

## July 29–August 4: Alma 36–38, “Look to God and Live”

### Overview

Alma counsels and teaches his sons Helaman and Shiblon, and entrusting Helaman with sacred Nephite plates and items.

In the next lesson we’ll discuss his teachings to his son Corianton

### Born Again

Alma tells Helaman that it is important to remember that the Lord delivered their fathers out of captivity

Alma 36:1-4

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.

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.

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.

Why did Alma say that it was important for Helaman to “[remember] the captivity of our fathers”?

(he surely did deliver them in their afflictions)

In verse 28 he talks about Moses out of Egypt.

In verse 29 he talks about Lehi out of Jerusalem.

The angel told him to remember his father deliverance out of Helam

What does Alma promise to all those who put their trust in God?

(supported in their trials, and their troubles, and their afflictions, and shall be lifted up at the last day)

In verse 27 Alma testifies how he knows from his own experience that true

Alma 36:27

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.

Heber J. Grant

"Let me say in passing that Alma knew, no better than I know, that those who put their trust in God shall be supported in all manner of afflictions and trials; because I have passed through trials and tribulations and have been supported by Him. I was able to sit by the deathbed of my last living son, for whom I had great expectations, and see him die without my shedding a tear; and there was a most peaceful feeling in my heart when he passed away. So I know, as Alma of old knew, that those who trust in God shall be supported in their tribulation." (Gospel Standards, pg. 324)

In verse 4 Alma states that he knows that this is true, not because of his carnal experiences, but because of the witness of the Holy Ghost

In verses 5 thru 11 Alma gives the account of the angel appearing to Alma. Then he talks about the process he went thru to repent

Alma 36:12-17

12 But I was racked with eternal torment, for my soul was harrowed up to the greatest degree and racked with all my sins.

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.

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.

16 And now, for three days and for three nights was I racked, even with the pains of a damned soul.

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.

What did was Alma mean when he said, "I had murdered many of his children"?

(I... led them away unto destruction)

How did Alma learn that there was hope for redemption?

(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)

Neil L. Andersen

"Although there may be times when a child does not listen with a believing heart, your testimony of Jesus will remain in his or her mind and soul. Do you remember the story of Alma, who had chosen the wrong path?...

"If a child is not listening, don't despair. Time and truth are on your side. At the right moment, your words will return as if from heaven itself. Your testimony will never leave your children." (CR, April 2010)

Hugh Nibley says this about Alma calling out to Christ

Hugh Nibley

"When [Alma] says, 'O Jesus' [some] would say, 'Well, why not call on God directly? Why call on Jesus?' Well, that's the point of the whole thing.... He has offended God. What he wants is a kind person who will feel with him and know what he is going through. And, of course, that's the Lord, that's Christ. He descended below all things. He suffered all these things, so he knows. Alma appeals to the one he can appeal to. He's scared [and feels he'd] sooner be extinct than have to face [God]. But there is Jesus; he will get me out. He is the Savior-he knows. So he appeals to him." (Teachings of the Book of Mormon, pg. 458)

Alma continues his story of repentance and being born again

Alma 36:18-23

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.

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.

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!

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.

22 Yea, methought 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.

How is it possible that after Alma called upon Christ he "was harrowed up by the memory of [his] sins no more"?

Tad R. Callister

"How could [Alma] remember his sins but have no pain or guilt? Because when we repent, we are 'born of God.' We become, as the scriptures say, 'new creatures' in Christ. With perfect honesty we can now say, 'I am not the

man or woman who committed those past sins. I am a new and transformed being." (CR, Oct. 2000)

Dieter F. Uchtdorf

"Satan will try to make us believe that our sins are not forgiven because we can remember them. Satan is a liar; he tries to blur our vision and lead us away from the path of repentance and forgiveness. God did not promise that we would not remember our sins. Remembering will help us avoid making the same mistakes again. But if we stay true and faithful, the memory of our sins will be softened over time. This will be part of the needed healing and sanctification process. Alma testified that after he cried out to Jesus for mercy, he could still remember his sins, but the memory of his sins no longer distressed and tortured him, because he knew he had been forgiven." (CR, April 2007)

Why do you think that Alma now felt that nothing was as exquisite as was his joy?

(there could be nothing so exquisite and so bitter as were my pains)

Alma is born again. He receives a remission of his sins, is filled with the Holy Ghost, and labored that others would know about the mercy of Christ.

Alma 36:24-26

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.

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.

What did Alma want to do now that he had tasted the exceeding great joy of being born again?

(I have labored without ceasing, that I might bring souls unto repentance)

Sheri L. Dew

"Standing tall begins with our own conversion, for when we taste the gospel's 'exceeding joy' we want to share it. The casseroles and quilts we have made to relieve suffering are splendid acts of kindness, but no service—I repeat, no service—compares with that of leading someone to Christ." (CR, Oct. 2000)

Marion G. Romney

"No person whose soul is illuminated by the burning Spirit of God can in this world of sin and dense darkness remain passive. He is driven by an irresistible urge to fit himself to be an active agent of God in furthering righteousness and in freeing the lives and minds of men from the bondage of sin." (CR, Oct. 1941)

## Prayer

Alma teaches Helaman an important lesson about prayer

Alma 37:35-37

35 O, remember, my son, and learn wisdom in thy youth; yea, learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God.

36 Yea, and cry unto God for all thy support; yea, let all thy doings be unto the Lord, and whithersoever thou goest let it be in the Lord; yea, let all thy thoughts be directed unto the Lord; yea, let the affections of thy heart be placed upon the Lord forever.

37 Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good; yea, when thou liest down at night lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep; and when thou risest in the morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God; and if ye do these things, ye shall be lifted up at the last day.

According to Alma, when should we pray, what should we pray for, and what should we included in our prayers?

(cry unto God for all thy support

Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good  
let thy heart be full of thanks unto God)

Ezra Taft Benson

"For what should we pray? We should pray about our work, against the power of our enemies and the devil, for our welfare and the welfare of those around us. We should counsel with the Lord pertaining to all our decisions and activities. We should be grateful enough to give thanks for all we have. We should confess His hand in all things." (CR, April 1977)

Marion D. Hanks

"The Lord said we must 'pray always.' His promises are wonderful. He has told us that we may receive the Spirit by the prayer of faith; that we must 'pray continually' that we will not be tempted beyond what we can bear; that we must 'counsel with the Lord' in all our doings, night and day; that we must 'not perform anything unto the Lord' without praying to the Father in the name of Christ. His marvelous promise is that 'he will direct us for good.'" (CR, Oct. 1960)

## Alma Counsels Shiblon

Alma states how Shiblon has been blessed by the Lord because his diligence and steadfastness

Alma 38:1-5

1 My son, give ear to my words, for I say unto you, even as I said unto Helaman, that inasmuch as ye shall keep the commandments of God ye shall prosper in the land; and inasmuch as ye will not keep the commandments of God ye shall be cut off from his presence.

2 And now, my son, I trust that I shall have great joy in you, because of your steadiness and your faithfulness unto God; for as you have commenced in your youth to look to the Lord your God, even so I hope that you will continue in keeping his commandments; for blessed is he that endureth to the end.

3 I say unto you, my son, that I have had great joy in thee already, because of thy faithfulness and thy diligence, and thy patience and thy long-suffering among the people of the Zoramites.

4 For I know that thou wast in bonds; yea, and I also know that thou wast stoned for the word's sake; and thou didst bear all these things with patience because the Lord was with thee; and now thou knowest that the Lord did deliver thee.

5 And now my son, Shiblon, I would that ye should remember, that as much as ye shall put your trust in God even so much ye shall be delivered out of your trials, and your troubles, and your afflictions, and ye shall be lifted up at the last day.

What blessing did Shiblon receive that helped him to deal patiently with his trials and afflictions while teaching the Zoramites?

(because the Lord was with thee)

Because of his “steadiness and your faithfulness unto God” the Lord was with him. And Shiblon knew that the Lord had delivered him.

Alma 38:10-15

10 And now, as ye have begun to teach the word even so I would that ye should continue to teach; and I would that ye would be diligent and temperate in all things.

11 See that ye are not lifted up unto pride; yea, see that ye do not boast in your own wisdom, nor of your much strength.

12 Use boldness, but not overbearance; and also see that ye bridle all your passions, that ye may be filled with love; see that ye refrain from idleness.

13 Do not pray as the Zoramites do, for ye have seen that they pray to be heard of men, and to be praised for their wisdom.

14 Do not say: O God, I thank thee that we are better than our brethren; but rather say: O Lord, forgive my unworthiness, and remember my brethren in mercy—yea, acknowledge your unworthiness before God at all times.

15 And may the Lord bless your soul, and receive you at the last day into his kingdom, to sit down in peace. Now go, my son, and teach the word unto this people.

Be sober. My son, farewell.

What instructions does Alma give Shiblon to help him continue to overcome the natural man and serve the Lord?

David A. Bednar

"To some degree, the natural man described by King Benjamin is alive and well in each of us. The natural man or woman is unrepentant, is carnal and sensual, is indulgent and excessive, and is prideful and selfish....

"In contrast, 'the man [or woman] of Christ' is spiritual and bridles all passions, is temperate and restrained, and is benevolent and selfless. Men and women of Christ lay hold upon the word of God, deny themselves and take up His cross, and press forward along a strait and narrow course of faithfulness, obedience, and devotion to the Savior and His gospel." (CR, April 2013)

What does Alma mean by "bridle all your passions"?

Boyd K. Packer

"A bridle is used to guide, to direct. Our passion is to be controlled-but not controlled by extermination, as with a plague of insects; not controlled by eradication, as with a disease. It is to be controlled as electricity is controlled, to generate power and life. When lawfully used, the power of procreation will bless and it will sanctify." (The Things of the Soul, pg. 109)

That is the blessing we are promised if we do bridle our passions?

(that ye may be filled with love)

Ezra Taft Benson

"There is no lasting happiness in immorality. There is no joy to be found in breaking the law of chastity. Just the opposite is true.... Guilt and shame set in. We become fearful that our sins will be discovered. We must sneak and hide, lie and cheat. Love begins to die. Bitterness, jealousy, anger, and even hate begin to grow." ("The Law of Chastity", BYU Devotional and Fireside Speeches, Oct. 13, 1987)

Note that Pres. Benson said, "breaking the law of chastity... love begins to die." Alma says the inverse, when we bridle our passions we are filled with love.

Helaman Entrusted with Sacred Items

Alma entrusts Helaman with the sacred plates and items that had been handed down to him from king Mosiah

## The Liahona

Alma gives the example of the Liahona to explain how we can follow Christ if we are not “slothful because of the easiness of the way.”

Alma 37:38,43-47

38 And now, my son, I have somewhat to say concerning the thing which our fathers call a ball, or director—or our fathers called it Liahona, which is, being interpreted, a compass; and the Lord prepared it.

43 And now, my son, I would that ye should understand that these things are not without a shadow; for as our fathers were slothful to give heed to this compass (now these things were temporal) they did not prosper; even so it is with things which are spiritual.

44 For behold, it is as easy to give heed to the word of Christ, which will point to you a straight course to eternal bliss, as it was for our fathers to give heed to this compass, which would point unto them a straight course to the promised land.

45 And now I say, is there not a type in this thing? For just as surely as this director did bring our fathers, by following its course, to the promised land, shall the words of Christ, if we follow their course, carry us beyond this vale of sorrow into a far better land of promise.

46 O my son, do not let us be slothful because of the easiness of the way; for so was it with our fathers; for so was it prepared for them, that if they would look they might live; even so it is with us. The way is prepared, and if we will look we may live forever.

47 And now, my son, see that ye take care of these sacred things, yea, see that ye look to God and live. Go unto this people and declare the word, and be sober. My son, farewell.

What did the Nephites have, and what do we have, that makes it easy to understand the doctrine of Christ and to follow Him?

(the words of Christ)

Why do you think Alma would warn Helaman not to be “slothful because of the easiness of the way” when it comes to studying the scriptures?

W. Rolfe Kerr

"The words of Christ can be a personal Liahona for each of us, showing us the way. Let us not be slothful because of the easiness of the way. Let us in faith take the words of Christ into our minds and into our hearts as they are recorded in sacred scripture and as they are uttered by living prophets, seers, and revelators. Let us with faith and diligence feast upon the words of Christ, for the words of Christ will be our spiritual Liahona telling us all things what we should do." (CR, April 2004)

The records of Nephi



Alma 37:1-4,18-19

1 And now, my son Helaman, I command you that ye take the records which have been entrusted with me;

2 And I also command you that ye keep a record of this people, according as I have done, upon the plates of Nephi, and keep all these things sacred which I have kept, even as I have kept them; for it is for a wise purpose that they are kept.

D&C 3:16,19-20

16 Nevertheless, my work shall go forth, for inasmuch as the knowledge of a Savior has come unto the world, through the testimony of the Jews, even so shall the knowledge of a Savior come unto my people—

19 And for this very purpose are these plates preserved, which contain these records—that the promises of the Lord might be fulfilled, which he made to his people;

20 And that the Lamanites might come to the knowledge of their fathers, and that they might know the promises of the Lord, and that they may believe the gospel and rely upon the merits of Jesus Christ, and be glorified through faith in his name, and that through their repentance they might be saved. Amen.

### The Brass Plates

Alma 37:3-4,18-19

3 And these plates of brass, which contain these engravings, which have the records of the holy scriptures upon them, which have the genealogy of our forefathers, even from the beginning—

4 Behold, it has been prophesied by our fathers, that they should be kept and handed down from one generation to another, and be kept and preserved by the hand of the Lord until they should go forth unto every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, that they shall know of the mysteries contained thereon.

18 For he promised unto them that he would preserve these things for a wise purpose in him, that he might show forth his power unto future generations.

19 And now behold, one purpose hath he fulfilled, even to the restoration of many thousands of the Lamanites to the knowledge of the truth; and he hath shown forth his power in them, and he will also still show forth his power in them unto future generations; therefore they shall be preserved.

Orson Pratt

"The Lord has told us that he would bring forth those brass plates that Lehi and the families that came with him from Jerusalem, some six hundred years before Christ, brought with them, which contain the history of the creation, and the writings of inspired men down to the days of Jeremiah; they came out in Jeremiah's day. We are informed in the Book of Mormon that they contained many prophecies very great and extensive in their nature. And when these plates... are brought to light we shall have the history of the Old

Testament much more fully, with the addition of a great many prophecies that are not now contained in that record." (JD, 19:204)

The 24 gold plates and the interpreters

Alma 37:21

21 And now, I will speak unto you concerning those twenty-four plates, that ye keep them, that the mysteries and the works of darkness, and their secret works, or the secret works of those people who have been destroyed, may be made manifest unto this people; yea, all their murders, and robbings, and their plunderings, and all their wickedness and abominations, may be made manifest unto this people; yea, and that ye preserve these interpreters.

David Whitmer

"We not only saw the plates of the Book of Mormon but also the brass plates, the plates of the Book of Ether.... There [was] a table with many records or plates upon it, besides the plates of the Book of Mormon, also the Sword of Laban, the Directors i.e., the ball which Lehi had - and the Interpreters [Urim and Thummim]. I saw them just as plain as I see this bed (striking the bed beside him with his hand), and I heard the voice of the Lord, as distinctly as I ever heard anything in my life declaring that the records of the plates of the Book of Mormon were translated by the gift and power of God." (Millennial Star, No. 49, Vol. XL, Dec. 9, 1878)