

July 8–14: Alma 23–29, They “Never Did Fall Away”

Truly Converted

In the last lesson we studied how the king of the Lamanites was converted to the gospel. He gave unrestricted access to his kingdom to the Son's of Mosiah so they could teach the gospel without obstruction. As a result thousands of Lamanites are converted

Alma 23:5-7

5 And thousands were brought to the knowledge of the Lord, yea, thousands were brought to believe in the traditions of the Nephites; and they were taught the records and prophecies which were handed down even to the present time.

6 And as sure as the Lord liveth, so sure as many as believed, or as many as were brought to the knowledge of the truth, through the preaching of Ammon and his brethren, according to the spirit of revelation and of prophecy, and the power of God working miracles in them—yea, I say unto you, as the Lord liveth, as many of the Lamanites as believed in their preaching, and were converted unto the Lord, never did fall away.

7 For they became a righteous people; they did lay down the weapons of their rebellion, that they did not fight against God any more, neither against any of their brethren.

Why do you think that of the thousands who were converted “[none] did fell away”?

(were brought to the knowledge of the truth
and were converted unto the Lord
they did lay down the weapons of their rebellion)

What do you think it means to us to “lay down the weapons of [our] rebellion”?

(that they did not fight against God any more)

David A. Bednar

"Two major elements are described in these verses: (1) 'the knowledge of the truth', which may be interpreted as a testimony, and (2) 'converted unto the Lord', which I understand to be conversion to the Savior and His gospel. Thus, the powerful combination of both testimony and conversion unto the Lord produced firmness and steadfastness and provided spiritual protection.

"They never did fall away and surrendered 'the weapons of their rebellion, that they did not fight against God any more.' To set aside cherished 'weapons of rebellion' such as selfishness, pride, and disobedience requires more than merely believing and knowing. Conviction, humility, repentance, and submissiveness precede the abandonment of our weapons of rebellion. Do you and I still possess weapons of rebellion that keep us from becoming

converted unto the Lord? If so, then we need to repent now." (CR, Oct. 2012)

It seems the reason that none fell away was because they felt so strongly the contrast living in open rebellion of God, and the joy that comes with having God cleanse you of all your sins. Feeling this contrast gave them a strong testimony of the goodness of God.

Those who were converted wanted to be called by a new name

Alma 23:16-18

16 And now it came to pass that the king and those who were converted were desirous that they might have a name, that thereby they might be distinguished from their brethren; therefore the king consulted with Aaron and many of their priests, concerning the name that they should take upon them, that they might be distinguished

17 And it came to pass that they called their names Anti-Nephi-Lehies; and they were called by this name and were no more called Lamanites.

18 And they began to be a very industrious people; yea, and they were friendly with the Nephites; therefore, they did open a correspondence with them, and the curse of God did no more follow them.

Hugh Nibley states "Anti" should be interpreted as the Egyptian "nty", which means "he of" or "the one of." This would indicate that they are now identifying as Nephites: He-of-Nephi-Lehi

I could be they were taking upon themselves the name of the king's son – their spiritual leader:

Alma 24:3 Now the king conferred the kingdom upon his son, and he called his name Anti-Nephi-Lehi. (The-one-of-Nephi-Lehi)

The Nephites called them The People of Ammon

Let's read about read about the wicked Lamanites and why their hearts were so hard

Alma 24:1-2

1 And it came to pass that the Amalekites and the Amulonites and the Lamanites who were in the land of Amulon, and also in the land of Helam, and who were in the land of Jerusalem, and in fine, in all the land round about, who had not been converted and had not taken upon them the name of Anti-Nephi-Lehi, were stirred up by the Amalekites and by the Amulonites to anger against their brethren

2 And their hatred became exceedingly sore against them, even insomuch that they began to rebel against their king, insomuch that they would not that he should be their king; therefore, they took up arms against the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi.

Why do you think the hatred of Lamanites towards the Anti-Nephi-Lehies was "exceedingly sore"?

(the Lamanites... were stirred up by the Amalekites and by the Amulonites to anger against their brethren)

Recall that the Amalekites and the Amulonites former Nephites.

- The Amulonites were descendants of the priests of Noah
- The Amalekites were followers of Amlici who tried to get the Nephites to anoint him to be their king shortly after the death of Mosiah. When he failed his followers joined up with the Lamanites.

Both former Nephite groups followed the teachings of Nehor. Nehor was an anti-Christ (Alma chapter 1). He started a religion that emphasized worldly gain, no need for personal responsibility or sacrifice, and that all mankind would be saved in the end regardless of how they had lived their life.

Alma 24:29-30

29 Now, among those who joined the people of the Lord, there were none who were Amalekites or Amulonites, or who were of the order of Nehor, but they were actual descendants of Laman and Lemuel.

30 And thus we can plainly discern, that after a people have been once enlightened by the Spirit of God, and have had great knowledge of things pertaining to righteousness, and then have fallen away into sin and transgression, they become more hardened, and thus their state becomes far worse than though they had never known these things.

What reason is given that none of the former Nephites joined the people of the Lord?

(once enlightened by the Spirit of God,... then have fallen away... they become more hardened)

2 Peter 2:20-22

[20] For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

[21] For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

[22] But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

This is very much the case with the Amalekites and the Amulonites.

Note, as we study the Book of Alma, the Amalekites and the Amulonites were the cause of most of the problems. We'll see this in the war chapters towards the end of the Book of Alma

Because of this stirred up hatred, the Lamanites took up arms against their own people. But not one person who had been converted would take up arms again. King Anti-Nephi-Lehi teaches and prepares his people.

Alma 24:7-11

7 Now, these are the words which he said unto the people concerning the matter: I thank my God, my beloved people, that our great God has in goodness sent these our brethren, the Nephites, unto us to preach unto us, and to convince us of the traditions of our wicked fathers.

8 And behold, I thank my great God that he has given us a portion of his Spirit to soften our hearts, that we have opened a correspondence with these brethren, the Nephites.

9 And behold, I also thank my God, that by opening this correspondence we have been convinced of our sins, and of the many murders which we have committed.

10 And I also thank my God, yea, my great God, that he hath granted unto us that we might repent of these things, and also that he hath forgiven us of those our many sins and murders which we have committed, and taken away the guilt from our hearts, through the merits of his Son

11 And now behold, my brethren, since it has been all that we could do (as we were the most lost of all mankind) to repent of all our sins and the many murders which we have committed, and to get God to take them away from our hearts, for it was all we could do to repent sufficiently before God that he would take away our stain—

Why were they so insistent to never take up weapons of war again even though they had the right to protect their lives?

(it has been all that we could do to repent of all our sins and the many murders)

How did they know that God had forgiven them?

(God... [hath] taken away the guilt from our hearts)

M. Russell Ballard

"We need to remember that Christ came to remove guilt by forgiving those who repent. He came to bring peace to the troubled soul. 'Peace I leave with you,' He said. 'My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid' (John 14:27). Through the miraculous Atonement He urges us to 'take my yoke upon you, ... and ye shall find rest unto your souls' (Matthew 11:29)

"As the power of the Atonement begins to work in our lives, we come to understand that the Savior has already borne the burden of our guilt. O that we may be wise enough to understand, to repent as necessary, and to let go of our guilt." (CR, Oct. 2006)

The king continues his teachings

Alma 24:12-14

12 Now, my best beloved brethren, since God hath taken away our stains, and our swords have become bright, then let us stain our swords no more with the blood of our brethren.

13 Behold, I say unto you, Nay, let us retain our swords that they be not stained with the blood of our brethren; for perhaps, if we should stain our swords again they can no more be washed bright through the blood of the Son of our great God, which shall be shed for the atonement of our sins.

14 And the great God has had mercy on us, and made these things known unto us that we might not perish; yea, and he has made these things known unto us beforehand, because he loveth our souls as well as he loveth our children; therefore, in his mercy he doth visit us by his angels, that the plan of salvation might be made known unto us as well as unto future generations.

In what way did they recognize that the great things that they had been taught would be a blessing beyond them and their lives?

(he loveth our children; therefore... the plan of salvation might be made known unto us as well as unto future generations)

Ezra Taft Benson

"We must know these essential truths. Aaron and Ammon and their brethren in the Book of Mormon taught these same kinds of truths to the Lamanite people, who were 'in the darkest abyss' (Alma 26:3). After accepting these eternal truths, the Book of Mormon states, those converted Lamanites never did fall away.

"If our children and grandchildren are taught and heed these same truths, will they fall away? We best instruct them in the Book of Mormon at our dinner table, by our firesides, at their bedsides, and in our letters and phone calls-in all of our goings and comings." (CR, Oct. 1984)

The king continues his teachings

Alma 24:15-16

15 Oh, how merciful is our God! And now behold, since it has been as much as we could do to get our stains taken away from us, and our swords are made bright, let us hide them away that they may be kept bright, as a testimony to our God at the last day, or at the day that we shall be brought to stand before him to be judged, that we have not stained our swords in the blood of our brethren since he imparted his word unto us and has made us clean thereby.

16 And now, my brethren, if our brethren seek to destroy us, behold, we will hide away our swords, yea, even we will bury them deep in the earth, that they may be kept bright, as a testimony that we have never used them, at the last day; and if our brethren destroy us, behold, we shall go to our God and shall be saved

Why did the king and his people bury their swords in the ground?

(that they may be kept bright, as a testimony that we have never used them, at the last day)

Again we see their great faith and how the idea of sinning again is abhorrent to them, even to the point that they would rather die

The People of Ammon Keep Their Covenants

Because the People of Ammon did not waiver from to their convictions many more Lamanites are converted

Alma 24:20-27

20 And it came to pass that their brethren, the Lamanites, made preparations for war, and came up to the land of Nephi for the purpose of destroying the king, and to place another in his stead, and also of destroying the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi out of the land.

21 Now when the people saw that they were coming against them they went out to meet them, and prostrated themselves before them to the earth, and began to call on the name of the Lord; and thus they were in this attitude when the Lamanites began to fall upon them, and began to slay them with the sword.

22 And thus without meeting any resistance, they did slay a thousand and five of them; and we know that they are blessed, for they have gone to dwell with their God.

23 Now when the Lamanites saw that their brethren would not flee from the sword, neither would they turn aside to the right hand or to the left, but that they would lie down and perish, and praised God even in the very act of perishing under the sword

—
24 Now when the Lamanites saw this they did forbear from slaying them; and there were many whose hearts had swollen in them for those of their brethren who had fallen under the sword, for they repented of the things which they had done.

25 And it came to pass that they threw down their weapons of war, and they would not take them again, for they were stung for the murders which they had committed; and they came down even as their brethren, relying upon the mercies of those whose arms were lifted to slay them.

26 And it came to pass that the people of God were joined that day by more than the number who had been slain; and those who had been slain were righteous people, therefore we have no reason to doubt but what they were saved.

27 And there was not a wicked man slain among them; but there were more than a thousand brought to the knowledge of the truth; thus we see that the Lord worketh in many ways to the salvation of his people.

Verse 27, Mormon says "thus we see", teaching us that the Lord works in many ways to bring about the salvation of his people – kind of drastic missionary work. But again, Mormon is looking at the eternal perspective

Richard G. Scott

"Many of their unconverted brethren came upon them and began to slay them. The now-faithful people chose to succumb to the sword rather than risk their spiritual lives by taking up arms. Their righteous example helped even more people to be converted and to lay down their weapons of rebellion." (CR, Oct. 2013)

The Lamanites didn't accomplish their objective by attacking the Anti-Nephi-Lehis so they decide to attack the Nephites. But they were defeated by the Nephites and many of the Lamanites were killed

Alma 25:6-9

6 For many of them, after having suffered much loss and so many afflictions, began to be stirred up in remembrance of the words which Aaron and his brethren had preached to them in their land; therefore they began to disbelieve the traditions of their fathers, and to believe in the Lord, and that he gave great power unto the Nephites; and thus there were many of them converted in the wilderness.

7 And it came to pass that those rulers who were the remnant of the children of Amulon caused that they should be put to death, yea, all those that believed in these things.

8 Now this martyrdom caused that many of their brethren should be stirred up to anger; and there began to be contention in the wilderness; and the Lamanites began to hunt the seed of Amulon and his brethren and began to slay them; and they fled into the east wilderness.

9 And behold they are hunted at this day by the Lamanites. Thus the words of Abinadi were brought to pass, which he said concerning the seed of the priests who caused that he should suffer death by fire.

When the Lamanites began to soften their hearts, what did they remember?

(began to be stirred up in remembrance of the words which Aaron and his brethren had preached to them in their land)

What does this teach us about the long-term effect of the effort of missionary work?

This shows how far-reaching the missionary efforts of the sons of Mosiah were. The sower of the seed never knows when the seed will take sprout and grow

Alma 25:13-14

13 And it came to pass that when the Lamanites saw that they could not overpower the Nephites they returned again to their own land; and many of them came over to dwell in the land of Ishmael and the land of Nephi, and did join themselves to the people of God, who were the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi.

14 And they did also bury their weapons of war, according as their brethren had, and they began to be a righteous people; and they did walk in the ways of the Lord, and did observe to keep his commandments and his statutes.

In this case, what caused the Lamanites to repent of their sins and join the People of Ammon?

(when the Lamanites saw that they could not overpower the Nephites they... did join themselves to the people of God)

Because of the direct teachings of the son's of Mosiah thousands of Lamanites were converted and became the people of Anti-Nephi-Lehi

Because of the seeds planted by the son's of Mosiah:

- Thousands more converted during the slaughter of the Anti-Nephi-Lehis
- Many more were converted when they are defeated by the Nephite army
- Still more were converted when they returned home after the battle

Ammon praises the Lord for the great blessing he and his brethren have received

Alma 26:1-3

1 And now, these are the words of Ammon to his brethren, which say thus: My brothers and my brethren, behold I say unto you, how great reason have we to rejoice; for could we have supposed when we started from the land of Zarahemla that God would have granted unto us such great blessings?

2 And now, I ask, what great blessings has he bestowed upon us? Can ye tell?

3 Behold, I answer for you; for our brethren, the Lamanites, were in darkness, yea, even in the darkest abyss, but behold, how many of them are brought to behold the marvelous light of God! And this is the blessing which hath been bestowed upon us, that we have been made instruments in the hands of God to bring about this great work

What great blessing did Ammon state that the Lord give to him and his brethren?

(we have been made instruments in the hands of God to bring about this great work)

James E. Faust

“You can be powerful instruments in the hands of God to help bring about this great work.... Blessings and a comforting peace will come to you if you can love God ‘with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself’ (Luke 10:27). If you have done your best, which you usually do, your humble offering, whatever it may be, will be acceptable and pleasing to the Lord” (CR, Oct. 2005)

Ammon talks about those who were converted and kept their covenants

Alma 26:4-7

4 Behold, thousands of them do rejoice, and have been brought into the fold of God.

5 Behold, the field was ripe, and blessed are ye, for ye did thrust in the sickle, and did reap with your might, yea, all the day long did ye labor; and behold the number of your sheaves! And they shall be gathered into the garners, that they are not wasted.

6 Yea, they shall not be beaten down by the storm at the last day; yea, neither shall they be harrowed up by the whirlwinds; but when the storm cometh they shall be gathered together in their place, that the storm cannot penetrate to them; yea, neither shall they be driven with fierce winds whithersoever the enemy listeth to carry them.

7 But behold, they are in the hands of the Lord of the harvest, and they are his; and he will braise them up at the last day.

In what ways were the People of Ammon blessed?

- Rejoice, and have been brought into the fold of God.
- They shall be gathered into the garners, that they are not wasted.
- When the storm cometh they shall be gathered together in their place
- They are his; and he will raise them up at the last day.

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

"Clearly, when we baptize, our eyes should gaze beyond the baptismal font to the holy temple. The great garner into which the sheaves should be gathered is the holy temple". (Church News, Sept. 17, 1994)

The Amalekites began again to destroy the converts. Ammon asked the Nephites to admit the Anti-Nephi-Lehies into their land. The Nephites gave Anti-Nephi-Lehies an inheritance in the land of Jershon, and help them keep their covenant by providing defense forces if they would pay the expense of the army. They are know among the Nephites as the People of Ammon.

Alma 27:26-27

26 And it came to pass that it did cause great joy among them. And they went down into the land of Jershon, and took possession of the land of Jershon; and they were called by the Nephites the people of Ammon; therefore they were distinguished by that name ever after.

27 And they were among the people of Nephi, and also numbered among the people who were of the church of God. And they were also distinguished for their zeal towards God, and also towards men; for they were perfectly honest and upright in all things; and they were firm in the faith of Christ, even unto the end.

The People of Ammon prove to be a great example and blessing to the Nephites. We will see this as we continue to study Alma