

### Introduction

The Nephites listening to King Benjamin recognized their need for the redeeming power of the Atonement. As a result, they prayed for forgiveness, received peace of conscience, and took upon themselves the name of Jesus Christ. Like those Nephites, we can also experience a change of heart and live in such a way that we will “always rejoice, and be filled with the love of God, and always retain a remission of [our] sins.” King Benjamin’s sermon instructs us how to “grow in the knowledge of the glory of him that created [us]” (Mosiah 4:12) through faith, repentance, and making and keeping covenants.

### Commentary

#### **Mosiah 4:1–2, 5, 11. “Less Than the Dust of the Earth”**

- King Benjamin’s people viewed themselves “even less than the dust of the earth.” This expression described the fact that while the dust of the earth is obedient to the commands of God (see Helaman 12:7–8), they as God’s children had not always been obedient to His commands. They recognized their utter dependence upon God—that man must rely upon God for everything: life and breath, food and the ability to produce it, health and strength, salvation and eternal life. Without God and the Atonement, man is, in a very real sense, nothing. Humility comes from realizing our dependence upon the Lord. The key to our greatness is to remember our nothingness without Christ and His Atonement. As Jacob taught, if there were no Atonement we would never live again and we would become angels to the devil (see 2 Nephi 9:7–9).

#### **Mosiah 4:2–3. Applying the “Atoning Blood of Christ”**

- King Benjamin’s people recognized their need for power beyond their own to overcome their sinful condition. They prayed for mercy and asked that Heavenly Father “apply the atoning blood of Christ” (Mosiah 4:2) so they could be forgiven of their sins. President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, taught how the Atonement can heal us of our errors:

“We all make mistakes. Sometimes we harm ourselves and seriously injure others in ways that we alone cannot repair. We break things that we alone cannot fix. It is then in our nature to feel guilt and humiliation and suffering, which we alone cannot cure. That is when the healing power of the Atonement will help. . . .

“If Christ had not made His Atonement, the penalties for mistakes would be added one on the other. Life would be hopeless. But He willingly sacrificed in order that we may be redeemed. . . .

“We can even ‘retain a remission of [our] sins’ [Mosiah 4:12]. Baptism by immersion is for the remission of our sins. That covenant can be renewed by partaking of the sacrament each week [see D&C 27:2].

“The Atonement has practical, personal, everyday value; apply it in your life. It can be activated with so simple a beginning as prayer. You will not thereafter be free from trouble and mistakes but can erase the guilt through repentance and be at peace” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2001, 28–29; or *Ensign*, May 2001, 23–24).

#### **Mosiah 4:3. “Peace of Conscience”**

- Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles testified that peace of conscience comes from sincere repentance and righteous living:

“God wants each of His children to enjoy the transcendent blessing of peace of conscience [see Mosiah 4:2–3]. A tranquil conscience invites freedom from anguish, sorrow, guilt, shame, and self-condemnation. It provides a foundation for happiness. . . .

“. . . You can regain peace of conscience by repenting of personal transgressions that cause you internal turmoil. . . .

“Broken law from sin or transgression causes anguish of mind and heart from an offended conscience. Knowing that all of His spirit children save His Only Begotten, Jesus Christ, would unintentionally or intentionally violate His laws, our Eternal Father provided a means to correct the consequences of such acts. Whether the violation be great or small, the solution is the same: full repentance through faith in

Jesus Christ and His Atonement with obedience to His commandments” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2004, 14–15; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 15–16).

- President Boyd K. Packer admonished those who seek peace of conscience through repentance to persevere until they obtain forgiveness:

“The gospel teaches us that relief from torment and guilt can be earned through repentance. Save for those few who defect to perdition after having known a fulness, there is no habit, no addiction, no rebellion, no transgression, no offense exempted from the promise of complete forgiveness. . . .

“That great morning of forgiveness may not come at once. Do not give up if at first you fail. Often the most difficult part of repentance is to forgive yourself. Discouragement is part of that test. Do not give up. That brilliant morning will come.

“Then ‘the peace of God, which passeth . . . understanding’ comes into your life once again. [Philippians 4:7]. Then you, like Him, will remember your sins no more. How will you know? You will know! [see Mosiah 4:1–3]” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1995, 22, 24; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 19–20).

### Mosiah 4:4–8. Come to a Knowledge of the Atonement

- President James E. Faust (1920–2007) of the First Presidency testified of the need for every Latter-day Saint to study and accept the Atonement:

“My beloved brothers and sisters and friends, I come humbly to this pulpit this morning because I wish to speak about the greatest event in all history. That singular event was the incomparable Atonement of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. This was the most transcendent act that has ever taken place, yet it is the most difficult to understand.

“My reason for wanting to learn all I can about the Atonement is partly selfish: Our salvation depends on believing in and accepting the Atonement [see Mosiah 4:6–7]. Such acceptance requires a continual effort to understand it more fully. The Atonement advances our mortal course of learning by making it possible for our natures to become perfect [see Moroni 10:32]. All of us

have sinned and need to repent to fully pay *our* part of the debt. When we sincerely repent, the Savior’s magnificent Atonement pays the *rest* of that debt [see 2 Nephi 25:23]” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2001, 19; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 18).

### Mosiah 4:12. “Retain a Remission of Your Sins”

- Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counseled us to frequently and regularly repent to retain a remission of sins: “Much emphasis was given by King Benjamin to retaining a remission of our sins (see Mosiah 4:26). We do not ponder that concept very much in the church. We ought to think of it a lot more. Retention clearly depends on the regularity of our repentance. In the church we worry, and should, over the retention of new members, but the retention of our remissions is cause for even deeper concern” (“King Benjamin’s Sermon: A Manual for Discipleship,” in John W. Welch and Stephen D. Ricks, eds., *King Benjamin’s Speech: “That Ye May Learn Wisdom”* [1998], 16).

### Mosiah 4:14–15. Raising Righteous Children

- King Benjamin taught the importance of the family and the need for righteous parents. Modern prophets also testify that the Lord commands His faithful disciples to bring up their children in righteousness and teach them gospel principles:

“Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, and to teach them to love and serve one another, [and] to observe the commandments of God” (“The Family: A Proclamation to the World,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 102).



- As a modern witness of parents’ responsibility to teach their children, Elder Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles identified several scriptures that help parents understand their role: “Scriptures direct parents to teach faith in Jesus Christ,

repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost [see Moroni 8:10]. Parents are to teach the plan of salvation [see Moses 6:58–62] and the importance of living in complete accord with the commandments of God [see Leviticus 10:11; Deuteronomy 6:7; Mosiah 4:14]. Otherwise, their children will surely suffer in ignorance of God’s redeeming and liberating law [see 2 Nephi 2:26]. Parents should also teach by example how to consecrate their lives—using their time, talents, tithing, and substance [see Mosiah 4:21–26; 18:27; Alma 1:27] to establish the Church and kingdom of God upon the earth [see JST, Matthew 6:38]. Living in that manner will literally bless their posterity” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2001, 85; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2001, 71).

**Mosiah 4:16–25. Imparting to the Poor**

- King Benjamin reminded us that we are all beggars before God and that we should show mercy to others if we expect mercy in return. Similarly, President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) counseled us to look upon others with compassion:



“Let us be more merciful. Let us get the arrogance out of our lives, the conceit, the egotism. Let us be more compassionate, gentler, filled with forbearance and patience and a greater measure of respect one for another. In so doing, our very example will cause others to be more merciful,

and we shall have greater claim upon the mercy of God who in His love will be generous toward us.

“‘For behold, are we not all beggars? . . .’ [Mosiah 4:19].

“So spoke King Benjamin. To which I add that the power of the Master is certain and His word is sure. He will keep His promise toward those who are compassionate. ‘Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy’ (Matthew 5:7).

“I am confident that a time will come for each of us when, whether because of sickness or infirmity, of poverty or distress, of oppressive measures against us by man or nature, we shall wish for mercy. And if,

through our lives, we have granted mercy to others, we shall obtain it for ourselves” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1990, 89; or *Ensign*, May 1990, 70).

**Mosiah 4:27. “Not Requisite That a Man Should Run Faster than He Has Strength”**

- Elder Neal A. Maxwell pointed out that we have limited time and energy, so we must focus on that which is most important:

“When we run faster than we are able, we get both inefficient and tired. . . .

“I have on my office wall a wise and useful reminder by Anne Morrow Lindbergh concerning one of the realities of life. She wrote, ‘My life cannot implement in action the demands of all the people to whom my heart responds.’ That’s good counsel for us all, not as an excuse to forego duty, but as a sage point about pace and the need for quality in relationships” (*Deposition of a Disciple* [1976], 58).

**MOSIAH 4:30**

*What must we watch and do to avoid perishing?*

**Mosiah 5:2. “A Mighty Change in Us”**

- Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained the process by which we experience the change of heart: “Once we receive a witness of the Spirit, our testimony is strengthened through study, prayer, and living the gospel. Our growing testimony brings us increased faith in Jesus Christ and His plan of happiness. We are motivated to repent and obey the commandments, which, with a mighty change of heart, leads to our conversion. And our conversion brings divine forgiveness, healing, joy, and the desire to bear our witness to others” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2003, 31–32; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 30).

**Mosiah 5:7–8. Becoming Children of Christ**

- President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) explained how we may consider Jesus Christ as our Father:

“If we speak of Jesus Christ as being our Father, we are not making any mistake because, spiritually, he begot us. No question about it—he united spirit and body, providing a resurrection for every living thing. We do not make any mistake in speaking of the Savior as our God, as our Father, and also as the Son of God because he received all authority. Jesus declared the Father conferred all authority upon him, and so he becomes to us a Father. Moreover, he begot us spiritually in the Resurrection. . . .

“. . . We are his sons and daughters. He is a Father to us because he begot us and saved us from death, uniting spirit and body. What is a father but one who gives life?” (“The Fatherhood of Christ” [unpublished address to seminary and institute of religion personnel, Brigham Young University, July 17, 1962], 5–6).

See commentary for Mosiah 15:1–7 (p. 153).

### Mosiah 5:8–10. Taking upon Us His Name

- Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles deepened our understanding of taking the name of Jesus Christ upon us:

“We see that we take upon us the name of Christ when we are baptized in his name, when we belong to his Church and profess our belief in him, and when we do the work of his kingdom.

“There are other meanings as well, deeper meanings that the more mature members of the Church should understand and ponder as he or she partakes of the sacrament.

“It is significant that when we partake of the sacrament we do not witness that we *take upon us* the name of Jesus Christ. We witness that we are *willing* to do so. (See D&C 20:77.) The fact that we only witness to our willingness suggests that something else must happen before we actually take that sacred name upon us in the most important sense. . . .

“Willingness to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ can therefore be understood as willingness to take upon us the authority of Jesus Christ. According to this meaning, by partaking of the sacrament we witness our willingness to participate in the sacred ordinances of the temple and to receive the highest blessings

available through the name and by the authority of the Savior when he chooses to confer them upon us.

“. . . Our willingness to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ affirms our commitment to do all that we can to be counted among those whom he will choose to stand at his right hand and be called by his name at the last day. In this sacred sense, our witness that we are willing to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ constitutes our declaration of candidacy for exaltation in the celestial kingdom. Exaltation is eternal life, ‘the greatest of all the gifts of God’ (D&C 14:7)” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1985, 102–3, 105; or *Ensign*, May 1985, 80–81, 83).

### Mosiah 5:12. “Know the Voice”

- Learning to recognize and follow the Lord’s voice is vital for spiritual progression. Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that God expects us to hear and know His voice in this life: “When my ministry is all over, it will not be any talk that I gave that will be very important in the sight of the Lord; but what will be important to him will be my hearing his voice and responding to his promptings” (“Respond to the Prompting of the Spirit” [an evening with Elder M. Russell Ballard, Jan. 8, 1988], 4, [www.ldsces.org](http://www.ldsces.org)).

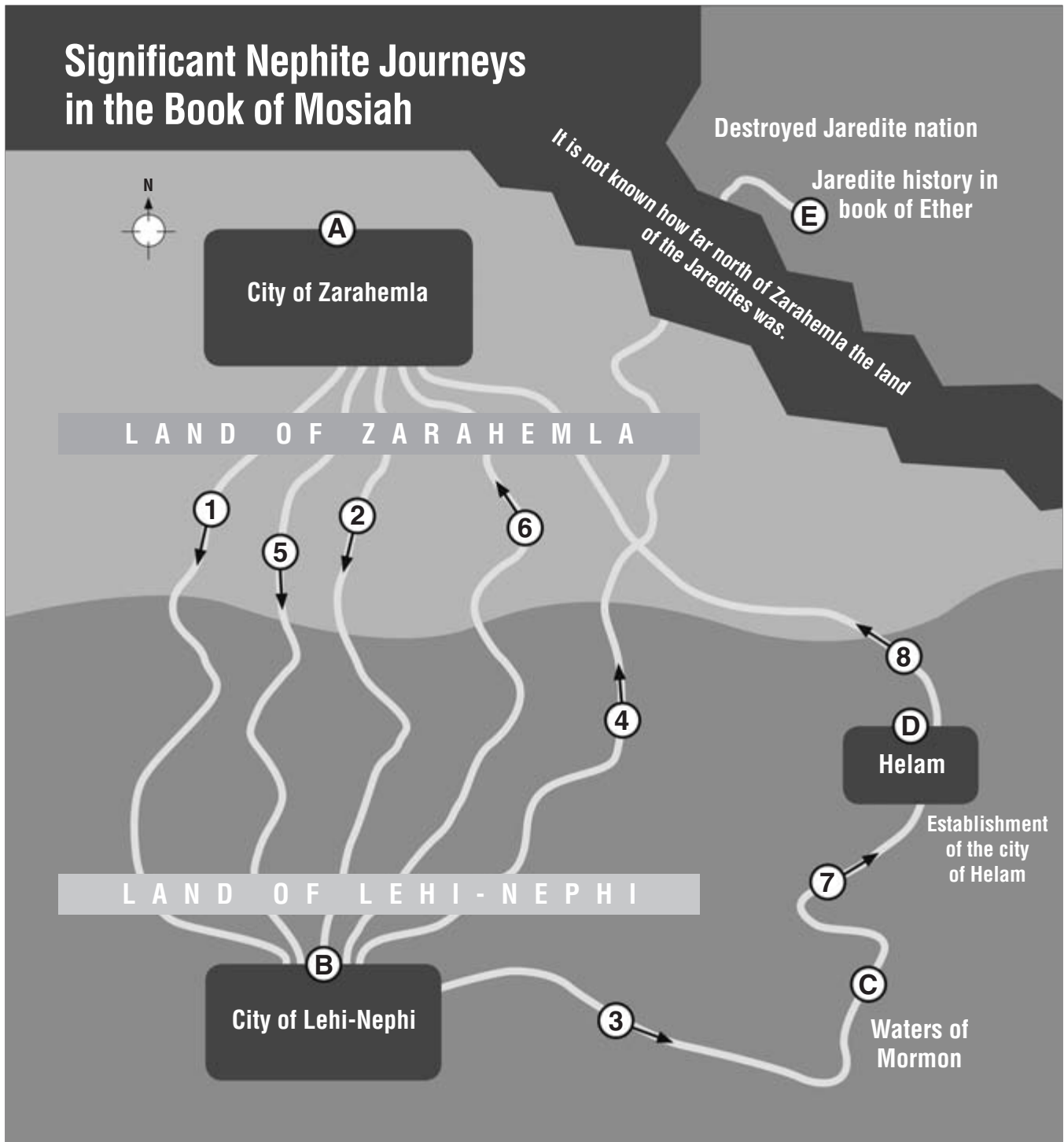
#### **MOSIAH 5:7–12**

*What must we do to be found on the right hand of God?*

### Mosiah 6:4–7. King Mosiah

- King Benjamin named his son after his father. We might, therefore, refer to King Benjamin’s father as Mosiah<sup>1</sup> and to King Benjamin’s son as Mosiah<sup>2</sup>. It was Mosiah<sup>1</sup> who was commanded by the Lord to take those who would follow him and depart out of the land of Nephi into the wilderness because of the wickedness of the Nephites (see Omni 1:12). The book of Mosiah, however, is named after Mosiah<sup>2</sup>; he is the one who kept the record.

## Significant Nephite Journeys in the Book of Mosiah



**Key to Map**

- 1. The ill-fated expedition. Read Omni 1:27–28; Mosiah 9:1–2.
- 2. Zeniff’s expedition. Read Omni 1:29; Mosiah 7:9; 9:3–7.
- 3. Alma’s escape to the Waters of Mormon. Read Mosiah 18:1–7, 30–33.
- 4. The expedition of 43 men to find Zarahemla. Read Mosiah 8:8–9; 21:25–27.

- 5. Ammon’s expedition to find Zeniff’s colony. Read Mosiah 7:2–3.
- 6. Limhi’s escape to Zarahemla. Read Mosiah 22:3–13.
- 7. Alma’s people flee to Helam. Read Mosiah 23:1–5, 19.
- 8. Alma’s escape to Zarahemla. Read Mosiah 24.



### Mosiah 7:1–14; 8:7–21. Nephite Journeys

- To understand the historical setting of Mosiah 7–8, you may need to review the events contained in Omni 1:27–30 and the chapter summaries from Mosiah 7–8. These references discuss the leaders of the people in the land of Zarahemla (Mosiah<sup>1</sup>, King Benjamin, and Mosiah<sup>2</sup>) as well as the kings in the land of Lehi-Nephi (Zeniff, Noah, and Limhi). They also refer to the journeys of various groups of people between the city of Zarahemla and Zeniff's colony in the land of Lehi-Nephi. To better understand these travels, study the accompanying map.

### Mosiah 8:13. Interpreters

- President Joseph Fielding Smith provided this historical overview of the “interpreters” referred to in the Book of Mormon:

“King Mosiah possessed ‘. . . two stones which were fastened into the two rims of a bow’ [Mosiah 28:13] called by the Nephites ‘Interpreters,’ with which he translated the Jaredite record [Mosiah 28:11–14], and these were handed down from generation to generation for the purpose of interpreting languages. How Mosiah came into possession of these ‘two stones’ or Urim and Thummim, the record does not tell us, more than to say that it was a ‘gift from God’ [Mosiah 21:28]. Mosiah had this ‘gift’ or Urim and Thummim before the people of Limhi discovered the record of Ether. They may have been received when the ‘large stone’ was brought to Mosiah with engravings upon it, which he interpreted by the ‘gift and power of God’ [Omni 1:20–21]. They may have been given to him, or to some other prophet before his day, just as the brother of Jared received them—from the Lord.

“That the Urim and Thummim, or two stones, given to the brother of Jared were those in the possession of Mosiah appears evident from the following statements in the Book of Mormon:

“The brother of Jared was commanded to seal up his writings of the vision he had when Christ appeared to him, so that they could not be read by his people. This vision was in a language which was confounded,

for it was not to go forth until after the resurrection of Christ. The Urim and Thummim were also sealed up so that they could not be used for the purpose of interpreting those sacred writings of this vision, until such time as the Lord should grant to man to interpret them. When they were to be revealed, they were to be interpreted by the aid of the same Urim and Thummim [Ether 3:21–28]. . . .

“Joseph Smith received with the ‘breastplate’ and the plates of the Book of Mormon, the Urim and Thummim, which were hid up by Moroni to come forth in the last days as a means by which the ancient record might be translated, which Urim and Thummim were given to the brother of Jared [D&C 17:1]” (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., 5 vols. [1957–66], 1:160–62).

### Mosiah 8:15. “A Seer Is Greater than a Prophet”

- President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) explained the unique role of a seer and how a seer views things



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differently than others: “A seer is one who sees. This does not mean that he sees through his natural eyes but rather through spiritual eyes. The seeric gift is a supernatural endowment” (*The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, ed. Clyde J. Williams [1997], 224).

- Elder John A. Widtsoe (1872–1952) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles further described a seer as one who “perceives the meaning of that which seems obscure to others; therefore he is an interpreter and clarifier of eternal truth. He foresees the future from the past and the present. This he does by the power of the Lord operating through him directly, or indirectly with the aid of divine instruments such as the Urim and Thummim. In short, he is one who sees, who walks in the Lord’s light with open eyes” (*Evidences and Reconciliations*, arr. G. Homer Durham [1960], 258).

**MOSIAH 8:13–18**

*What are the characteristics of a seer?*

## Points to Ponder

- What do you need to do to “retain a remission of your sins”? (Mosiah 4:12; see also vv. 9–30 ).
- What must you do to become a son or daughter of Jesus Christ? (Mosiah 5:7; see also Mosiah 27:24–27; Ether 3:14).

## Suggested Assignments

- Examine Mosiah 4:5–13 and discover some of the attributes of God identified by King Benjamin in his discourse.
- Mosiah 4:12–16 reviews several aspects of gospel living. Select two of them that are most meaningful to you and create a plan to apply them in your life more fully.