

## July 1–7: Alma 17–22, “I Will Make an Instrument of Thee”

### Teaching by Example

Recall from The Book of Mosiah how the 4 sons of Mosiah had been with Alma when the angel appeared to him. They were also converted, refused to be king, and went on a mission to Lamanites. 14 years later they were returning back to Zarahemla when they came across Alma.

Alma 17:1-3

1 And now it came to pass that as Alma was journeying from the land of Gideon southward, away to the land of Manti, behold, to his astonishment, he met with the sons of Mosiah journeying towards the land of Zarahemla.

2 Now these sons of Mosiah were with Alma at the time the angel first appeared unto him; therefore Alma did rejoice exceedingly to see his brethren; and what added more to his joy, they were still his brethren in the Lord; yea, and they had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth; for they were men of a sound understanding and they had searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God.

3 But this is not all; they had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and when they taught, they taught with power and authority of God.

What had they done to prepare themselves to teach “with power and authority of God”?

(they had searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God.... They had given themselves to much prayer and fasting)

David M. McConkie

"The Lord has commanded that before we seek to declare His word, we must seek to obtain it. You must become men and women of sound understanding by diligently searching the scriptures and by treasuring them up in your hearts. Then as you ask for the Lord's help, He will bless you with His Spirit and His word. You will have the power of God unto the convincing of men.

"Paul tells us that the gospel comes to men in two ways, in word and in power. The word of the gospel is written in the scriptures, and we can obtain the word by diligently searching. The power of the gospel comes into the lives of those who so live that the Holy Ghost is their companion and who follow the promptings they receive." (CR, Oct. 2013)

It is clear from the following passage that they were aware of their limitations and how much they need God's help. They express their strong desire to be able to teach the Lamanites. As we read this passage note what was required to make it possible for them to teach successfully.

Alma 17:9-11

9 And it came to pass that they journeyed many days in the wilderness, and they fasted much and prayed much that the Lord would grant unto them a portion of his Spirit to go with them, and abide with them, that they might be an instrument in the hands of God to bring, if it were possible, their brethren, the Lamanites, to the knowledge of the truth, to the knowledge of the baseness of the traditions of their fathers, which were not correct.

10 And it came to pass that the Lord did visit them with his Spirit, and said unto them: Be comforted. And they were comforted.

11 And the Lord said unto them also: Go forth among the Lamanites, thy brethren, and establish my word; yet ye shall be patient in long-suffering and afflictions, that ye may show forth good examples unto them in me, and I will make an instrument of thee in my hands unto the salvation of many souls.

Why did they believe that they needed to have the Holy Ghost with them?

(that they might be an instrument in the hands of God to bring... the Lamanites, to the knowledge of the truth)

What did they do to assure the that Holy Ghost would be with them?

(they fasted much and prayed much)

Why do you think that the Lord specifically stressed that they should “show forth good examples unto [the Lamanites]”?

(establish my word)

Jeffrey R. Holland

"Above all else we can live the gospel. Surely there is no more powerful missionary message we can send to this world than the example of a loving and happy Latter-day Saint life. The manner and bearing, the smile and kindness of a faithful member of the Church brings a warmth and an outreach which no missionary tract or videotape can convey. People do not join the Church because of what they know. They join because of what they feel, what they see and want spiritually. Our spirit of testimony and happiness in that regard will come through to others if we let it." (CR, April 2001)

What would be required of them in order to be a good examples and establish His word?

(yet ye shall be patient in long-suffering and affliction)

As we read about the success of that the Son's of Mosiah had among the Lamanite, let's keep in mind the importances of:  
Having the Holy Spirt,

Setting a good example, and  
Being patient in our afflictions

The Son's of Mosiah go their separate ways and Ammon goes to the land of Ishmael. He is taken captive and brought before the king of that city, Lamoni. Lets read how Ammon reacted to the king (remember Ammon was heir to the Nephite throne).

Alma 17:21-25

21 And thus Ammon was carried before the king who was over the land of Ishmael; and his name was Lamoni; and he was a descendant of Ishmael.

22 And the king inquired of Ammon if it were his desire to dwell in the land among the Lamanites, or among his people.

23 And Ammon said unto him: Yea, I desire to dwell among this people for a time; yea, and perhaps until the day I die.

24 And it came to pass that king Lamoni was much pleased with Ammon, and caused that his bands should be loosed; and he would that Ammon should take one of his daughters to wife.

25 But Ammon said unto him: Nay, but I will be thy servant. Therefore Ammon became a servant to king Lamoni. And it came to pass that he was set among other servants to watch the flocks of Lamoni, according to the custom of the Lamanites.

It appears that Ammon had the opportunity to marry into the kings household - Why do you think Ammon asked to be the king's servant?

It gave him an opportunity to "show forth good examples unto them."

Ammon, along with other shepherds were driving the sheep to water when the sheep were scattered by other Laminites who's intent was to get gain by stealing the scattered sheep and also they delighted in the destruction of others. Lets read how Ammon reacted to this incident

Alma 17:28-30

28 Now the servants of the king began to murmur, saying: Now the king will slay us, as he has our brethren because their flocks were scattered by the wickedness of these men. And they began to weep exceedingly, saying: Behold, our flocks are scattered already.

29 Now they wept because of the fear of being slain. Now when Ammon saw this his heart was swollen within him with joy; for, said he, I will show forth my power unto these my fellow-servants, or the power which is in me, in restoring these flocks unto the king, that I may win the hearts of these my fellow-servants, that I may lead them to believe in my words.

30 And now, these were the thoughts of Ammon, when he saw the afflictions of those whom he termed to be his brethren.

Why was Ammon's "heart swollen within him with joy" because of the afflictions of the Laminites?

(I may win the hearts of these my fellow-servants)

What gave Ammon confidence that he could “lead them to believe in [his] words”?

He had full faith in the power of God that was in him.  
He knew that if had the chance to serve them he could win their hearts and that would give him an opportunity to teach them.

James M. Paramore

"He overpowered the enemy and gathered the flocks, and all were astonished at his power, for none of the enemy could touch him....

"And now, after this type of ministry, of concern for others, even greater opportunities would be offered him to teach and minister unto the king and others." (CR, April 1986)

Ammon told the other shepherds to gather the sheep and encircle them and he would go and contend with the would-be thieves. He killed 6 from a distance with the sling. They attacked him so he cut off the arm of each that tried to club him. He killed their leader with the sword. When they returned his fellow shepherd took the arms as a witness to king Lamoni of what he had done.

Alma 18:8-10

8 And it came to pass that king Lamoni inquired of his servants, saying: Where is this man that has such great power?

9 And they said unto him: Behold, he is feeding thy horses. Now the king had commanded his servants, previous to the time of the watering of their flocks, that they should prepare his horses and chariots, and conduct him forth to the land of Nephi; for there had been a great feast appointed at the land of Nephi, by the father of Lamoni, who was king over all the land.

10 Now when king Lamoni heard that Ammon was preparing his horses and his chariots he was more astonished, because of the faithfulness of Ammon, saying: Surely there has not been any servant among all my servants that has been so faithful as this man; for even he doth remember all my commandments to execute them.

What does Ammon do that causes the king to be even “more astonished”?

(Surely there has not been any servant among all my servants that has been so faithful as this man)

Henry B. Eyring

“I am struck by the way [Ammon] taught... Ammon prepared himself, but he did more. He prepared his student to be taught the doctrines of salvation... Now, remember that he not only protected the servants and the animals at the waters of Sebus, but he drove off the enemy. When the other servants brought the evidence of what Ammon had done, King Lamoni said,

‘Where is he?’ They said, ‘Oh, he is in the stables. He is doing every little thing to serve you.’

“Isn’t that odd? He was called to teach the doctrines of salvation, but he was in the stables. Don’t you think he should have been praying and fasting and polishing his teaching plan? No, he was in the stables.” (“The Book of Mormon Will Change Your Life”, Ensign, Feb. 2004)

King Lamoni wants to question Ammon but is afraid because he thinks Ammon might be the Great Spirit.

Alma 18:16-23

17 I say unto you, what is it, that thy marvelings are so great? Behold, I am a man, and am thy servant; therefore, whatsoever thou desirest which is right, that will I do.

20 And the king said: How knowest thou the thoughts of my heart? Thou mayest speak boldly, and tell me concerning these things; and also tell me by what power ye slew and smote off the arms of my brethren that scattered my flocks—

21 And now, if thou wilt tell me concerning these things, whatsoever thou desirest I will give unto thee; and if it were needed, I would guard thee with my armies; but I know that thou art more powerful than all they; nevertheless, whatsoever thou desirest of me I will grant it unto thee.

22 Now Ammon being wise, yet harmless, he said unto Lamoni: Wilt thou hearken unto my words, if I tell thee by what power I do these things? And this is the thing that I desire of thee.

23 And the king answered him, and said: Yea, I will believe all thy words. And thus he was caught with guile.

Note again Ammon's focus on service and desires only to teach Lamoni. He was not interested in anything worldly the king could give him.

Ammon begins to teach Lamoni. He teaches him the truth about his fathers: Laman, Lemuel, and the sons of Ishmael. He teaches him about the creation, the fall, and the words of the prophets from the Brass Plates. He teaches him about Christ and the plan of salvation

Alma 18:40-42; 19:6

40 And it came to pass that after he had said all these things, and expounded them to the king, that the king believed all his words.

41 And he began to cry unto the Lord, saying: O Lord, have mercy; according to thy abundant mercy which thou hast had upon the people of Nephi, have upon me, and my people.

42 And now, when he had said this, he fell unto the earth, as if he were dead.

6 Now, this was what Ammon desired, for he knew that king Lamoni was under the power of God; he knew that the dark veil of unbelief was being cast away from his mind, and the light which did light up his mind, which was the light of the glory of

God, which was a marvelous light of his goodness—yea, this light had infused such joy into his soul, the cloud of darkness having been dispelled, and that the light of everlasting life was lit up in his soul, yea, he knew that this had overcome his natural frame, and he was carried away in God—

What reason is given that “the power of God... had overcome [Lamoni’s] natural frame”?

(the dark veil of unbelief was being cast away from his mind  
this light had infused such joy into his soul)

"Intense spiritual experiences often have the effect of draining one's physical strength. With Lamoni, the Spirit was so powerful that he had collapsed completely, the power of God... ‘had overcome his natural frame’ (Alma 19:6). [There are] other examples of the effect of the Spirit on the body.” (Juvenile Instructor, May 1892, pg. 303-4)

This state was known to Ammon because he had seen something similar with Alma after the angel appeared to him.

Can you think of some of the other examples of people who’s physical frame where overcome by the Spirit?

#### Moses

And the presence of God withdrew from Moses, that his glory was not upon Moses; and Moses was left unto himself. And as he was left unto himself, he fell unto the earth.

And it came to pass that it was for the space of many hours before Moses did again receive his natural strength like unto man... (Moses 1:9-10)

#### Daniel

Therefore I was left alone, and saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me...

Yet heard I the voice of his words: and when I heard the voice of his words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground.

(Daniel 10:8-9)

#### Peter

Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:

... he fell into a trance,

And saw heaven opened... (Acts 10:9-11)

#### Paul

... while I prayed in the temple, I was in a trance;

And saw him saying unto me, Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem... (Acts 22:17-18)

### Lehi

... [Lehi] returned to his own house at Jerusalem; and he cast himself upon his bed, being overcome with the Spirit and the things which he had seen. (1 Nephi 1:7)

### The People of king Benjamin

... when king Benjamin had made an end of speaking the words which had been delivered unto him by the angel of the Lord, that he cast his eyes round about on the multitude, and behold they had fallen to the earth, for the fear of the Lord had come upon them. (Mosiah 4:1)

### The Nephites at the time of Jacob

And when the multitude had witnessed that [Sherem] spake these things as he was about to give up the ghost, they were astonished exceedingly; insomuch that the power of God came down upon them, and they were overcome that they fell to the earth. (Jacob 7:21)

### Joseph Smith

When I came to myself again, I found myself lying on my back, looking up into heaven. When the light had departed, I had no strength; but soon recovering in some degree, I went home. (JSH 1:20)

### Sidney Rigdon (after vision recorded in D&C 76)

“Joseph sat firmly and calmly all the time in the midst of a magnificent glory, but Sidney sat limp and pale, apparently as limber as a rag, observing which, Joseph remarked, smilingly, ‘Sidney is not used to it as I am.’”  
(Account of Philo Dibble, Juvenile Instructor, May 1892, pg. 303–4)

Lamoni recovered long enough to minister to everyone in the room. As he did so they were all overcome by the Spirit except for one Lamanite woman, Abish, who was already converted. She gathered many others together to witness the miracle

Alma 19:29-35

29 And it came to pass that she went and took the queen by the hand, that perhaps she might raise her from the ground; and as soon as she touched her hand she arose and stood upon her feet, and cried with a loud voice, saying: O blessed Jesus, who has saved me from an awful hell! O blessed God, have mercy on this people!

30 And when she had said this, she clasped her hands, being filled with joy, speaking many words which were not understood; and when she had done this, she took the king, Lamoni, by the hand, and behold he arose and stood upon his feet.

31 And he, immediately, seeing the contention among his people, went forth and began to rebuke them, and to teach them the words which he had heard from the mouth of Ammon; and as many as heard his words believed, and were converted unto the Lord.

32 But there were many among them who would not hear his words; therefore they went their way.

33 And it came to pass that when Ammon arose he also administered unto them, and

also did all the servants of Lamoni; and they did all declare unto the people the selfsame thing—that their hearts had been changed; that they had no more desire to do evil.

Why do you think so many people refuse to so much as listen to the message of the gospel?

Pride. Love of the world

### Hard Hearted

We have been discussing what it takes for peoples hearts to be receptive to the gospel. In this lesson we also have examples of those who are not receptive.

Alma 21:1-4

1 Now when Ammon and his brethren separated themselves in the borders of the land of the Lamanites, behold Aaron took his journey towards the land which was called by the Lamanites, Jerusalem, calling it after the land of their fathers' nativity; and it was away joining the borders of Mormon.

2 Now the Lamanites and the Amalekites and the people of Amulon had built a great city, which was called Jerusalem.

3 Now the Lamanites of themselves were sufficiently hardened, but the Amalekites and the Amulonites were still harder; therefore they did cause the Lamanites that they should harden their hearts, that they should wax strong in wickedness and their abominations.

4 And it came to pass that Aaron came to the city of Jerusalem, and first began to preach to the Amalekites. And he began to preach to them in their synagogues, for they had built synagogues after the order of the Nehors; for many of the Amalekites and the Amulonites were after the order of the Nehors.

Who were the Amalekites?

Followers of Amlici who tried to get the Nephites to anoint him to be their king shortly after the death of Mosiah (Alma chapter 2). When he failed his followers joined up with the Lamanites.

Who were the Amulonites?

Descendants of the priests of Noah

Both these groups were decedents of Nephi and were “after the order of the Nehors.” Nehor was an anti-Christ (Alma chapter 1). He started a religion that emphasized worldly gain, no personal responsibility or sacrifice, and guaranteed that all mankind would be saved in the end.

What do you think made these two groups even more hard hearted than the Lamanites?



Matt 6:23

...If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

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.

Alma 21:5-6

5 Therefore, as Aaron entered into one of their synagogues to preach unto the people, and as he was speaking unto them, behold there arose an Amalekite and began to contend with him, saying: What is that thou hast testified? Hast thou seen an angel?

Why do not angels appear unto us? Behold are not this people as good as thy people?

6 Thou also sayest, except we repent we shall perish. How knowest thou the thought and intent of our hearts? How knowest thou that we have cause to repent? How knowest thou that we are not a righteous people? Behold, we have built sanctuaries, and we do assemble ourselves together to worship God. We do believe that God will save all men.

What do we learn about the logic and teachings of anti-Christ from these verses?

(Are not this people as good as thy people?  
How knowest thou the thought and intent of our hearts?  
We do believe that God will save all men)

Alma 21:7-10

7 Now Aaron said unto him: Believest thou that the Son of God shall come to redeem mankind from their sins?

8 And the man said unto him: We do not believe that thou knowest any such thing.

We do not believe in these foolish traditions. We do not believe that thou knowest of things to come, neither do we believe that thy fathers and also that our fathers did know concerning the things which they spake, of that which is to come.

9 Now Aaron began to open the scriptures unto them concerning the coming of Christ, and also concerning the resurrection of the dead, and that there could be no redemption for mankind save it were through the death and sufferings of Christ, and the atonement of his blood.

10 And it came to pass as he began to expound these things unto them they were angry with him, and began to mock him; and they would not hear the words which

he spake.

How did Aaron respond to their argument, “we do not believe that thou knowest of things to come”?

(Aaron began to open the scriptures unto them  
he began to expound these things unto them)

Which is all you can do, teach from the scriptures and bear your testimony  
(a lesson we learned from reading about Jacob confronting Sherem).

How did the Amalekite’s respond when Aaron began to teach them?

(they would not hear the words which he spake)  
Just like those who hardened their hearts against Ammon and Lamoni

But they mocked him and would not hear his words because of the hardness of their hearts

### The Great Plan of Happiness

In chapter 21 we also learn about a confrontation between Ammon and Lamoni’s father (the so called Old King). The Old King was so astonished by Ammon’s love and compassion that he wanted to know more. Aaron and some of his brethren went to teach the Old King.

Alma 22:2-3

2 And it came to pass that he went in unto him into the king’s palace, with his brethren, and bowed himself before the king, and said unto him: Behold, O king, we are the brethren of Ammon, whom thou hast delivered out of prison.

3 And now, O king, if thou wilt spare our lives, we will be thy servants. And the king said unto them: Arise, for I will grant unto you your lives, and I will not suffer that ye shall be my servants; but I will insist that ye shall administer unto me; for I have been somewhat troubled in mind because of the generosity and the greatness of the words of thy brother Ammon; and I desire to know the cause why he has not come up out of Middoni with thee.

In what way did Ammon set an example of righteousness that prompted the Old King to want to know more?

(I have been somewhat troubled in mind because of the generosity and the greatness of the words of... Ammon)

Aaron taught him about the plan of salvation

Alma 22:13-15

13 And Aaron did expound unto him the scriptures from the creation of Adam,

laying the fall of man before him, and their carnal state and also the plan of redemption, which was prepared from the foundation of the world, through Christ, for all whosoever would believe on his name.

14 And since man had fallen he could not merit anything of himself; but the sufferings and death of Christ atone for their sins, through faith and repentance, and so forth; and that he breaketh the bands of death, that the grave shall have no victory, and that the sting of death should be swallowed up in the hopes of glory; and Aaron did expound all these things unto the king.

15 And it came to pass that after Aaron had expounded these things unto him, the king said: What shall I do that I may have this eternal life of which thou hast spoken? Yea, what shall I do that I may be born of God, having this wicked spirit rooted out of my breast, and receive his Spirit, that I may be filled with joy, that I may not be cast off at the last day? Behold, said he, I will give up all that I possess, yea, I will forsake my kingdom, that I may receive this great joy.

Do you remember what the king was willing to give up to save his life when he had the confrontation with Ammon?

Alma 20:23

If thou wilt spare me I will grant unto thee whatsoever thou wilt ask, even to half of the kingdom.

Now the most important thing to him was to have what Aaron described to him and what he had seen in his son; to have the wicked spirit rooted out of him, to be filled with joy, born of God, and have eternal life.

Ezra Taft Benson

"Aaron instructed him to call upon God in faith to help him repent of all his sins. The king, anxious for his own soul, did as Aaron instructed...

"Now I want you, my brethren, to hear again this humble man's words: 'I will give away all my sins to know thee.'

"Brethren, each of us must surrender our sins if we are to really know Christ. For we do not know Him until we become like Him. There are some, like this king, who must pray until they, too, have 'a wicked spirit rooted' from them so they can find the same joy.

"Attaining a righteous and virtuous life is within the capability of any one of us if we will earnestly seek for it." (CR, Oct. 1983)

Alma 22:16-18

16 But Aaron said unto him: If thou desirest this thing, if thou wilt bow down before God, yea, if thou wilt repent of all thy sins, and will bow down before God, and call on his name in faith, believing that ye shall receive, then shalt thou receive the hope which thou desirest.

17 And it came to pass that when Aaron had said these words, the king did bow

down before the Lord, upon his knees; yea, even he did prostrate himself upon the earth, and cried mightily, saying:

18 O God, Aaron hath told me that there is a God; and if there is a God, and if thou art God, wilt thou make thyself known unto me, and I will give away all my sins to know thee, and that I may be raised from the dead, and be saved at the last day. And now when the king had said these words, he was struck as if he were dead.

He did not have to give up his kingdom to know the Lord, but rather all of his sins

What does Aaron promise the King he will receive if he goes before the Lord in faith and repents of his sins?

(the hope which he desires)

He is overcome by the Spirit while the “wicked spirit rooted out”