

May 20–26: Mosiah 18–24, “We Have Entered Into a Covenant with Him”

Baptism

Alma, after repenting and being converted, was teaching the words we had heard from Abinidi to all who gathered at the Waters of Mormon

He talks to those who believe in Christ about taking on the covenant of baptism

Mosiah 18:7-10

7 And it came to pass after many days there were a goodly number gathered together at the place of Mormon, to hear the words of Alma. Yea, all were gathered together that believed on his word, to hear him. And he did teach them, and did preach unto them repentance, and redemption, and faith on the Lord.

8 And it came to pass that he said unto them: Behold, here are the waters of Mormon (for thus were they called) and now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light;

9 Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life—

10 Now I say unto you, if this be the desire of your hearts, what have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him, that ye will serve him and keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you?

As converts of Christ, what had the people already shown and expressed a desire to do?

(enter his fold, bear one another's burdens, comfort, stand as witnesses of God, keep his commandments)

What did Alma admonish them to do to witness that they were willing to live these commandments?

(be... baptized in the name of the Lord
as a witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with him)

What did Alma tell them they would receive if they were true to covenant?

(numbered with those of the first resurrection
pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you)

L. Tom Perry

“[Baptism] is an ordinance denoting entry into a sacred and binding covenant between God and man. Men promise to forsake the world, love and serve their fellowmen, visit the fatherless and the widows in their afflictions, proclaim peace, preach the gospel, serve the Lord, and keep His commandments. The Lord promises to ‘pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon [us]’ (Mosh 18:10), redeem His Saints both temporally and spiritually, number them with those of the First Resurrection, and offer life eternal. Baptism and receiving the Holy Ghost are the prescribed ways to enter the strait and narrow path to eternal life.” (CR, April 2008)

What do you think Alma meant he admonishes to “stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in”?

Margaret D. Nadauld

“Standing as a witness in all things means all things—big things, little things, in all conversations, in jokes, in games played and books read and music listened to, in causes supported, in service rendered, in clothes worn, in friends made... Standing as a witness in all things means being kind in all things, being the first to say hello, being the first to smile, being the first to make the stranger feel a part of things, being helpful, thinking of others’ feelings, being inclusive.” (CR, April 2000)

The people express joy at the opportunity to be baptized

Mosiah 18:11-14

11 And now when the people had heard these words, they clapped their hands for joy, and exclaimed: This is the desire of our hearts.

12 And now it came to pass that Alma took Helam, he being one of the first, and went and stood forth in the water, and cried, saying: O Lord, pour out thy Spirit upon thy servant, that he may do this work with holiness of heart.

13 And when he had said these words, the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, and he said: Helam, I baptize thee, having authority from the Almighty God, as a testimony that ye have entered into a covenant to serve him until you are dead as to the mortal body; and may the Spirit of the Lord be poured out upon you; and may he grant unto you eternal life, through the redemption of Christ, whom he has prepared from the foundation of the world.

14 And after Alma had said these words, both Alma and Helam were buried in the water; and they arose and came forth out of the water rejoicing, being filled with the Spirit.

Note that we are baptized as a testimony of our covenant to serve God.

(as a testimony that ye have entered into a covenant to serve him)

Again, what did Alma tell them they would receive if they were true to their covenants?

(may he grant unto you eternal life
may the Spirit of the Lord be poured out upon you)

Alma establishes a church

Mosiah 18:17-20

17 And they were called the church of God, or the church of Christ, from that time forward. And it came to pass that whosoever was baptized by the power and authority of God was added to his church.

18 And it came to pass that Alma, having authority from God, ordained priests; even one priest to every fifty of their number did he ordain to preach unto them, and to teach them concerning the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

19 And he commanded them that they should teach nothing save it were the things which he had taught, and which had been spoken by the mouth of the holy prophets.

20 Yea, even he commanded them that they should preach nothing save it were repentance and faith on the Lord, who had redeemed his people.

Why do you think that Alma told the priests that they should focus their teaching on “repentance and faith on the Lord”?

(they should teach nothing save it were the things which he had taught, and which had been spoken by the mouth of the holy prophets)

Joseph Fielding Smith

"In the revelation to Oliver Cowdery, and to several others who came to ask what the Lord would have them do, the Lord said: ‘Say nothing but repentance unto this generation’ (D&C 6:9). We must not infer from this expression that those who went forth to preach were limited in their teachings so that all they could say was ‘repent from your sins,’ but in teaching the principles of the Gospel they should do so with the desire to... bring them in humility to a realization of the need for remission of sins. Even today, in all of our preaching it should be with the desire to bring people to repentance and faith in God.” (Church History and Modern Revelation, 1:42)

Progress Along the Path

As discussed in 2 Nephi, baptism is the beginning. It is the gate to the strait and narrow path (2Ne 31:19-20).

True to this principle, Alma instructed his people what they must do to "press forward" after they enter the gate and are on the path

Mosiah 18:21-23,29

21 And he commanded them that there should be no contention one with another, but that they should look forward with one eye, having one faith and one baptism, having

their hearts knit together in unity and in love one towards another.

22 And thus he commanded them to preach. And thus they became the children of God.

23 And he commanded them that they should observe the sabbath day, and keep it holy, and also every day they should give thanks to the Lord their God.

29 And this he said unto them, having been commanded of God; and they did walk uprightly before God, imparting to one another both temporally and spiritually according to their needs and their wants.

After repenting, being baptized, and being blessed with the Holy Ghost -
What are some things that Alma emphasizes that we must do to progress in the gospel?

(there should be no contention one with another
having their hearts knit together in unity and in love
they should observe the sabbath day
every day they should give thanks to the Lord their God
gather themselves together to teach the people, and to worship the Lord
imparting to one another both temporally and spiritually)

Alma implements a temporal law to help support the poor

Mosiah 18:27-28

27 And again Alma commanded that the people of the church should impart of their substance, every one according to that which he had; if he have more abundantly he should impart more abundantly; and of him that had but little, but little should be required; and to him that had not should be given.

28 And thus they should impart of their substance of their own free will and good desires towards God, and to those priests that stood in need, yea, and to every needy, naked soul.

How would you categorize this principle that Alma implements in the church to provide for those in need?

(impart of their substance every one according to that which he had
to him that had not should be given)

Lorenzo Snow

“There are men among us who call themselves Latter-day Saints, who do not impart of their substance according to the law of the Gospel. I say God is displeased with such covetousness, and he will never prosper the Latter-day Saints who are guilty of such miserly conduct....

“We should act in the spirit of this law [of the Gospel] according to the light of God that is within us.” (JD 20:361)

Alma had an important message to the priests of the churches

Mosiah 18:24,26

24 And he also commanded them that the priests whom he had ordained should labor with their own hands for their support.

26 And the priests were not to depend upon the people for their support; but for their labor they were to receive the grace of God, that they might wax strong in the Spirit, having the knowledge of God, that they might teach with power and authority from God.

What important reason does Alma give that we should not receiving temporal compensation for service in the church?

(for their labor they were to receive the grace of God that they might wax strong in the Spirit, having the knowledge of God that they might teach with power and authority from God)

Gene R. Cook

“The teacher of righteousness will be anxious to glorify the Lord. He will refuse to assume any glory unto himself. He will not practice priestcrafts—that is, preaching and holding himself up as a light to the world for gain or for the honor of men. He will be a preacher of righteousness speaking forcefully against sin, having an eye single to God, not to personal gain, honor, or popularity among men. He knows worldly aspirations leave the door open wide to apostasy.” (CR, April 1982)

The Lord Will Try His People

Being warned of the lord that Noah was after him, he took his people and fled eight days into the wilderness and settled in Helam.

Mormon comes right out and tells us that the following account of Alma's people is given to teach us a very important lesson.

Mosiah 23:20-24

20 And it came to pass that they did multiply and prosper exceedingly in the land of Helam; and they built a city, which they called the city of Helam.

21 Nevertheless the Lord seeth fit to chasten his people; yea, he trieth their patience and their faith.

22 Nevertheless—whosoever putteth his trust in him the same shall be lifted up at the last day. Yea, and thus it was with this people.

23 For behold, I will show unto you that they were brought into bondage, and none could deliver them but the Lord their God, yea, even the God of Abraham and Isaac and of Jacob.

24 And it came to pass that he did deliver them, and he did show forth his mighty power unto them, and great were their rejoicings.

What gospel principle does Mormon tell us is demonstrated by this account?

(the Lord seeth fit to chasten his people, try their patience and faith
whosoever putteth his trust in him the same shall be lifted up at the last day)

A definition of chasten is "to cleanse, refine, or purify" (1828 dictionary).

This is an inevitable part of being a follower of Christ as we learn from modern revelation:

D&C 136:31

My people must be tried in all things, that they may be prepared to receive the glory that I have for them, even the glory of Zion; and he that will not bear chastisement is not worthy of my kingdom.

An army of Lamanites were sent to find the people of Limhi. But instead they found, and became friendly with, the priests of Noah and their Lamanite wives. While trying to find their way back to the land of Nephi the Lamanites and priests found Alma and his people, and bought them under bondage.

Mosiah 24:10-14

10 And it came to pass that so great were their afflictions that they began to cry mightily to God.

11 And Amulon commanded them that they should stop their cries; and he put guards over them to watch them, that whosoever should be found calling upon God should be put to death.

12 And Alma and his people did not raise their voices to the Lord their God, but did pour out their hearts to him; and he did know the thoughts of their hearts.

13 And it came to pass that the voice of the Lord came to them in their afflictions, saying: Lift up your heads and be of good comfort, for I know of the covenant which ye have made unto me; and I will covenant with my people and deliver them out of bondage.

14 And I will also ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, that even you cannot feel them upon your backs, even while you are in bondage; and this will I do that ye may stand as witnesses for me hereafter, and that ye may know of a surety that I, the Lord God, do visit my people in their afflictions.

What do we learn from these verses about how the Lord responds to those who make and keep covenants to live the gospel?

(I will covenant with my people
that ye may know of a surety that I... visit my people)

Henry B. Eyring

“The times we will pass through will have in them hard trials, as they did for the people of Alma under the cruel Amulon, who put burdens on their

backs too heavy for them to bear...

“You and I are witnesses that whenever we have kept our covenants with God, especially when it was hard, He has heard our prayers of thanks for what He has already done for us and has answered our prayer for strength to endure faithfully. And more than once He has made us cheerful as well as strong.” (CR, Oct. 2016)

How did the Lord bless them even though He chose to let them endure this trial?

(I will also ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, that even you cannot feel them upon your backs)

He didn't remove the burden but, instead, He strengthened them so the could endure them

D. Todd Christofferson

“The followers of Alma established a Zion community in Helam but then were brought into bondage. They did not deserve their suffering—quite the contrary...

“The Lord strengthened them and lightened their burdens to the point they could hardly feel them upon their backs and then in due course delivered them. Their faith was immeasurably strengthened by their experience, and ever after they enjoyed a special bond with the Lord.” (CR, April 2011)

What were the people promised that their example of faithfulness would do to help strengthen followers of Christ?

(that ye may stand as witnesses for me hereafter, and do visit my people in their afflictions)

The impact of this experience on the faith of the people is referenced several times in the Book of Mormon.

Recall what the angel said to Alma the Younger:

Mosiah 27:16

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...

It is clear that, because of their patience, they were greatly blessed even during the time of afflictions

Mosiah 24:15-17

15 And now it came to pass that the burdens which were laid upon Alma and his brethren were made light; yea, the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up

their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord.

16 And it came to pass that so great was their faith and their patience that the voice of the Lord came unto them again, saying: Be of good comfort, for on the morrow I will deliver you out of bondage.

17 And he said unto Alma: Thou shalt go before this people, and I will go with thee and deliver this people out of bondage.

How does Mormon describe the way that the people submitted to their afflictions?

(cheerfully and with patience... faith and their patience)

David F. Evans

"Patiently keeping our covenants while we do what is necessary to receive answers from the Lord is part of God's pattern for learning truth. Especially when things are hard, we may be required to 'submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord.' Patient covenant keeping increases our humility, deepens our desire to know truth, and allows the Holy Ghost to 'guide [us] in wisdom's paths that [we] may be blessed, prospered, and preserved' (Mosh 2:36)." (CR, Oct. 2017)

Note how the people expressed gratitude to the Lord for this great blessings

Mosiah 24:18-22

18 Now it came to pass that Alma and his people in the night-time gathered their flocks together, and also of their grain; yea, even all the night-time were they gathering their flocks together.

19 And in the morning the Lord caused a deep sleep to come upon the Lamanites, yea, and all their task-masters were in a profound sleep.

20 And Alma and his people departed into the wilderness; and when they had traveled all day they pitched their tents in a valley, and they called the valley Alma, because he led their way in the wilderness.

21 Yea, and in the valley of Alma they poured out their thanks to God because he had been merciful unto them, and eased their burdens, and had delivered them out of bondage; for they were in bondage, and none could deliver them except it were the Lord their God.

22 And they gave thanks to God, yea, all their men and all their women and all their children that could speak lifted their voices in the praises of their God.

After this difficulty had passed, how did the people react to the experience that they had been thru?

(they poured out their thanks to God... And they gave thanks to God, yea, all... lifted their voices in the praises of their God)

Ronald E. Poelman

"Those with whom Alma shared the inspired teachings of Abinadi entered into the baptismal covenant and began to live the gospel fully.... Certainly they did not deserve adversity. However, they were provided with the opportunity for further spiritual growth....

"Eventually, because of their faith and patience, they were delivered from their afflictions. Having been further refined spiritually, and with increased faith, 'they gave thanks to God.'" (CR, April 1989)

Slow to Remember the Lord

Back in the land of Nephi the Lamanites again attack the people of Noah
Noah commands the men to flee but soon they rebel against Noah put him to death
Now Limhi is king in the land of Nephi but they are subject to the Lamanites
In an attempt to regain their freedom the people of Limhi attack the Lamanites three times but are defeated each time.

The afflictions the people of Limhi was different from that of the people of Alma in cause, purpose, and effect. Their afflictions could be and object lesson for D&C 101:7-8

7) They were slow to hearken unto the voice of the Lord their God; therefore, the Lord their God is slow to hearken unto their prayers, to answer them in the day of their trouble.

8) In the day of their peace they esteemed lightly my counsel; but, in the day of their trouble, of necessity they feel after me.

Typical of the pride cycle, it was their wickedness that brought on their afflictions. And their afflictions caused them to humbly seek after the Lord

Mosiah 21:13-15

13 And they did humble themselves even to the dust, subjecting themselves to the yoke of bondage, submitting themselves to be smitten, and to be driven to and fro, and burdened, according to the desires of their enemies.

14 And they did humble themselves even in the depths of humility; and they did cry mightily to God; yea, even all the day long did they cry unto their God that he would deliver them out of their afflictions.

15 And now the Lord was slow to hear their cry because of their iniquities; nevertheless the Lord did hear their cries, and began to soften the hearts of the Lamanites that they began to ease their burdens; yet the Lord did not see fit to deliver them out of bondage.

Why was the Lord slow to hear their cries?

(the Lord was slow to hear their cry because of their iniquities)

Boyd K. Packer

"We should remember that people don't get in serious trouble in one step. I don't think anyone steps off a precipice into the depths of immorality and apostasy. They slide down the slippery sides of the chasm. When they hit bottom, it's interesting that usually they want to take one step out. There's not one step out any more than there was one step in. It's a long, hard climb." (CR, April 1970)

Baptism

This was the situation of the people of Limi when Ammon's group arrived from Zarahemla

Mosiah 21:29-35

29 Yet Ammon and his brethren were filled with sorrow because so many of their brethren had been slain;

30 And also that king Noah and his priests had caused the people to commit so many sins and iniquities against God; and they also did mourn for the death of Abinadi; and also for the departure of Alma and the people that went with him, who had formed a church of God through the strength and power of God, and faith on the words which had been spoken by Abinadi.

31 Yea, they did mourn for their departure, for they knew not whither they had fled. Now they would have gladly joined with them, for they themselves had entered into a covenant with God to serve him and keep his commandments.

32 And now since the coming of Ammon, king Limhi had also entered into a covenant with God, and also many of his people, to serve him and keep his commandments.

33 And it came to pass that king Limhi and many of his people were desirous to be baptized; but there was none in the land that had authority from God. And Ammon declined doing this thing, considering himself an unworthy servant.

34 Therefore they did not at that time form themselves into a church, waiting upon the Spirit of the Lord. Now they were desirous to become even as Alma and his brethren, who had fled into the wilderness.

35 They were desirous to be baptized as a witness and a testimony that they were willing to serve God with all their hearts; nevertheless they did prolong the time; and an account of their baptism shall be given hereafter.

Why did the people of Limhi have a desire to be baptized?

(a witness and a testimony that they were willing to serve God with all their hearts)

Why were they not able to be baptized and witness their covenant at that time?

(there was none in the land that had authority from God
Therefore they did not at that time form themselves into a church)

Chapter 22 tells us how the Lord finally heard the people of Limhi's prayers and

delivered them out of bondage. And they returned to Zarahemla.

Government (As a preview of an upcoming lesson lesson (Mosiah 29))

Mosiah 23:6-8

6 And the people were desirous that Alma should be their king, for he was beloved by his people.

7 But he said unto them: Behold, it is not expedient that we should have a king; for thus saith the Lord: Ye shall not esteem one flesh above another, or one man shall not think himself above another; therefore I say unto you it is not expedient that ye should have a king.

8 Nevertheless, if it were possible that ye could always have just men to be your kings it would be well for you to have a king.

Can monarchy be a good form of government?

(if it were possible that ye could always have just men to be your kings it would be well for you to have a king)

Examples: Benjamin, Melchizadak, Enoch

So why should they not have a King?

(not esteem one person over another)

Mosiah 23:12-13

12 And now I say unto you, ye have been oppressed by king Noah, and have been in bondage to him and his priests, and have been brought into iniquity by them; therefore ye were bound with the bands of iniquity.

13 And now as ye have been delivered by the power of God out of these bonds; yea, even out of the hands of king Noah and his people, and also from the bonds of iniquity, even so I desire that ye should stand fast in this liberty wherewith ye have been made free, and that ye trust no man to be a king over you.

There are many examples in the OT of corrupt kings like Noah who led the people to do iniquity. To avoid universal iniquity (bound with the bands of iniquity) it is important we "stand fast in this liberty wherewith ye have been made free"

In Mosiah 29 we will study how and why Mosiah gives the Nephites their independence