

Engaging Gospel Doctrine: 197

BoM Lesson 24: “Give Us Strength According to Our Faith ... in Christ”

**Link to Online Lesson:** [“Give Us Strength According to Our Faith ... in Christ”](#)

**Class Member Reading: Alma 13-16**

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### Alma 13

Why on earth is this sermon here? Why is Alma teaching this advanced theology that sounds so academic or legal, to these depraved Nephites? Is he trying to feed their sense of self-importance, but with gospel principles? Wake them up to their potential? Was there another approach that could have reached them? So as badly as it went for Alma, we can still see what benefit we can draw from this sermon on priesthood and foreordination.

1 And again, my brethren, I would cite your minds forward to the time when the Lord God gave these commandments unto his children; and I would that ye should remember that the Lord God ordained priests, after his holy order, which was after the order of his Son, to teach these things unto the people. Interesting little tidbit... they are supposed to look “forward” to the past! Isn’t that how we experience life? We are facing backwards. The future is unknown, and we look in the direction we are facing—toward the past.

2 And those priests were ordained after the order of his Son, in a manner that thereby the people might know in what manner to look forward to his Son for redemption. God’s servants are supposed to be teachers and symbols of redemption.

3 And this is the manner after which they were ordained — being **called** and **prepared from the foundation of the world** according to the **foreknowledge** of God, on account of their **exceeding faith** and **good works**; in the first place being **left to choose** good or evil; therefore they having **chosen good**, and exercising **exceedingly great faith**, are called with a **holy calling**, yea, with that holy calling which was prepared with, and according to, a **preparatory redemption** for such. One of the great theological and philosophical debates involves the question of Free Will. This relates to the theological question of whether humans are “Predestined” to heaven or hell. John Calvin taught Predestination for example, that God already knows who will make it to heaven and hell, which means there isn’t much point to this life, right? In fact, Calvin prioritized the “Sovereignty of God” so highly that God even \*determines\* who ends up in heaven and hell. This chapter addresses the topic in quite a sophisticated, satisfying way, especially when supplemented with the strong emphasis on agency found elsewhere in the Book of Mormon and other LDS Scriptures.

## Engaging Gospel Doctrine: 197

### BoM Lesson 24: “Give Us Strength According to Our Faith ... in Christ”

4 And thus they have been called to this holy calling on account of their faith, while others would reject the Spirit of God on account of the hardness of their hearts and blindness of their minds, while, if it had not been for this they might have had as great privilege as their brethren.

5 Or in fine, **in the first place they were on the same standing with their brethren**; thus this holy calling being prepared from the foundation of the world for such as would not harden their hearts, being in and through the atonement of the Only Begotten Son, who was prepared— I consider this verse extremely important. One of the most striking ideas I have ever heard is the “Law of accumulated advantage” or the “Matthew Effect” that Malcolm Gladwell talks about in *Outliers*. This principle states that small advantages early on (like being born a bit earlier in the year when it comes to sports) accumulate into game-changing advantages later on. Note what these few verses teach us. At some point Intelligences or Spirits are “on the same standing”, but use their agency to different degrees to do good, and that combined with God’s foreknowledge prompted them to foreordain and prepare their children to different tasks. We can also comment that just because someone is foreordained to a task does not mean they will carry it out.

6 And thus being called by this holy calling, and ordained unto the high priesthood of the holy order of God, to teach his commandments unto the children of men, that **they also** might enter into his rest— This seems to be the goal of foreordination and callings in general... so those who are more prepared or capable in certain areas can help others move forward as well. I love the idea of us supporting and helping each other with our differing gifts and perspectives.

7 This high priesthood being after the order of his Son, which order was from the foundation of the world; or in other words, being without beginning of days or end of years, being prepared from eternity to all eternity, according to his foreknowledge of all things— I love the scope of Mormonism, which teaches that it isn’t so much a matter of God being from eternity to eternity, but that God is part of a Plan that goes from eternity to eternity.

8 Now they were ordained after this manner—being called with a holy calling, and ordained with a holy ordinance, and taking upon them the high priesthood of the holy order, which calling, and ordinance, and high priesthood, is without beginning or end—  
9 Thus they become high priests forever, after the order of the Son, the Only Begotten of the Father, who is without beginning of days or end of years, who is full of **grace, equity,** and **truth**. And thus it is. Amen.

## Engaging Gospel Doctrine: 197

### BoM Lesson 24: “Give Us Strength According to Our Faith ... in Christ”

10 Now, as I said concerning the holy order, or this high priesthood, there were many who were ordained and became high priests of God; and it was on account of their **exceeding faith and repentance**, and their righteousness before God, they choosing to repent and work righteousness rather than to perish; *Is this talking about the pre-existence, or Judaism?*

11 Therefore they were called after this holy order, and were sanctified, and their garments were washed white through the blood of the Lamb.

12 Now they, after being sanctified by the Holy Ghost, having their garments made white, being pure and spotless before God, **could not look upon sin save it were with abhorrence**; and there were many, exceedingly great many, who were made pure and entered into the rest of the Lord their God. *Evocative description of a changed heart.. we can't think about sin without feeling sick.*

13 And now, my brethren, I would that ye should **humble yourselves** before God, and bring **forth fruit meet for repentance**, that ye may also **enter into that rest**. *Simple formula—humble yourselves and do good. I think among other things “rest” refers to peace of conscience that comes from knowing you are living well.*

14 Yea, humble yourselves even as the people in the days of Melchizedek, who was also a high priest after this same order which I have spoken, who also took upon him the high priesthood forever.

15 And it was this same Melchizedek to whom Abraham paid tithes; yea, even our father Abraham paid tithes of one-tenth part of all he possessed.

16 Now these **ordinances** were given after this manner, that thereby the people might **look forward** on the Son of God, it being a **type** of his order, or it being his order, and this that they might **look forward** to him for a remission of their sins, that they might enter into the rest of the Lord. *Gospel ordinances teach us about and help us look forward to redemption.*

17 Now this Melchizedek was a king over the land of Salem; and his people had **waxed strong in iniquity and abomination**; yea, they had all gone astray; they were **full of all manner of wickedness**;

18 But Melchizedek having exercised **mighty faith**, and received the office of the high priesthood according to the holy order of God, did **preach repentance** unto his people. And behold, they did repent; and Melchizedek did establish peace in the land in his days; therefore he was called the **prince of peace**, for he was the king of Salem; and he did reign under his father. *(Salem or Shalom means peace in Hebrew)*

## Engaging Gospel Doctrine: 197

### BoM Lesson 24: “Give Us Strength According to Our Faith ... in Christ”

19 Now, there were many before him, and also there were many afterwards, but none were greater; therefore, of him they have more particularly made mention.

20 Now I need not rehearse the matter; what I have said may suffice. Behold, the scriptures are before you; if ye will wrest them it shall be to your own destruction.

21 And now it came to pass that when Alma had said these words unto them, he stretched forth his hand unto them and cried with a mighty voice, saying: Now is the time to repent, for the day of salvation draweth nigh;

22 Yea, and the voice of the Lord, by the mouth of angels, doth declare it unto all nations; yea, doth declare it, that they may have **glad tidings of great joy**; yea, and he doth sound these **glad tidings** among all his people, yea, even to them that are scattered abroad upon the face of the earth; wherefore they have come unto us.

23 And they are made known unto us in plain terms, that we may understand, that we cannot err; and this because of our being wanderers in a strange land; therefore, we are thus highly favored, for we have these glad tidings declared unto us in all parts of our vineyard.

24 For behold, angels are declaring it unto many at this time in our land; and this is for the purpose of **preparing the hearts of the children of men** to receive his word at the time of his coming in his glory.

25 And now we only wait to hear the **joyful news** declared unto us by the mouth of angels, of his coming; for the time cometh, we know not how soon. Would to God that it might be in my day; but let it be sooner or later, in it I will rejoice. *Now Alma is preached the Good News... again, I wonder where his fervor came from. He doesn't seem to know details, only that Jesus will appear to his people (see Alma 7:8).*

26 And it shall be made known unto just and holy men, by the mouth of angels, at the time of his coming, that the words of our fathers may be fulfilled, according to that which they have spoken concerning him, which was according to the spirit of prophecy which was in them. *The Holy Ghost, angels, and righteous humans all teach the same message.*

27 And now, my brethren, I **wish from the inmost part of my heart**, yea, with **great anxiety even unto pain**, that ye would hearken unto my words, and cast off your sins, and not procrastinate the day of your repentance; *Alma does seem to be taking a softer approach now. He is opening up and being vulnerable rather than preaching judgment and destruction.*

28 But that ye would **humble yourselves** before the Lord, and call on his holy name, and **watch** and **pray** continually, **that ye may not be tempted above that which ye can**

**bear**, and thus be **led by the Holy Spirit**, becoming **humble, meek, submissive, patient, full of love** and all **long-suffering**; Wow. This verse is packed with helpful principles. I find this verse more helpful than 1 Cor. 10:13, which promises us we will not be tempted beyond that which we can bear. This verse suggests that we can be overpowered by trial and temptation, but if we are humble and watch and pray we can maintain our agency. I interpret this as meaning that we can structure our lives in such a way that we can be our best selves. These traits help us maintain the attitude we need to be on guard against our weaknesses and limitations: humility, meekness, submissiveness, patience, love, long-suffering. A rigorous acceptance. The gospel fosters a powerful combination of strength and submission.

29 Having **faith** on the Lord; having a **hope** that ye shall receive eternal life; having the love of God always in your hearts, that ye may be lifted up at the last day and enter into his rest.

30 And may the Lord grant unto you repentance, that ye may not bring down his wrath upon you, that ye may not be bound down by the chains of hell, that ye may not suffer the second death.

31 And Alma spake many more words unto the people, which are not written in this book. **What were they? Because their response is horrific.**

#### **Alma 14**

1 And it came to pass after he had made an end of speaking unto the people **many of them did believe on his words, and began to repent, and to search the scriptures.** So **Alma did have success with a minority.**

2 But the **more part of them** were desirous that they might destroy Alma and Amulek; for they were **angry** with Alma, because of the **plainness** of his words unto Zeezrom; and they also said that Amulek had lied unto them, and had reviled against their law and also against their lawyers and judges.

3 And they were also **angry** with Alma and Amulek; and because **they had testified so plainly against their wickedness**, they sought to put them away privily. **This is all deflection—the majority refused to acknowledge their faults, so they chose to project them and destroy those trying to make them see.**

4 But it came to pass that they did not; but they **took them and bound them** with strong cords, and took them before the chief judge of the land.

## Engaging Gospel Doctrine: 197

### BoM Lesson 24: “Give Us Strength According to Our Faith ... in Christ”

5 And the people went forth and witnessed against them—testifying that they had reviled against the law, and their lawyers and judges of the land, and also of all the people that were in the land; and also testified that there was but one God, and that he should send his Son among the people, but he should not save them; and many such things did the people testify against Alma and Amulek. Now this was done before the chief judge of the land. *Interesting mixture of legal and theological accusations.*

6 And it came to pass that Zeezrom was **astonished** at the words which had been spoken; and he also knew concerning the blindness of the minds, which **he had caused** among the people by his lying words; and his **soul began to be harrowed up** under a **consciousness of his own guilt**; yea, he began to be encircled about by the pains of hell. *Zeezrom is taking the opposite path—he is embracing his accountability, and awareness of his mistakes and their consequences sears his soul. This is a harrowing but also purifying and transformative process.*

7 And it came to pass that he began to cry unto the people, saying: Behold, **I am guilty**, and these men are spotless before God. And he began to **plead for them from that time forth**; but they reviled him, saying: Art thou also possessed with the devil? And they spit upon him, and cast him out from among them, and also all those who believed in the words which had been spoken by Alma and Amulek; and they cast them out, and sent men to cast stones at them. *Their wickedness has no limits. They don't want to face the truth within these men, so they cast them out.*

8 And they brought their wives and children together, and whosoever believed or had been taught to believe in the word of God they caused that they should be cast into the fire; and they also brought forth their records which contained the holy scriptures, and cast them into the fire also, that they might be burned and destroyed by fire. *The horrific crux of the reading. One of the darker moments in the Book of Mormon.*

9 And it came to pass that they took Alma and Amulek, and carried them forth to the place of martyrdom, that they might witness the destruction of those who were consumed by fire. *Vicious, mocking cruelty. This horror exists at the extremes of human nature and is painful to even take seriously and sit with. And the hardest part is knowing that humans suffer, women and children suffer every single day.*

10 And when Amulek saw the pains of the women and children who were consuming in the fire, **he also was pained**; and he said unto Alma: How can we witness this awful scene? Therefore let us stretch forth our hands, and exercise the power of God which is in us, and save them from the flames. *Evidence and logic suggest Amulek's own wife and*

## Engaging Gospel Doctrine: 197

### BoM Lesson 24: “Give Us Strength According to Our Faith ... in Christ”

children were in the fire. Perhaps the hardest element of this story to sit with is why miracles happened sometimes but not others. Why were Alma and Amulek saved from prison? Why were they only saved after they had suffered a great deal? Above all, WHY did God let these women and children die if there were any other alternative? THIS is the question of theodicy: why God seems to intervene in some situations but not in others. And the paradoxical challenge is that often by attributing meaning to tragedy we compound rather than relieve harm.

11 But Alma said unto him: The Spirit constraineth me that I must not stretch forth mine hand; for behold the Lord receiveth them up unto himself, in glory; and he doth suffer that they may do this thing, or that the people may do this thing unto them, according to the hardness of their hearts, that the judgments which he shall exercise upon them in his wrath may be just; and the blood of the innocent shall stand as a witness against them, yea, and cry mightily against them at the last day. This is a horrible, unsatisfying answer. In order for punishment to be just the most horrifying abuses of justice have to be endured? It doesn't add up.

12 Now Amulek said unto Alma: Behold, perhaps they will burn us also. Perhaps part of him wanted to die with his family rather than survive.

13 And Alma said: Be it according to the will of the Lord. But, behold, our work is not finished; therefore they burn us not.

14 Now it came to pass that when the bodies of those who had been cast into the fire were consumed, and also the records which were cast in with them, the chief judge of the land came and stood before Alma and Amulek, as they were bound; and he smote them with his hand upon their cheeks, and said unto them: After what ye have seen, will ye preach again unto this people, that they shall be cast into a lake of fire and brimstone? That would have taken awhile... this was a horrific ordeal. The Ammonihahites are clearly mocking Alma and Amulek's teachings, reversing them in mocking and murderous ways.

15 Behold, ye see that ye had not power to save those who had been cast into the fire; neither has God saved them because they were of thy faith. And the judge smote them again upon their cheeks, and asked: What say ye for yourselves?

16 Now this judge was after the order and faith of Nehor, who slew Gideon.

17 And it came to pass that Alma and Amulek answered him nothing; and he smote them again, and delivered them to the officers to be cast into prison.

## Engaging Gospel Doctrine: 197

### BoM Lesson 24: “Give Us Strength According to Our Faith ... in Christ”

18 And when they had been cast into prison three days, there came many lawyers, and judges, and priests, and teachers, who were of the profession of Nehor; and they came in unto the prison to see them, and they questioned them about many words; but they answered them nothing.

19 And it came to pass that the judge stood before them, and said: Why do ye not answer the words of this people? Know ye not that I have power to deliver you up unto the flames? And he commanded them to speak; but they answered nothing. **They know their words would be wasted and their opponents don't deserve a response.**

20 And it came to pass that they departed and went their ways, but came again on the morrow; and the judge also smote them again on their cheeks. And many came forth also, and smote them, saying: Will ye stand again and judge this people, and condemn our law? If ye have such great power why do ye not deliver yourselves?

21 And many such things did they say unto them, gnashing their teeth upon them, and spitting upon them, and saying: How shall we look when we are damned?

22 And many such things, yea, all manner of such things did they say unto them; and thus they did **mock them** for many days. And they did withhold food from them that they might hunger, and water that they might thirst; and they also did take from them their clothes that they were naked; and thus they were bound with strong cords, and confined in prison. **They experienced deprivation and torture in prison.**

23 And it came to pass after they had thus suffered for many days, (and it was on the twelfth day, in the tenth month, in the tenth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi) that the chief judge over the land of Ammonihah and many of their teachers and their lawyers went in unto the prison where Alma and Amulek were bound with cords. **The date formula might suggest that months had passed (thus necessitating a date being given).**

24 And the chief judge stood before them, and smote them again, and said unto them: If ye have the power of God deliver yourselves from these bands, and then we will believe that the Lord will destroy this people according to your words.

25 And it came to pass that they all went forth and smote them, saying the same words, even until the last; and when the last had spoken unto them the power of God was upon Alma and Amulek, and they rose and stood upon their feet.

26 And Alma cried, saying: How long shall we suffer these great afflictions, O Lord? O Lord, give us strength according to our faith which is in Christ, even unto deliverance. **And they broke the cords** with which they were bound; and when the people saw this,



## Engaging Gospel Doctrine: 197

### BoM Lesson 24: “Give Us Strength According to Our Faith ... in Christ”

they began to flee, for the fear of destruction had come upon them. How many nights had they despaired? How did this test their faith? Does finally being delivered help, or raise the terrible question of why they weren't delivered earlier? Why innocents weren't delivered?

27 And it came to pass that so great was their **fear** that they fell to the earth, and did not obtain the outer door of the prison; and the earth shook mightily, and the walls of the prison were rent in twain, so that they fell to the earth; and the chief judge, and the lawyers, and priests, and teachers, who smote upon Alma and Amulek, were slain by the fall thereof. So they were delivered by an earthquake.

28 And Alma and Amulek came forth out of the prison, and they were not hurt; for the Lord had granted unto them power, according to their faith which was in Christ. And they straightway came forth out of the prison; and they were loosed from their bands; and the prison had fallen to the earth, and every soul within the walls thereof, save it were Alma and Amulek, was slain; and they straightway came forth into the city.

29 Now the people having heard a great noise came running together by multitudes to know the cause of it; and when they saw Alma and Amulek coming forth out of the prison, and the walls thereof had fallen to the earth, they were struck with great fear, and fled from the presence of Alma and Amulek even as a goat fleeth with her young from **two lions**; and thus they did flee from the presence of Alma and Amulek.

#### Alma 15

1 And it came to pass that Alma and Amulek were **commanded to depart** out of that city; and they departed, and came out even into the land of Sidom; and behold, there they found all the people who had departed out of the land of Ammonihah, who had been cast out and stoned, because they believed in the words of Alma. Even their dramatic escape did not move the people of Ammonihah... they just wanted Alma and Amulek gone.

2 And they related unto them all that had happened unto their wives and children, and also concerning themselves, and of their power of deliverance. Mormon is trying to frame the situation as positively as possible...note how he is talking around the horror of the women and children's deaths.

3 And also Zeezrom lay sick at Sidom, with a burning fever, which was caused by the great **tribulations of his mind** on account of his wickedness, for he **supposed** that Alma and Amulek were no more; and he supposed that they had been slain because of his

## Engaging Gospel Doctrine: 197

### BoM Lesson 24: “Give Us Strength According to Our Faith ... in Christ”

iniquity. And this great sin, and his many other sins, did **harrow up his mind** until it did become exceedingly sore, **having no deliverance**; therefore he began to be scorched with a burning heat. These are the pains of hell—awareness and remorse and regret combined with helplessness to do anything productive about those agonizing feelings. Also, we experience our assumptions as reality—what we believe to be true, we feel in our minds and bodies as true—even if it is inaccurate, as it was in Zeezrom’s case!

4 Now, when he heard that Alma and Amulek were in the land of Sidom, his heart **began to take courage**; and he sent a message immediately unto them, desiring them to come unto him.

5 And it came to pass that they went immediately, obeying the message which he had sent unto them; and they went in unto the house unto Zeezrom; and they found him upon his bed, sick, being very low with a burning fever; and his **mind also was exceedingly sore** because of his iniquities; and when he saw them he stretched forth his hand, and besought them that they would heal him. We have hope when we see a way out of our pain and guilt. Again, hell and damnation is regret combined with the inability to do anything about it.

6 And it came to pass that Alma said unto him, taking him by the hand: Believest thou in the power of Christ unto salvation?

7 And he answered and said: Yea, I believe all the words that thou hast taught.

8 And Alma said: If thou believest in the redemption of Christ thou canst be healed.

9 And he said: Yea, I **believe** according to thy words.

10 And then Alma cried unto the Lord, saying: O Lord our God, have **mercy** on this man, and heal him according to his faith which is in Christ.

11 And when Alma had said these words, Zeezrom leaped upon his feet, and began to walk; and this was done to the great astonishment of all the people; and the knowledge of this went forth throughout all the land of Sidom.

12 And Alma baptized Zeezrom unto the Lord; and he began from that time forth to preach unto the people.

13 And Alma **established a church** in the land of Sidom, and consecrated priests and teachers in the land, to baptize unto the Lord whosoever were desirous to be baptized.

14 And it came to pass that they were many; for they did flock in from all the region round about Sidom, and were baptized.

## Engaging Gospel Doctrine: 197

### BoM Lesson 24: “Give Us Strength According to Our Faith ... in Christ”

15 But as to the people that were in the land of Ammonihah, they yet remained a hard-hearted and a stiffnecked people; and they repented not of their sins, ascribing all the power of Alma and Amulek to the devil; for they were of the profession of Nehor, and did not believe in the repentance of their sins. They refuse to believe anything that would influence them to change their way of thinking and being, so they find a way to reject it.

16 And it came to pass that Alma and Amulek, Amulek having forsaken all his gold, and silver, and his precious things, which were in the land of Ammonihah, for the word of God, he **being rejected by those who were once his friends and also by his father and his kindred**; Amulek paid a terrible cost for welcoming Alma into his home. There had to have been moments where he regretted it. This is another key verse supporting the idea that Amulek was watching his own family die in the fire.

17 Therefore, after Alma having **established the church at Sidom**, seeing a great **check**, yea, seeing that the people were **checked as to the pride of their hearts**, and began to humble themselves before God, and began to assemble themselves together at their sanctuaries to worship God before the altar, **watching and praying continually**, that they might be delivered from Satan, and from death, and from destruction— This is what we need as humans! To take our limitations seriously and put “checks” in our lives that help us remain humble and healthy and loving and open, to resist the tendencies of the Ammonihahites, that impulse to reject anything that challenges us, to blame others rather than accepting accountability and seeking to change and improve.

18 Now as I said, Alma having seen all these things, therefore he took Amulek and came over to the land of Zarahemla, and took him to his own house, and did **administer unto him in his tribulations**, and **strengthened him in the Lord**. Don't rush over this verse; it is one of the most important in the entire reading. Alma and Amulek both suffered more than we can imagine. Amulek was especially vulnerable, and here Alma spends time with him, ministers to him, sits with him, and stays with him as he begins to do the work of mourning and healing. This process cannot be rushed, only facilitated. That is what Alma is doing here.

19 And thus ended the tenth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi.

#### Alma 16

1 And it came to pass in the eleventh year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi, on the fifth day of the second month, there having been **much peace** in the land of Zarahemla, there having been no wars nor contentions for a **certain number of years**,

## Engaging Gospel Doctrine: 197

### BoM Lesson 24: “Give Us Strength According to Our Faith ... in Christ”

even until the fifth day of the second month in the eleventh year, there was a cry of war heard throughout the land. [Mormon is telling this story in a way that it makes it seem like divine punishment on Ammonihah, but it was YEARS before anything happened.](#)

2 For behold, the armies of the Lamanites had come in upon the wilderness side, into the borders of the land, even into the city of Ammonihah, and began to slay the people and destroy the city.

3 And now it came to pass, before the Nephites could raise a sufficient army to drive them out of the land, they had destroyed the people who were in the city of Ammonihah, and also some around the borders of Noah, and taken others captive into the wilderness.

4 Now it came to pass that the Nephites were desirous to obtain those who had been carried away captive into the wilderness.

5 Therefore, he that had been appointed chief captain over the armies of the Nephites, (and his name was Zoram, and he had two sons, **Lehi** and Aha)—now Zoram and his two sons, knowing that Alma was high priest over the church, and having heard that he had the spirit of prophecy, therefore they went unto him and desired of him to know whither the Lord would that they should go into the wilderness in search of their brethren, who had been taken captive by the Lamanites. [It is fun to piece together stories from the Book of Mormon. I think this Lehi was the general in Captain Moroni’s time.](#)

6 And it came to pass that Alma inquired of the Lord concerning the matter. And Alma returned and said unto them: Behold, the Lamanites will cross the river Sidon in the south wilderness, away up beyond the borders of the land of Manti. And behold there shall ye meet them, on the east of the river Sidon, and there the Lord will deliver unto thee thy brethren who have been taken captive by the Lamanites.

7 And it came to pass that Zoram and his sons crossed over the river Sidon, with their armies, and marched away beyond the borders of Manti into the south wilderness, which was on the east side of the river Sidon.

8 And they came upon the armies of the Lamanites, and the Lamanites were scattered and driven into the wilderness; and they took their brethren who had been taken captive by the Lamanites, and there was **not one soul of them had been lost** that were taken captive. And they were brought by their brethren to possess their own lands. [A heartening victory.](#)

9 And thus ended the eleventh year of the judges, the Lamanites having been driven out of the land, and the **people of Ammonihah were destroyed; yea, every living soul** of the Ammonihahites was destroyed, and also their great city, which they said God could not

## Engaging Gospel Doctrine: 197

### BoM Lesson 24: “Give Us Strength According to Our Faith ... in Christ”

destroy, because of its greatness. Every living soul. That includes men, women and children. Mormon intends this to be a story of vindication, but it is also worth mourning. One atrocity does not justify another.

10 But behold, in one day it was left desolate; and the carcasses were mangled by dogs and wild beasts of the wilderness.

11 Nevertheless, after many days their dead bodies were heaped up upon the face of the earth, and they were covered with a shallow covering. And now so great was the scent thereof that the people did not go in to possess the land of Ammonihah for many years. And it was called Desolation of Nehors; for they were of the profession of Nehor, who were slain; and their lands remained desolate.

12 And the Lamanites did not come again to war against the Nephites until the fourteenth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi. And thus for **three years did the people of Nephi have continual peace in all the land.** Peace is rare in the book of Alma.

13 And Alma and Amulek went forth preaching repentance to the people in their temples, and in their sanctuaries, and also in their synagogues, which were built after the manner of the Jews. The religious scholar in me is curious about these distinctions between temple, sanctuary, and synagogue.

14 And as many as would hear their words, unto them they did impart the word of God, without any respect of persons, continually.

15 And thus did Alma and Amulek go forth, and also many more who had been chosen for the work, to preach the word throughout all the land. And the **establishment of the church became general** throughout the land, in all the region round about, among all the people of the Nephites. So this was a high point in righteousness and social well-being.

16 And there was **no inequality among them**; the Lord did **pour out his Spirit** on all the face of the land to **prepare the minds of the children of men**, or to **prepare their hearts** to receive the word which should be taught among them at the time of his coming— Preparation matters! How can we prepare ourselves and our loved ones to receive greater truth and goodness?

17 That they might not be hardened against the word, that they might not be unbelieving, and go on to destruction, but that they might **receive the word with joy**, and as a branch be grafted into the true vine, that they might enter into the rest of the Lord their God.

## Engaging Gospel Doctrine: 197

### BoM Lesson 24: “Give Us Strength According to Our Faith ... in Christ”

18 Now those priests who did go forth among the people did preach against all lyings, and deceivings, and envyings, and strifes, and malice, and revilings, and stealing, robbing, plundering, murdering, committing adultery, and all manner of lasciviousness, crying that these things ought not so to be— [Sin harms](#)

19 Holding forth things which must shortly come; yea, holding forth the coming of the Son of God, his sufferings and death, and also the resurrection of the dead. [Again, interesting that this fervor was about 80 years before Jesus’ birth, let alone his appearance to the Nephites 30 years after that.](#)

20 And many of the people did inquire concerning the place where the Son of God should come; and **they were taught that he would appear unto them after his resurrection**; and this the people did hear with great joy and gladness. [So this detail had been revealed—Alma didn’t know it a few chapters earlier \(Alma 7:8\).](#)

21 And now after the **church had been established throughout all the land**—having got the victory over the devil, and the word of God being preached in its purity in all the land, and the Lord pouring out his blessings upon the people—thus ended the fourteenth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi. [A happy ending of sorts for a very difficult section of the Book of Mormon.](#)

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**Additional Reading:** [N/A](#)

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**Scripture Chain:** [N/A](#)

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