

Introduction

Many of the “rising generation” rejected the testimony of their fathers and led some Church members to “commit many sins” (see Mosiah 26:1, 6). As a result, Alma sought the Lord’s guidance on how to deal with members of the Church who broke the laws of God. He also prayed that his own son might “be brought to the knowledge of the truth” (see Mosiah 27:14). The answers to both petitions provide valuable teachings for us today. We learn the manner in which priesthood leaders must admonish those who commit serious sin and help them through the repentance process. We also see the need for all mankind to be “born of God” in the story of Alma the Younger and the four sons of Mosiah. Through your study, contemplate how accepting the Atonement of Jesus Christ leads to repentance, full conversion, and the desire to labor for the salvation of others.

Commentary

Mosiah 25–29. Mosiah²

- The book of Mosiah is often confusing because of the different storylines and historical flashbacks that are part of the book. Refer to the chart “Flashbacks from Omni through Mosiah” in the appendix (p. 413).

Mosiah 25:5–11. The Power of the Scriptures

- In Mosiah 25:5–11, Mosiah “caused” the scriptures to be read to the people. The following list shows the effects that the scriptures had on the people:

1. They were “struck with wonder and amazement” (v. 7).
2. They “were filled with exceedingly great joy” (v. 8).
3. They felt “sorrow” for the deaths of so many (v. 9).
4. They recognized the “goodness of God” (v. 10).
5. They felt the need to “give thanks to God” (v. 10).
6. The sins of others “filled [them] with pain and anguish” (v. 11).



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Mosiah 26:1–4. The Rising Generation

- President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency emphasized the need to teach the youth of the Church to believe in God: “No charge in the kingdom is more important than to build faith in youth. Each child in each generation chooses faith or disbelief. Faith is not an inheritance; it is a choice. Those who believed King Benjamin learned that. Many of their children chose later not to believe. The scriptures give as a reason, ‘for they would not call upon the Lord their God’ (Mosiah 26:4)” (“Inquire of the Lord” [remarks at an evening with Elder Neal A. Maxwell, Feb. 2, 2001], 1, www.ldsces.org).

- Speaking to the youth of the Church, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained why older Church members mentor those younger than them: “So much that we do in this church is directed toward you, those whom the Book of Mormon calls ‘the rising generation’ (Mosiah 26:1; Alma 5:49). We who have already walked that portion of life’s path that you are now on try to call back to you something of what we have learned. We shout encouragement. We try to warn of pitfalls or perils along the way. Where possible we try to walk with you and keep you close to our side” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 52; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 38).

MOSIAH 26:1–6

What were the challenges Alma faced with the rising generation?

Mosiah 26:8–12. Why Did King Mosiah Decline to Judge Church Members?

- After King Mosiah (as king and prophet) gave Alma authority to establish churches throughout the land, it seemed natural for Alma to bring the disobedient Church members to Mosiah to be judged. The king, however, having delegated priesthood authority to Alma, indicated that Alma was responsible for dealing with those who transgressed the laws of the Church. Mosiah retained the judgment of those who broke the laws of the land.


Mosiah 26:20. “Thou Shalt Have Eternal Life”

- The Lord declared that Alma should “have eternal life” (Mosiah 26:20). The Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44) outlined the process by which one obtains this promise: “After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost, (by the laying on of hands), . . . then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son, thou shalt be exalted. When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and his election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter, which the Lord hath promised the Saints, as is recorded in the testimony of St. John” (*History of the Church*, 3:380).

Mosiah 26:24–28. Knowing the Lord

- Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained how we can know the Lord: “We can choose to know the Lord by reading the scriptures every day; by communicating with him in fervent prayer at least morning and night, and in times of trial, every hour or more, if needed; and by keeping his commandments. Remember, ‘Hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.’ (1 John 2:3–5.)” (*Finding Peace in Our Lives* [1995], 74).

Mosiah 26:29–30. Confession of Sins

- Confession of sins is required as part of the repentance process. The Lord declared, “By this ye may know if a man repenteth of his sins—behold, he will confess them and forsake them” (D&C 58:43 ). In *True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* (2004), we read the following description:

“*Confession.* ‘He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy’ (Proverbs 28:13). Essential to forgiveness is a willingness to disclose fully to your

Heavenly Father all that you have done. Kneel before Him in humble prayer, acknowledging your sins. Confess your shame and guilt, and then plead for help.

“Serious transgressions, such as violations of the law of chastity, may jeopardize your membership in the Church. Therefore, you need to confess these sins to both the Lord and His

representatives in the Church. This is done under the care of your bishop or branch president and possibly your stake or mission president, who serve as watchmen and judges in the Church.

While only the Lord can forgive sins, these priesthood leaders play a critical role in the process of repentance. They will keep your confession confidential and help you throughout the process of repentance. Be completely honest with them. If you partially confess, mentioning only lesser mistakes, you will not be able to resolve a more serious, undisclosed transgression. The sooner you begin this process, the sooner you will find the peace and joy that come with the miracle of forgiveness” ([2004], 134).



MOSIAH 26:31
What is the result of refusing to forgive others who trespass against us?

Mosiah 26:32–36. “Their Names Were Blotted Out”

- “Blotted out” in Mosiah 26:36 refers to excommunication. When a Church member commits serious sin, the Lord’s servants must take steps to assist the sinner through repentance. Sometimes this involves formal or informal Church discipline. Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained:

“Church discipline encourages members to keep the commandments of God. Its mere existence . . . stresses the seriousness and clarifies the meaning of the

commandments of God. This is extremely important in an otherwise permissive society. . . .

“The shepherd has a responsibility to protect the flock. . . . That responsibility may require him to deny [the sinner] the fellowship of the Saints or even to sever his membership in the flock. As Jesus taught: ‘If he repent not he shall not be numbered among my people, that he may not destroy my people, for behold I know my sheep, and they are numbered.’ (3 Ne. 18:31; see also Mosiah 26:34–36.)” (*The Lord’s Way* [1991], 216, 227).

- President James E. Faust (1920–2007) of the First Presidency identified offenses that warrant Church discipline:

“Church discipline is not limited to sexual sins but includes other acts such as murder, abortions, burglary, theft, fraud and other dishonesty, deliberate disobedience to the rules and regulations of the Church, advocating or practicing polygamy, apostasy, or any other unchristian conduct, including defiance or ridicule of the Lord’s anointed, contrary to the law of the Lord and the order of the Church. . . .

“Among the activities considered apostate to the Church include when members ‘(1) repeatedly act in clear, open, and deliberate public opposition to the Church or its leaders; (2) persist in teaching as Church doctrine information that is not Church doctrine after being corrected by their bishops or higher authority; or (3) continue to follow the teachings of apostate cults (such as those that advocate plural marriage) after being corrected by their bishops or higher authority’ (*General Handbook of Instructions* [1989], p. 10-3)” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 52–53; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 37–38).

- In 1985 the First Presidency issued an invitation for everyone to come back, which reminded us of our duty toward those who have had their names “blotted out”:

“We are aware of some who are inactive, of others who have become critical and are prone to find fault, and of those who have been disfellowshipped or excommunicated because of serious transgressions.

“To all such we reach out in love. We are anxious to forgive in the spirit of Him who said: ‘I, the Lord, will

forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men.’ (D&C 64:10)

“We encourage Church members to forgive those who may have wronged them. To those who have ceased activity and to those who have become critical, we say, ‘Come back. Come back and feast at the table of the Lord, and taste again the sweet and satisfying fruits of fellowship with the saints.’

“We are confident that many have longed to return, but have felt awkward about doing so. We assure you that you will find open arms to receive you and willing hands to assist you” (Ezra Taft Benson, Gordon B. Hinckley, and Thomas S. Monson, “An Invitation to Come Back,” *Church News*, Dec. 22, 1985, 3).

Mosiah 27:14. An Angel Sent from God

- One of the roles an angel fulfills is to call the wicked to repentance (see Moroni 7:29, 31). Note that the angel did not come to Alma and the four sons of Mosiah because of their righteousness but “that the prayers of his servants might be answered according to their faith” (Mosiah 27:14).

- The ministering of angels must be in harmony with the will of God and does not always occur according to the timetable of the petitioner. Speaking of a man who had prayed for the visitation of angels, President Wilford Woodruff (1807–98) said:

“I said to him that if he were to pray a thousand years to the God of Israel for that gift, it would not be granted, unless the Lord had a motive in sending an angel to him. I told him

that the Lord never did nor never will send an angel to anybody merely to gratify the desire of the individual to see an angel. If the Lord sends an angel to anyone, He sends him to perform a work that cannot be performed only by the



administration of an angel. I said to him that those were my views. The Lord had sent angels to men from the creation of the world, at different times, but always with a message or with something to perform that

could not be performed without. I rehearsed to him different times when angels appeared to men. Of course, I referred to the angel visiting Joseph Smith. The Revelator John said that in the last days an angel would fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwelt on the earth. The reason it required an angel to do this work was, the Gospel was not on the earth. The Gospel and the Priesthood had been taken from among men. Hence God had to restore it again.

“Now, I have always said, and I want to say it to you, that the Holy Ghost is what every Saint of God needs. It is far more important that a man should have that gift than he should have the ministration of an angel, unless it is necessary for an angel to teach him something that he has not been taught” (“The Administration of Angels,” in Brian H. Stuy, comp. *Collected Discourses*, 5 vols. [1987–92], 5:233).

MOSIAH 27:14

How can righteous parents influence wayward children?

Mosiah 27:22–23. Ministering to Those Who Have Strayed

• One of the chief duties God requires of those He calls to serve is to help those who have strayed come back to the fold. While serving in the Seventy, Elder Theodore M. Burton (1907–89) shared his feelings about this sacred work: “I have been asked the question, ‘Isn’t it depressing to have to review the sins and transgressions of people involved in such difficulties?’ It would be if I were looking for sins and transgressions. But I am working with people who are repenting. These are sons and daughters of God who have made mistakes—some of them very serious. But they are *not* sinners. They *were*



sinners in the past but have learned through bitter experience the heartbreak that results from disobedience to God’s laws. *Now* they are no longer sinners. They are God’s repentant children who want to come back to Him and are striving to do so. They have made their mistakes and have paid for them. Now they seek understanding, love, and acceptance” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1985, 80–81; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 64).

Mosiah 27:25. Being Born Again

• President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) gave us an important reminder as we seek to be born again and become like our Savior Jesus Christ:

“We must be careful, as we seek to become more and more godlike, that we do not become discouraged and lose hope. Becoming Christlike is a lifetime pursuit and very often involves growth and change that is slow, almost imperceptible. The scriptures record remarkable accounts of men whose lives changed dramatically, in an instant, as it were: Alma the Younger, Paul on the road to Damascus, Enos praying far into the night, King Lamoni. Such astonishing examples of the power to change even those steeped in sin give confidence that the Atonement can reach even those deepest in despair.

“But we must be cautious as we discuss these remarkable examples. Though they are real and powerful, they are the exception more than the rule. For every Paul, for every Enos, and for every King Lamoni, there are hundreds and thousands of people who find the process of repentance much more subtle, much more imperceptible. Day by day they move closer to the Lord, little realizing they are building a godlike life. They live quiet lives of goodness, service, and commitment. They are like the Lamanites, who the Lord said ‘were baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost, *and they knew it not.*’ (3 Ne. 9:20; italics added.)” (“A Mighty Change of Heart,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1989, 5).

• For additional information on the subject of being born again and experiencing a mighty change of heart, refer to the commentary for Mosiah 5:2 (see p. 144), Alma 5:12–14 (see p. 178), and Alma 36:17–21 (see p. 234).

- Elder Dallin H. Oaks discussed the meaning of being born again:

“The question of whether a person has been saved is sometimes phrased in terms of whether that person has been ‘born again.’ Being ‘born again’ is a familiar reference in the Bible and the Book of Mormon. As noted earlier, Jesus taught that except a man was ‘born again’ (John 3:3) of water and of the Spirit, he could not enter into the kingdom of God (see John 3:5). The Book of Mormon has many teachings about the necessity of being ‘born again’ or ‘born of God’ (Mosiah 27:25; see verses 24–26; Alma 36:24, 26; Moses 6:59). As we understand these scriptures, our answer to whether we have been born again is clearly ‘yes.’ We were born again when we entered into a covenant relationship with our Savior by being born of water and of the Spirit and by taking upon us the name of Jesus Christ. We can renew that rebirth each Sabbath when we partake of the sacrament.

“Latter-day Saints affirm that those who have been born again in this way are spiritually begotten sons and daughters of Jesus Christ (see Mosiah 5:7; 15:9–13; 27:25). Nevertheless, in order to realize the intended blessings of this born-again status, we must still keep our covenants and endure to the end. In the meantime, through the grace of God, we have been born again as new creatures with new spiritual parentage and the prospects of a glorious inheritance” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 77; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 56).

Mosiah 27:28. After Much Tribulation Comes the Blessing

- Though Alma the Younger had to wade through much tribulation, the end result of his repentance was exquisite and exceeding joy (see Alma 36:21). The following chart helps illustrate the effect of Alma’s repentance:

Before	After
“Carnal and fallen,” to be “cast off” (Mosiah 27:25–27; Alma 36:11)	Redeemed of God, “born of the Spirit” (Mosiah 27:24–25; Alma 36:23)
“Wading through much tribulation” (Mosiah 27:28)	Snatched “out of an everlasting burning” (Mosiah 27:28)

Before	After
In “the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity” (Mosiah 27:29)	“Redeemed from the gall of bitterness and bonds of iniquity” (Mosiah 27:29)
“In the darkest abyss” (Mosiah 27:29)	Beheld “the marvelous light of God” (Mosiah 27:29)
“Racked with eternal torment” (Mosiah 27:29)	Soul “pained no more” (Mosiah 27:29)
“Harrowed up by the memory” of his many sins (Alma 36:17)	No longer “harrowed up by the memory” of his sins (Alma 36:19)
Felt exquisite and exceeding pain (Alma 36:20–21)	Felt exquisite and exceeding joy (Alma 36:20–21)
Soul racked with horror at the thought of being in the presence of God (Alma 36:14–15)	Soul longed to be in the presence of God (Alma 36:22)

Taken from the Book of Mormon Gospel Doctrine Teacher’s Manual (1999), 92.

- Elder Jeffrey R. Holland explained we must realize that the price of sin is high and that though repentance can be difficult, the end result is always worth much more than the cost:

“We learn that repentance is a very painful process. By his own admission Alma said he wandered ‘through much tribulation, repenting nigh unto death,’ that he was consumed with an ‘everlasting burning. . . . I was in the darkest abyss,’ he said. ‘My soul was racked with eternal torment’ (Mosiah 27:28–29). . . .

“For three seemingly endless days and nights he was torn ‘with the pains of a damned soul’ (Alma 36:16), pain so real that he was physically incapacitated and spiritually terrorized by what appeared to be his ultimate fate. No one should think that the gift of forgiveness is fully realized without significant effort on the part of the forgiven. No one should be foolish enough to sin willingly or wantonly, thinking forgiveness is easily available.

“Repentance of necessity involves suffering and sorrow. Anyone who thinks otherwise has not read the life of the young Alma, nor tried personally to repent. In the process of repentance we are granted just a taste of the

suffering we would endure if we failed to turn away from evil. That pain, though only momentary for the repentant, is the most bitter of cups. No man or woman should be foolish enough to think it can be sipped, even briefly, without consequence. . . .

“We learn that when repentance is complete, we are born again and leave behind forever the self we once were. To me, none of the many approaches to teaching repentance falls more short than the well-intentioned suggestion that ‘although a nail may be removed from a wooden post, there will forever be a hole in that post.’ We know that repentance (the removal of that nail, if you will) can be a very long and painful and difficult task. Unfortunately, some will never have the incentive to undertake it. We even know that there are a very few sins for which no repentance is possible. But where repentance is possible, and its requirements are faithfully pursued and completed, there is no ‘hole left in the post’ for the bold reason that it is no longer the same post. It is a new post. We can start again, utterly clean, with a new will and a new way of life” (*However Long and Hard the Road* [1985], 83–84).

MOSIAH 28:3–4

How did the conversion of the sons of Mosiah influence their desire to be missionaries?

Mosiah 28:3. “Salvation Should Be Declared to Every Creature”

- President Howard W. Hunter (1907–95) described how desire to share the gospel is a natural result of personal conversion:

“There is the example of the four sons of Mosiah—Ammon, Aaron, Omner, and Himni—who received a forgiveness of sins through the Atonement and then labored for years among the Lamanites to bring them to Christ. The record states that they could not bear the thought that any soul should perish (see Mosiah 28:3). . . .

“A great indicator of one’s personal conversion is the desire to share the gospel with others. For this

reason the Lord gave an obligation to every member of the Church to be missionaries” (*The Teachings of Howard W. Hunter*, ed. Clyde J. Williams [1997], 249).

- Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles suggested one effective way Church members could share the gospel today: “The key to successful member missionary work is the exercise of faith. One way to show your faith in the Lord and His promises is to prayerfully set a date to have someone prepared to meet with the missionaries. I have received hundreds of letters from members who have exercised their faith in this simple way. Even though families had no one in mind with whom they could share the gospel, they set a date, prayed, and then talked to many more people. The Lord is the Good Shepherd, and He knows His sheep who have been prepared to hear His voice. He will guide us as we seek His divine help in sharing His gospel” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2006, 89; or *Ensign*, May 2006, 86).



Mosiah 28:11–20. The Jaredite Record and Seer Stones

- President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) discussed Mosiah’s use of the interpreters in translating the Jaredite record:

“The people of Limhi brought to Mosiah a record, ‘. . . engraven on plates of ore,’ [Mosiah 21:27] which record Mosiah translated by the aid of ‘two stones which were fastened into the two rims of a bow.’ . . .

“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 [see D&C 17:1]” (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., 5 vols. [1957–66], 1:161–62).

Mosiah 29:26–27. The Danger of the Majority Choosing “That Which Is Not Right”

- Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles warned that we must not be indifferent to wickedness in society, because destruction awaits nations that choose unrighteousness:

“Speaking behaviorally, when what was once the lesser voice of the people becomes more dominant, then the judgments of God and the consequences of foolish selfishness follow (see Mosiah 29:26–27).

“Cultural decline is accelerated when single-interest segments of society become indifferent to general values once widely shared. This drift is facilitated by the indifferent or the indulgent as society is led carefully down to hell (see 2 Nephi 28:21). Some may not join in this drift, but instead they step aside, whereas once they might have constrained, as is their representative right. . . .

“We actually have an obligation to notice genuine, telltale societal signs. . . .

“For what happens in cultural decline both leaders and followers are really accountable. Historically, of course, it is easy to criticize bad leaders, but we should not give followers a free pass. Otherwise, in their rationalization of their degeneration they may say they were just following orders, while the leader was just ordering followers! However, much more is required of followers in a democratic society, wherein individual character matters so much in both leaders and followers” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1999, 28–30; or *Ensign*, May 1999, 23–24).

- President Boyd K. Packer also spoke of the recent trends of distorting tolerance:

“The virtue of tolerance has been distorted and elevated to a position of such prominence as to be thought equal to and even valued more than morality. It is one thing to be tolerant, even forgiving of individual conduct. It is quite another to collectively legislate and legalize to protect immoral conduct that can weaken, even destroy the family.

“There is a dangerous trap when tolerance is exaggerated to protect the rights of those whose conduct endangers the family and injures the rights of the more part of the people. We are getting dangerously close to the condition described by the prophet Mosiah [in Mosiah 29:26–27]” (“Children of God,” *BYU Women’s Conference*, May 5, 2006, 6).

Mosiah 29:41–44. The Reign of the Judges

- The change in the government instituted through King Mosiah was so significant that from then until the birth of Christ (see 3 Nephi 2:8) the Nephites recorded their time in relation to the beginning of the reign of the judges. Previously the Nephites kept track of time from the year Lehi left Jerusalem.

Points to Ponder

- What do you think motivates those who have been fully converted to share the gospel with others?
- Why do you feel it is important to keep records in our families and in the Church?

Suggested Assignments

- Volunteer to teach a family home evening lesson about the conversion of Alma the Younger and the sons of Mosiah in Mosiah 27–28. Challenge those you teach to apply the principles demonstrated by Alma and the sons of Mosiah found in Mosiah 27:32–36; 28:3.
- Create a special entry in your personal journal that describes a “change of heart” you experienced in the development of your testimony.