi were assembled together, and also all the people of Zarahemla, and they were gathered together in two bodies.

[Almost sounds like segregation?](#)

5 And it came to pass that Mosiah did read, and caused to be read, the records of Zeniff to his people; yea, he read the records of the people of Zeniff, from the time they left the land of Zarahemla until they returned again.

6 And he also read the account of Alma and his brethren, and all their afflictions, from the time they left the land of Zarahemla until the time they returned again.

7 And now, when Mosiah had made an end of reading the records, his people who tarried in the land were struck with **wonder** and **amazement**.

8 For they knew not what to think; for when they beheld those that had been delivered out of bondage they were filled with **exceedingly great joy**.

9 And again, when they thought of their brethren who had been slain by the Lamanites they were **filled with sorrow**, and even shed many tears of sorrow.

10 And again, when they thought of the immediate goodness of God, and his power in delivering Alma and his brethren out of the hands of the Lamanites and of bondage, they did raise their voices and give **thanks** to God.

11 And again, when they thought upon the Lamanites, who were their brethren, of their sinful and polluted state, they were filled with **pain and anguish for the welfare of their souls**. Emotional sensitivity and breadth.

12 And it came to pass that those who were the **children of Amulon and his brethren**, who had taken to wife the daughters of the Lamanites, were displeased with the conduct of their fathers, and they would no longer be called by the names of their fathers, therefore they took upon themselves the name of Nephi, that they might be called the children of Nephi and be numbered among those who were called Nephites. Children of the priests.

13 And now all the people of Zarahemla were numbered with the Nephites, and this because the **kingdom had been conferred upon none but those who were descendants of Nephi**. These two phrases don't go together... sounds like a subtle justification of Nephite hegemony.

14 And now it came to pass that when Mosiah had made an end of speaking and reading to the people, he desired that **Alma** should also speak to the people.

15 And Alma did speak unto them, when they were assembled together in large bodies, and he **went from one body to another**, preaching unto the people repentance and faith on the Lord. Personal ministry.

16 And he did exhort the people of Limhi and his brethren, all those that had been delivered out of bondage, that they should remember that it was the Lord that did deliver them. Is Alma projecting his own experience? The Lord seems to have been minimally involved in Limhi's deliverance. Personal application: We should not assume that we all have similar (spiritual experiences).

17 And it came to pass that after Alma had taught the people many things, and had made an end of speaking to them, that king Limhi was desirous that he might be baptized; and all his people were desirous that they might be baptized also.

18 Therefore, **Alma did go forth into the water and did baptize them**; yea, he did baptize them after the manner he did his brethren in the waters of Mormon; yea, and as many as he did baptize did belong to the church of God; and this because of their belief on the words of Alma.

19 And it came to pass that king Mosiah granted unto Alma that he might **establish churches** throughout all the land of Zarahemla; and gave him power to ordain priests and teachers over every church. **This is very interesting. Why does Mosiah accede to Alma's authority?**

20 Now this was done because there were so many people that they could not all be governed by one teacher; neither could they all hear the word of God in one assembly;

21 Therefore they did **assemble themselves together in different bodies**, being **called churches; every church having their priests and their teachers**, and every priest preaching the word according as it was delivered to him by the mouth of Alma. **Is this a new form of Church governance? Mormon is speaking about these details as if they are new or different.**

22 And thus, notwithstanding there being many churches **they were all one church**, yea, even the **church of God**; for **there was nothing preached** in all the churches except it were **repentance and faith in God**.

23 And now there were seven churches in the land of Zarahemla. And it came to pass that whosoever were desirous to take upon them the name of Christ, or of God, they did join the churches of God;

24 And they were called the people of God. And the **Lord did pour out his Spirit upon them**, and they were **blessed**, and **prospered** in the land.

Mosiah 26

1 Now it came to pass that there were many of the **rising generation** that could not understand the words of king Benjamin, being little children at the time he spake unto his people; and they did not believe the tradition of their fathers. **We all need to experience our own conversion. These youth**

did not experience the powerful communal conversation at the time of King Benjamin's speech, so they do not believe their parents' words.

2 They did not believe what had been said concerning the resurrection of the dead, neither did they believe concerning the coming of Christ.

3 And now because of their unbelief they could not understand the word of God; and their hearts were hardened. **Interesting order. Do we need to believe in order to understand?**

4 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.

5 And now in the reign of Mosiah they were not half so numerous as the people of God; but because of the dissensions among the brethren they became more numerous. **That is quite a lot of nonbelievers.**

6 For it came to pass that they did deceive many with their **flattering words**, who were in the church, and did **cause them to commit many sins**; therefore it became expedient that those who committed sin, that were in the church, should be admonished by the church. **Note that the church had no power over the unbelievers, but that those who were in the church needed to be disciplined.**

7 And it came to pass that they were brought before the priests, and delivered up unto the priests by the teachers; and the priests brought them before Alma, who was the high priest.

8 Now king Mosiah had given Alma the authority over the church.

9 And it came to pass that **Alma did not know concerning them**; but there were many witnesses against them; yea, the people stood and testified of their iniquity in abundance.

10 Now there had not any such thing happened before in the church; therefore **Alma was troubled in his spirit**, and he caused that they should be brought before the king.

11 And he said unto the king: Behold, here are many whom we have brought before thee, who are accused of their brethren; yea, and they have been taken in divers iniquities. And **they do not repent** of their iniquities; therefore we have brought them before thee, that thou mayest judge them

according to their crimes. This is very important! The people are not punished because they sin (as we all do); they are punished because they refuse to repent of those sins. I really wish we had more information; this narrative feels two dimensional.

12 But king Mosiah said unto Alma: Behold, I judge them not; therefore I deliver them into thy hands to be judged.

13 And now the **spirit of Alma was again troubled**; and he went and inquired of the Lord what he should do concerning this matter, for he **feared that he should do wrong in the sight of God**. What a great example of religious leadership! Alma does not dismiss either the seriousness of the members’ sins or the value of those members themselves. He checks himself and wants to make sure he responds in the right way.

14 And it came to pass that after he had **poured out his whole soul to God**, the voice of the Lord came to him, saying:

15 **Blessed** art thou, Alma, and blessed are they who were baptized in the waters of Mormon. Thou art blessed because of thy **exceeding faith** in the **words alone** of my servant Abinadi. Powerful—Alma pours out his heart on behalf of others, and his own soul is redeemed. “Words alone” we can trust and have faith in the words of another, but those words also trigger our own experiences.

16 And blessed are they because of their exceeding faith in the words alone which thou hast spoken unto them.

17 And blessed art thou because thou hast **established a church** among this people; and they shall be established, and **they shall be my people**.

18 Yea, blessed is this people who are **willing to bear my name**; for in my name shall they be called; and **they are mine**. Note the repetition of belonging language. One of our greatest cravings is to belong.

19 **And because thou hast inquired of me concerning the transgressor, thou art blessed**. It sounds like even more efficient than seeking our own salvation is seeking how we can help and care for others.

20 Thou art my servant; and **I covenant with thee that thou shalt have eternal life**; and thou shalt serve me and go forth in my name, and shalt gather together my sheep. Alma receives his Calling and Election Made Sure.

21 And he that will hear my voice shall be my sheep; and him shall ye receive into the church, and him will I also receive.

22 For behold, **this is my church**; whosoever is baptized shall be baptized unto repentance. And whomsoever ye receive shall believe in my name; and him will I freely forgive.

23 For it is I that taketh upon me the sins of the world; for it is I that hath created them (**Created the sins? World standing for "those who are in the world"?**); and it is I that granteth unto him that believeth unto the end a place at my right hand.

24 For behold, in my name are they called; and if they know me they shall come forth, and shall have a place eternally at my right hand.

25 And it shall come to pass that when the second trump shall sound then shall they that never knew me come forth and shall stand before me.

26 And then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, that I am their Redeemer; but **they would not be redeemed**. **God redeems everyone, but we need to act in such a way to access that redemption.**

27 And then I will confess unto them that I never knew them; and they shall depart into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

28 Therefore I say unto you, that he that will not hear my voice, the same shall ye not receive into my church, for him I will not receive at the last day.

29 Therefore I say unto you, Go; and whosoever transgresseth against me, him shall ye **judge according to the sins which he has committed**; and if he **confess** his sins before thee and me, and **repenteth** in the sincerity of his heart, him shall ye forgive, and I will forgive him also. **We need to be held accountable for our actions (though the ritual of confession can be problematic and even lead to abuse).**

30 Yea, and as often as my people repent will I forgive them their trespasses against me. **Comforting and encouraging verse! We need to have an attitude of repentance, sorrow for our mistakes and tendencies to make mistakes, filled with earnest desire to do better.**

31 And ye shall also **forgive one another your trespasses**; for verily I say unto you, he that forgiveth not his neighbor's trespasses when he says that he repents, the same hath brought himself under condemnation. **We**

need to have a forgiving heart. Of course, forgiving does not necessarily mean trusting or putting ourselves into unhealthy situations.

32 Now I say unto you, Go; and whosoever will not repent of his sins the same **shall not be numbered among my people**; and this shall be observed from this time forward. I appreciate the important nuance from Jesus in 3 Nephi 18 where it says that we should continue to fellowship the excommunicated.

33 And it came to pass when Alma had heard these words he **wrote them down** that he might have them, and that he might judge the people of that church according to the commandments of God.

34 And it came to pass that Alma went and judged those that had been taken in iniquity, according to the word of the Lord.

35 And whosoever repented of their sins and did confess them, them he did number among the people of the church;

36 And those that would not confess their sins and repent of their iniquity, the same were not numbered among the people of the church, and their names were blotted out.

37 And it came to pass that Alma did **regulate all the affairs of the church**; and they began again to have **peace** and to **prosper** exceedingly in the affairs of the church, **walking circumspectly before God**, receiving many, and baptizing many. **Communities need boundaries and regulation.**

38 And now all these things did Alma and his **fellow laborers** do who were over the church, **walking in all diligence**, teaching the word of God in all things, suffering all manner of afflictions, being persecuted by all those who did not belong to the church of God.

39 And they did **admonish** their brethren; and they **were also admonished**, every one by the word of God, according to his sins, or to the sins which he had committed, being commanded of God to **pray** without ceasing, and to **give thanks** in all things.

Mosiah 27

1 And now it came to pass that the **persecutions which were inflicted on the church by the unbelievers** became so great that the church

began to murmur, and complain to their leaders concerning the matter; and they did complain to Alma. And Alma laid the case before their king, Mosiah. And Mosiah consulted with his priests. [What persecutions would these have been? Mockery?](#)

2 And it came to pass that king Mosiah sent a proclamation throughout the land round about that **there should not any unbeliever persecute any of those who belonged to the church of God.**

3 And there was a strict command throughout all the churches that there should be **no persecutions** among them, that there should be an **equality** among all men;

4 That they should let no **pride** nor **haughtiness** disturb their peace; that every man should **esteem his neighbor as himself, laboring with their own hands** for their support.

5 Yea, and all their priests and teachers should labor with their own hands for their support, in all cases save it were in sickness, or in much want; and doing these things, they did abound in the grace of God.

6 And there began to be **much peace** again in the land; and the people began to be very numerous, and began to scatter abroad upon the face of the earth, yea, on the north and on the south, on the east and on the west, building large cities and villages in all quarters of the land.

7 And the Lord did visit them and prosper them, and they became a large and wealthy people.

8 Now the **sons of Mosiah were numbered among the unbelievers**; and also **one of the sons of Alma** was numbered among them, he being called Alma, after his father; nevertheless, he became a very wicked and an idolatrous man. And he was a man of **many words**, and did speak much **flattery** to the people; therefore he led many of the people to do after the manner of his iniquities. [Sounds like all of Mosiah's sons were wicked but only one of Alma's was. I believe that Nephiah was another of Alma's sons \(he refused to take the records when Alma offered them to him, and takes over the judgment seat. See Alma 4:17-18; 50:37-39\).](#)

9 And **he became a great hinderment** to the prosperity of the church of God; **stealing away the hearts of the people**; causing much

dissension among the people; giving a chance for the enemy of God to exercise his power over them. Like Paul, Alma is a powerful figure, a force for both good and ill, depending on whose side he is on.

10 And now it came to pass that while he was going about to destroy the church of God, for he did go about secretly with the sons of Mosiah seeking to destroy the church, and to lead astray the people of the Lord, contrary to the commandments of God, or even the king— The narrative is flat without Alma’s motivations. Why was he trying to destroy the Church? Perhaps he believed it to be harmful. I think the most illumination comes from the idea that he was raised in the time of Amulon’s persecution. Alma had faith and promised that God would deliver them, but they went through an unknown amount and intensity of persecution. We are specifically told that “Amulon’s children persecuted Alma’s children” (Mosiah 24:8), which would include Alma the younger. What did that persecution include, exactly? We can deduce that Alma was deeply scarred by these difficult years, and so bore a grudge against the Church, or perhaps he felt actually called to destroy a worldview and institution that played a part in hurting him and his friends. Perhaps Alma was angry that his father didn’t do more to deliver them, especially since he was so gifted in flattery (Amulon certainly managed to get his way). I don’t know why the sons of Mosiah went along. Did Alma the younger influence them perhaps? Alma’s conversion helped him see the church in a different way, or gave him the fire to be part of the solution.

11 And as I said unto you, as they were going about rebelling against God, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto them; and he descended as it were in a cloud; and he spake as it were with a voice of thunder, which caused the earth to shake upon which they stood;

12 And so great was their **astonishment**, that they fell to the earth, and understood not the words which he spake unto them.

13 Nevertheless he cried again, saying: Alma, arise and stand forth, for why persecutest thou the church of God? For the Lord hath said: This is my church, and I will establish it; and nothing shall overthrow it, save it is the transgression of my people. Similarities to Paul’s conversion.

14 And again, the angel said: Behold, the Lord hath heard the prayers of his people, and also the prayers of his servant, Alma, who is thy father; for he has prayed with much faith concerning thee that thou mightest be **brought to the knowledge of the truth**; therefore, for this purpose have I come to **convince thee of the power and authority of God**, that the prayers of his servants might be answered according to their faith.

15 And now behold, can ye dispute the power of God? For behold, doth not my voice shake the earth? And can ye not also behold me before you? And I am sent from God. **Why doesn't this happen more often? How is Alma the Younger's exceptional experience helpful to us?**

16 Now I say unto thee: Go, and **remember the captivity of thy fathers** in the land of Helam, and in the land of Nephi; and remember how great things he has done for them; for they were in bondage, and **he has delivered them**. And now I say unto thee, Alma, go thy way, and seek to **destroy the church no more**, that their prayers may be answered, and this **even if thou wilt of thyself be cast off**. Lots to unpack in this verse. The angel says “thy fathers”, though I think it was likely that Alma was present during the captivity (Alma likely was the eldest, thus named after his father, and Alma's children are explicitly mentioned). Perhaps the angel is reframing Alma's experience? The angel's final statement is striking, and Alma himself admits it is what most impacted him (Alma 36:11). The angel respects Alma's agency to make choices that will lead to his own destruction, but he is condemned for leading others to destruction as well. That isn't a bad general guideline—our personal freedoms stop where others' begin.

17 And now it came to pass that these were the last words which the angel spake unto Alma, and he departed.

18 And now Alma and those that were with him fell again to the earth, for great was their **astonishment**; for with their own eyes they had beheld an angel of the Lord; and his voice was as thunder, which shook the earth; and they knew that there was nothing save the power of God that could shake the earth and cause it to tremble as though it would part asunder. **They don't have faith, because they have seen... worth discussing why God**

doesn't just send angels to everyone, or personally appear to convince everyone of the reality of their existence.

19 And now the **astonishment** of Alma was so great that he became dumb, that he could not open his mouth; yea, and he became **weak**, even that he could not move his hands; therefore he was taken by those that were with him, and carried **helpless**, even until he was laid before his father. Alma's system is overwhelmed. Note the repetition of the word “astonished”. I imagine that if Alma believed in God at all he did not believe in an intervening God (otherwise why would God have allowed Amulon to enslave his people for years).

20 And they rehearsed unto his father all that had happened unto them; and his father **rejoiced**, for he knew that it was the power of God. Discernment and context—usually the comatose form of your child would not be met with rejoicing, but Alma understands what is going on.

21 And he caused that a **multitude** should be gathered together that they might **witness what the Lord had done** for his son, and also for those that were with him.

22 And he caused that the **priests** should assemble themselves together; and they began to fast, and to pray to the Lord their God that he would open the mouth of Alma, that he might speak, and also that his limbs might receive their strength—that the eyes of the people might be opened to see and know of the **goodness** and **glory** of God.

23 And it came to pass after they had fasted and prayed for the space of two days and two nights, the **limbs of Alma received their strength**, and he stood up and began to speak unto them, bidding them to be of good comfort:

24 For, said he, I have **repented of my sins**, and have been **redeemed of the Lord**; behold I am **born of the Spirit**. Alma is dramatically changed, reborn into a new version of himself. I would argue it is the true version of himself, and he had fallen out of alignment with that version of himself.

25 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**;

26 And thus they become **new creatures**; and unless they do this, they can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God. Alma, like Paul, experiences this conversion/transformation in an extreme form, but this change is one we all need to experience.

27 I say unto you, unless this be the case, they must be cast off; and this I know, because **I was like to be cast off**.

28 Nevertheless, after **wading through much tribulation, repenting nigh unto death**, the Lord in mercy hath seen fit to **snatch** me out of an everlasting burning, and **I am born of God**.

29 My soul hath been redeemed from the **gall of bitterness** and **bonds of iniquity**. I was in the **darkest abyss**; but now I behold the **marvelous light of God**. My soul was **racked** with **eternal torment**; but I am **snatched**, and my **soul is pained no more**. I just want to drink down these evocative words. They really speak to me. Alma doesn't hold back describing the repentance process as painful, nearly fatal in his case. We don't know what his sins were, but I think it was facing them unflinchingly, taking full accountability, internalizing all the consequences, that made him want to die—then Jesus “snatched” him from that guilt and regret and awful state. I relate to the word “racked”... that feeling of being torn apart by emotional anguish (I feel things intensely).

30 I **rejected my Redeemer**, and **denied** that which had been spoken of by our fathers; but now that they may foresee that he will come, and that he remembereth every creature of his creating, he will make himself manifest unto all. Rejecting Christ and the idea that he would come in the future seems a common problem in the Book of Mormon. What were the consequences of Alma's rejection?

31 Yea, every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess before him. Yea, even at the last day, when all men shall stand to be judged of him, then shall they **confess that he is God**; then shall they confess, who **live without God in the world**, that the judgment of an everlasting punishment is just upon them; and they shall quake, and tremble, and

shrink beneath the glance of his all-searching eye. Does "living without God" really merit everlasting punishment? I don't think so.

32 And now it came to pass that Alma began from this time forward to teach the people, and those who were with Alma at the time the angel appeared unto them, traveling round about through all the land, publishing to all the people the things which they had heard and seen, and preaching the word of God in much tribulation, being **greatly persecuted** by those who were unbelievers, being smitten by many of them. So physical violence was involved as well as disagreement and mockery.

33 But notwithstanding all this, they did **impart much consolation** to the church, confirming their faith, and exhorting them with long-suffering and much travail to keep the commandments of God.

34 And four of them were the sons of Mosiah; and their names were Ammon, and Aaron, and Omner, and Himni; these were the names of the sons of Mosiah.

35 And they traveled throughout all the land of Zarahemla, and among all the people who were under the reign of king Mosiah, **zealously striving to repair all the injuries which they had done to the church, confessing** all their sins, and publishing all the things which they had seen, and explaining the prophecies and the scriptures to all who desired to hear them. This is key to the repentance process... we need to do all we can to fix the mess we have made, to put things right. And when we can't put things right (in a sense, we never can, not truly), we can dedicate our lives to doing good and healing, building up rather than tearing down.

36 And thus they were **instruments in the hands of God** in bringing many to the knowledge of the truth, yea, to the knowledge of their Redeemer.

37 And how blessed are they! For they did publish peace; they did publish good tidings of good; and they did declare unto the people that the Lord reigneth. Full circle as Mormon quotes the Isaiah chapter Abinadi uses in .

Mosiah 28

1 Now it came to pass that after the sons of Mosiah had done all these things, they took a small number with them and returned to their father,

the king, and desired of him that he would grant unto them that they might, with these whom they had selected, go up to the land of Nephi that they might **preach** the things which they had heard, and that they might **impart the word of God to their brethren**, the Lamanites— We can reflect on the contrast between this quest and that of Zeniff’s group. They wanted to “possess the land” (Omni, Mosiah 9), but the sons of Mosiah want to heal and teach the Lamanites.

2 That perhaps they might bring them to the knowledge of the Lord their God, and convince them of the iniquity of their fathers; and that perhaps they might **cure them of their hatred** towards the Nephites, that **they might also be brought to rejoice** in the Lord their God, that they might **become friendly** to one another, and that there should be **no more contentions** in all the land which the Lord their God had given them. These are noble motivations! It is important to take seriously the fact that these principles can be expressed in different ways by different people in different cultures... but the sons of Mosiah want to increase knowledge, joy, friendship and reduce iniquity, hatred, and contention. We need to distinguish wanting someone else to be better or well and wanting them to be better *according to our own definitions or priorities*.

3 Now they were desirous that **salvation** should be declared to every creature, for they could not bear that any human soul should perish; yea, even the very thoughts that any soul should endure endless torment did cause them to quake and tremble. They experience a powerful, almost overwhelming empathy.

4 And thus did the **Spirit of the Lord work upon them**, for they were the very **vilest of sinners**. And the Lord saw fit in his **infinite mercy** to **spare them**; nevertheless they **suffered much anguish of soul because of their iniquities**, suffering much and fearing that they should be cast off forever. I wish we knew what their sins were. The problem with human psychology is that we can err in both directions—we can commit sin without realizing it, and we can also believe we are committing sin when we are not. Norms impact what we believe to be right or wrong.

5 And it came to pass that they did plead with their father many days that they might go up to the land of Nephi.

6 And king Mosiah went and **inquired of the Lord** if he should let his sons go up among the Lamanites to preach the word.

7 And the Lord said unto Mosiah: Let them go up, for many shall believe on their words, and they shall have eternal life; and I will deliver thy sons out of the hands of the Lamanites. **God first answers Mosiah, then explains the blessings that will come from their mission, and then finally reassures him as to their safety.**

8 And it came to pass that Mosiah granted that they might go and do according to their request.

9 And they took their journey into the wilderness to go up to preach the word among the Lamanites; and I shall give an account of their proceedings hereafter.

10 Now king Mosiah had no one to confer the kingdom upon, for there was **not any of his sons who would accept of the kingdom.** Their conversion led to a radical realignment of priorities. Alan Miner brings up a point I hadn't considered... Mosiah's sons refusing the kingdom created a precarious political situation, because then the Mulekites would likely make an argument that they should take over the kingship. It would have been upsetting and even offensive to the Mulekites that the government is changed to a system of judges rather than giving power to the Mulekites. It would make sense that the “kingmen” at the time of Captain Moroni could have been Mulekites who wanted a Mulekite-led government (See Alma 51). Note how Mormon changes the subject in the next verse.

11 Therefore he took the **records** which were engraven on the **plates of brass**, and also the **plates of Nephi**, and **all the things which he had kept and preserved** according to the commandments of God, after having translated and caused to be written the records which were on the **plates of gold** which had been found by the people of Limhi, which were delivered to him by the hand of Limhi;

12 And this he did because of the **great anxiety** of his people; for they were **desirous beyond measure** to know concerning those people who had been destroyed.

13 And now he translated them by the means of those two stones which were fastened into the two rims of a bow. **This seems to describe a Urim**

and Thummim, like the one Joseph used, but we are not sure where this one is from, though the end of this chapter suggests Lehi had it? (see my notes with more details).

14 Now these things were prepared from the beginning, and were handed down from generation to generation, for the purpose of interpreting languages;

15 And they have been kept and preserved by the hand of the Lord, that he should discover to every creature who should possess the land the iniquities and abominations of his people;

16 And whosoever has these things is called **seer**, after the manner of old times. Interesting that “seer” describes someone using a tool rather than someone with a divine gift.

17 Now after Mosiah had finished translating these records, behold, it gave an account of the people who were destroyed, from the time that they were destroyed back to the building of the great tower, at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people and they were scattered abroad upon the face of all the earth, yea, and even from that time back until the creation of Adam.

18 Now this account did cause the people of Mosiah to mourn exceedingly, yea, they were filled with sorrow; nevertheless it gave them much knowledge, in the which they did rejoice. Good example—rejoicing in added knowledge even if that knowledge is sad or difficult.

19 And this account shall be written hereafter; for behold, it is expedient that all people should know the things which are written in this account (Mormon keeps all his editorial promises except this one. Mormon never was able to edit the Jaredite records, so Moroni did it).

20 And now, as I said unto you, that after king Mosiah had done these things, he took the plates of brass, and all the things which he had kept, and **conferred them upon Alma**, who was the son of Alma; yea, all the records, and also the interpreters, and conferred them upon him, and commanded him that he should keep and preserve them, and also keep a record of the people, handing them down from one generation to another, even as they had been handed down from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem. This is an amazing sign of trust in Alma’s conversion. Mosiah seems

concerned that Aaron might return to his wicked ways (Mosiah 29:9), but he hands over the sacred records to Alma. Of course, Alma the Elder also had a dark past, and Mosiah entrusted the entire Church to him. These are great examples of trusting others when they deserve it, having second chances, and not being held captive by the mistakes of the past.

Alma 36

I love these chapters where Alma counsels his sons. We are fortunate to have not only the account of Alma’s conversion edited by Mormon, but Alma’s own account where he describes what he experienced.

1 My son, give ear to my words; for I swear unto you, that inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall prosper in the land.

2 I would that ye should do as I have done, in remembering the captivity of our fathers; for they were in bondage, and none could deliver them except it was the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and he surely did deliver them in their afflictions. Alma has followed and internalized the words of the angel. What is most striking about this shift is that this “captivity” was likely the hardest time of Alma’s life, and he has reframed it in his mind as an important lesson.

3 And now, O my son Helaman, behold, thou art in thy youth, and therefore, I beseech of thee that thou wilt **hear my words and learn of me**; for I do know that whosoever shall **put their trust in God** shall be supported in their trials, and their troubles, and their afflictions, and shall be lifted up at the last day. Also poignant, because this is what Alma’s father counseled before his people were taken captive by the Lamanites, and there were years of trial. But as we discussed, we can be supported **in** our trials.

4 And I would not that ye think that I know of myself—not of the temporal but of the spiritual, not of the carnal mind but of God.

5 Now, behold, I say unto you, **if I had not been born of God I should not have known these things**; but God has, by the mouth of his holy angel, made these things known unto me, not of any worthiness of myself; Alma touches on a key truth—the way we understand our experiences, the stories and meaning-making around them, proves much

more impactful than what happens. In fact, that is what creates trauma—not so much the events themselves (though those can be horrific and that should not be minimized), but how we understand and process those experiences. The hopeful side of this truth is that we can reprocess and reframe our experiences, and by doing so, can heal past damage. This is what Alma does.

6 For I went about with the sons of Mosiah, **seeking to destroy the church of God**; but behold, God sent his holy angel to stop us by the way.

7 And behold, he spake unto us, as it were the voice of thunder, and the whole earth did tremble beneath our feet; and we all fell to the earth, for the fear of the Lord came upon us.

8 But behold, the voice said unto me: Arise. And I arose and stood up, and beheld the angel.

9 And he said unto me: If thou wilt of thyself be destroyed, seek no more to destroy the church of God.

10 And it came to pass that I fell to the earth; and it was for the space of three days and three nights that I could not open my mouth, neither had I the use of my limbs.

11 And the angel spake more things unto me, which were heard by my brethren, but **I did not hear them**; for when I heard the words—If thou wilt be destroyed of thyself, seek no more to destroy the church of God—I was struck with such great **fear** and **amazement** lest **perhaps I should be destroyed**, that I fell to the earth and I did hear no more. Note that self-interest is what initially moves Alma. That opens up his soul and increases his sensitivity, and *then* he is able to be concerned for others. This is a reminder to meet people where they are, speak their language, so that they can have a frame of reference or opening to learn to see and experience in a different way.

12 But I was **racked with eternal torment**, for my **soul was harrowed up** to the greatest degree and racked with all my sins. “rack” is a torture term, and a “harrow” is an agricultural implement that tears up the soil (I wrote “soul” first, fittingly) in preparation for planting. Both evocative terms. This is how I experience regret personally as well.

13 Yea, I did **remember all my sins and iniquities**, for which I was **tormented with the pains of hell**; yea, I saw that I had **rebelled against my God**, and that I had **not kept his holy commandments**.

14 Yea, and I had **murdered many of his children**, or rather **led them away unto destruction**; yea, and in fine so great had been my iniquities, that the very thought of **coming into the presence of my God** did **rack my soul with inexpressible horror**. Alma is having an Awakening moment almost too painful to bear. As humans, we protect ourselves. We lie to ourselves, frankly. We soften the truth. We give ourselves the benefit of the doubt. We rationalize. Paradoxically, we need to experience the "pains of hell" to be delivered from them. We need to courageously face all our mistakes and the ways we have harmed others, even unintentionally. Alma is looking at his past actions through new eyes, and that process is both excruciating and transformative.

15 Oh, thought I, **that I could be banished** and become **extinct both soul and body**, that I might not be brought to stand in the presence of my God, to be **judged of my deeds**. Close reading makes Alma sound like an atheist (which would have been unusual but not impossible). It is plausible that he believed that he would not exist after death, and so the thought he would need to be held accountable for all his actions terrifies him. Most importantly, Alma **fears accountability** as the "natural human" always does. As we become "new creatures", we embrace accountability and the consequences of our actions. We have integrity and congruence.

16 And now, for three days and for three nights was I racked, even with the **pains of a damned soul**. Alma had a motivating hell field trip.

17 And it came to pass that as I was thus **racked with torment**, while I was harrowed up by the memory of my many sins, behold, **I remembered** also to have heard my father prophesy unto the people concerning the coming of **one Jesus Christ, a Son of God**, to **atone** for the sins of the world.

18 Now, as my mind **caught hold upon this thought**, 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. Once the solution presents itself we can “catch hold upon it”. We need to fully acknowledge the problems, but the time comes to focus primarily on solutions.

19 And now, behold, when I thought this, **I could remember my pains no more; yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more.** Isn't it fascinating (and life saving!) that we can't remember pain? We know intellectually that we used to hurt (hurt like hell in Alma's case, literally) but we can't feel that pain. Alma remembers his sins, but those memories no longer torture him. He has come to terms with what he did. He has digested the bitterness and come out of it a different creature.

20 And oh, what **joy**, and what **marvelous light** I did behold; yea, my soul was **filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain!** Can we experience joy greater than we have experienced pain or sorrow? I don't know that we can. Joy fills the cup our sorrow has carved... (paraphrase of Khalil Gibran)

21 Yea, I say unto you, my son, that there could be **nothing so exquisite and so bitter as were my pains.** Yea, and again I say unto you, my son, that on the other hand, there can be nothing so **exquisite and sweet as was my joy.** Alma is a highly sensitive soul.

22 Yea, me thought I saw, even as our father Lehi saw, God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels, in the attitude of singing and praising their God; yea, and **my soul did long to be there.**

23 **But** behold, my limbs did receive their strength again, and I stood upon my feet, and did **manifest** unto the people that **I had been born of God.** These two verses together suggest that Alma wanted to die, “but” he felt called to bring souls to repentance and serve others. It is not enough to be forgiven; we must be transformed and then fill our lives with doing good.

24 Yea, and from that time even until now, I have **labored without ceasing**, that I might bring souls unto repentance; **that I might bring them to taste of the exceeding joy of which I did taste;** that they might also be **born of God**, and be **filled with the Holy Ghost.** **THIS.** Not only is Alma dedicated, that that dedication comes from a pure motivation—that others might feel joy and be transformed into the best versions of themselves. The tricky thing to remember is that there is no one

path to joy and change that works for everyone (even the gospel is individualized). Sharing our personal experiences can inspire others to seek their own—this is one of the best ways to inspire change in others.

25 Yea, and now behold, O my son, the Lord doth give me **exceedingly great joy** in the fruit of my labors;

26 For because of the word which he has imparted unto me, behold, **many have been born of God**, and have **tasted as I have tasted**, and have **seen eye to eye as I have seen**; therefore they do know of these things of which I have spoken, as I do know; and the **knowledge which I have is of God**. Both “of God” and experiential at the same time.

27 And **I have been supported under trials and troubles of every kind**, yea, and in **all manner of afflictions**; yea, God has delivered me from prison, and from bonds, and from death; yea, and I do put my trust in him, and he will still deliver me. *As we will see over the next few lessons, Alma really did experience and witness horrific events.*

28 And I know that he will raise me up at the last day, to dwell with him in glory; yea, and I will praise him forever, for he has brought our fathers out of Egypt, and he has swallowed up the Egyptians in the Red Sea; and he led them by his power into the promised land; yea, and he has delivered them out of bondage and captivity from time to time.

29 Yea, and he has also brought our fathers out of the land of Jerusalem; and he has also, by his everlasting power, delivered them out of bondage and captivity, from time to time even down to the present day; and I have always retained in remembrance their captivity; yea, and ye also ought to **retain in remembrance**, as I have done, their captivity.

30 But behold, my son, this is not all; for ye ought to know as I do know, that inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall prosper in the land; and ye ought to know also, that inasmuch as ye will not keep the commandments of God ye shall be cut off from his presence. Now this is according to his word.

Engaging Gospel Doctrine: 193
BoM Lesson 20: “My Soul Is Pained No More”

Additional Reading: None

Scripture Chain: [N/A](#)
