

## Chapter 27

{Original 1830 Chapter XI – continued}

### Persecution by Unbelievers Creates Inequality among Men

1 And **now it came to pass**

aa

A→B that the **persecutions\*** which were inflicted  
on the **church\***  
by the \_\_\_\_\_ **unbelievers**  
became so GREAT

B→C that the **church\* began to** murmur  
and [**began to**] complain to their **leaders\***  
concerning the matter

C→D and they [the **leaders\***] **did** complain to **Alma\***

D→E And [he] **Alma\*** \_\_\_\_\_ laid the case  
before their **king Mosiah\***

E→F And [he] **Mosiah\*** consulted with **his** priests\*

2 And **it came to pass**

[Epistle] E

that **king Mosiah** sent a proclamation *throughout [ALL]the land round about*  
that there **should** NOT ANY **unbeliever**  
persecute ANY  
of **those**  
**who** belonged to the **church**  
of **God**

3 And there was a strict command throughout ALL the **churches**

that there **should** be NO persecutions

bb

among **them**

that there **should** be an equality

among ALL men

[Par. aa – Climactic parallelism]

[Par. bb – Simple alternating parallelism]

[Mosiah 27]

4     **that**   they            should let NO **pride**  
  NOR **haughtiness**  
  disturb **their** **peace**

*Priesthood Leaders Should Support Themselves without Pride*

**that**   EVERY man   should esteem his neighbor **as** himself     01  
  laboring with their own hands     cc  
  for their support

5 **Yea** and   ALL their **priests**  
  and **teachers**  
  should **labor**   with their own hands  
  for their support  
  in ALL cases

**SAVE** it       **were**           in   [cases of] sickness  
  **or**           in   [cases of] much want

**And**       [in]   doing           these **things**  
  **they**       did       abound in the **grace**  
  of **God**

*~~~ People Scatter Abroad*

6    **And**   there        began to be   MUCH **peace** again     02  
  **in**        **the land**

**and**   the **people**   began to be   very numerous

**and**   [the **people**]   began to scatter abroad   **upon**       **the face of the earth**   dd

**yea**   on        **the north**  
**and**   on        **the south**  
[**and**] on        **the east**  
**and**   on        **the west**

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Heb. 01 – Simile “as”]

[Par. dd – Distribution]

[Par. cc – Alternating parallelism]

[Heb. 02 – Use of “began to be”]

building large cities  
 and [small] villages  
 in ALL quarters  
 of the land

[Note: In the Bible, the immediate land is divided into quarters (see, i.e., Joshua 15:5; 18:15-15; Isaiah 47:15; 56:11). Likewise, the heavens (see Jeremiah 49:36) and the earth (see Genesis 19:4) are seen in quadrants. In Egyptian texts, four beings or creatures often depicted the four cardinal points of the earth. (Diane E. Wirth and Steven L. Olsen, "Four Quarters," in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, F.A.R.M.S., p. 145-146.)]

7 And the Lord did visit them  
 And [the Lord] did prosper them  
 and they became a large  
 and a wealthy people [deleted in 1840]

*Unbelievers Deny Equality of All Men before God  
 An Angel Declares Repentance to Alma & the Sons of Mosiah  
 in Answer to the Prayers of the Lord's Faithful Servants*

8 [1] **Now** the sons of Mosiah were numbered among the unbelievers  
 and also ONE of the sons of Alma was numbered among them  
 he being called Alma<sub>2</sub> after his father  
 nevertheless  
 [2] he [Alma<sub>2</sub>] became a very wicked  
 and an idolatrous man  
 [3] **And** he [Alma<sub>2</sub>] was a man of MANY words  
 and [he Alma<sub>2</sub>] did speak MUCH flattery  
 to the people

[Note: I have changed the coloration of "Alma<sub>2</sub>" from black to brown, signifying someone or something bad. I will do the same with the "sons" of Mosiah.]

[Par. ee – Extended alternating contrasting parallelism – see Mosiah 27:24-36 for the matching changes (1'-7') for good]

[Mosiah 27]

**Therefore** he [Alma] led MANY of the people  
[4] to do after the manner of his iniquities

9 [5] **And** he [Alma] became a GREAT hinderment  
to the prosperity of the church  
of God

[6] stealing away the hearts ff  
of the people  
causing MUCH dissension  
among the people  
giving a chance for the **Enemy**  
of God gg  
to exercise his power  
over them  
[the people]

10 **And now it came to pass**  
that **while** he [Alma] was going about [First Statement]  
to destroy the church  
of God

[7] **for** he [Alma] did go about secretly {AG}  
with  
the **sons** of Mosiah

[3] seeking to destroy the church  
**and** [seeking]to lead astray the people  
of **the Lord**

contrary to the commandments of God  
**or** [contrary to the commandments  
of] even the **king**

[Comment]

11 **And as** I [Mormon] said unto you hh

**as** they were going about [Resumptive repetition]  
rebelling against God

\*\*\*

[Par. ff – Working out]

[Par. gg – Like endings “of God”]

[Par. hh – Like paragraph beginnings]

**Behold** [he] the angel of the Lord appeared unto **them**

ii

[Note: According to an article by John Welch, not all readers are aware that the Book of Mormon contains **three** accounts of the conversion of Alma the Younger. **Mosiah 27: 8-37** gives a contemporary account of how Alma had agitated against the church of God before the angel of the Lord appeared to him and helped him make an extraordinary conversion to that which is good. Additionally, in **Alma 36:4-26** and **Alma 38:6-8**, Alma twice recounts his conversion story as he blesses his sons Helaman and Shiblon. Interesting results come from a careful comparison of these three texts. (John W. Welch, "Three Accounts of Alma's Conversion," in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, F.A.R.M.S., p. 150.)]

**and** he [the angel] **descended** **as it were**  
in a cloud

[A] **and** he [the angel] **spake** **as it were** [Chiastic]  
with a **voice** of thunder

which caused the **earth** to shake  
upon which **[earth]** **they** stood

12[B] **And** **so** GREAT was their **astonishment**  
[C] **that** **they** **fell** \_\_\_\_\_ to the **earth**

[D] **and** [they] understood NOT the **words**  
**which** he [the angel] **spake** unto **them**

13 Nevertheless

[E] he [the angel] **cried again**  
**saying**

**Alma** arise  
**and** stand forth

**for** why persecutest **thou** \_\_\_\_\_ the **church**  
of God ?

[F] **For** [He] the Lord hath **said**

This is \_\_\_\_\_ My church  
**and** **I** [the Lord] will establish it [My church]

\_\_\_\_\_ [Par. ii – Like beginnings “he the angel”]

[Mosiah 27]

and NOTHING shall overthrow it [My church]  
SAVE it is the transgression  
of My people

[save it be?]

14 And again

[he] the angel said

Behold [He] the Lord hath heard the prayers  
of His people

jj

And also [He the Lord] hath heard the prayers  
of His servant Alma  
who is thy father

for he [thy father] has prayed  
with MUCH faith  
concerning thee

that thou mightest be brought to the knowledge  
of the truth

therefore

for this purpose have  
[G] I [an angel] come to convince thee  
of the power  
and [of the] authority  
of God  
that the prayers  
of His servants  
might be answered  
according to their faith

15 And now

behold

[G'] can ye dispute the power  
of God?

kk

For behold doth NOT My voice shake the earth?  
And can ye NOT also behold Me before you?

[Par. jj – Simple alternating parallelism]

[Par. kk – Questions to make a point]

And I [an angel] am sent from God  
 16 Now I [an angel] say unto thee

[F] Go  
 and remember the captivity of thy fathers  
 in the land of Helam  
 and in the land of Nephi

and remember how GREAT things  
 He has done for them  
 for they were \_\_\_\_\_ in bondage  
 and He has delivered them

03

And now I [an angel] say unto thee Alma

[E] Go thy way  
 and seek to destroy the church NO MORE [see v. 10]  
 that their prayers may be answered

and [that] this [may be] [archaic grammar – meaning?]  
 even if thou wilt  
 of thyself be cast off

17 And now it came to pass

[D] that these were the last words  
 which [he] the angel spake unto [him] Alma  
 and he [the angel] departed

*All Men Are Redeemed By Covenants, Not Birthright  
 Alma Repents and Is Redeemed*

18 And now

[he] Alma  
 and those that were \_\_\_\_\_ with him  
 [C] fell again to the earth

[Heb. 03 – Use of “how instead of “what”]

[Mosiah 27]

[B'] for GREAT was their astonishment  
for with their own eyes

they had beheld an angel of the Lord  
[A'] and his voice was as thunder 04  
which shook the earth LL

and they knew  
that there was NOTHING SAVE the power of God  
that could shake the earth  
and cause it the earth  
to tremble  
as though it the earth  
would part asunder {AL}  
[split into pieces]

19 And now \_\_\_\_\_ the astonishment  
of Alma was so GREAT mm

that he [Alma] became dumb [see Mosiah 14] nn  
that he [Alma] could NOT open his mouth

yea and he [Alma] became weak  
even that he [Alma] could NOT move his hands

therefore he [Alma] was taken oo  
by those that were with him

and [he Alma was] carried helpless  
[by those that were with him]

even until he [Alma] was laid before his father

20 And they rehearsed unto his father  
ALL that had happened unto them

And his father rejoiced  
for he [his father] knew  
that it was the power of God

[Heb. 04 – Simile “as”]

[Par. LL – Circular repetition “the earth”]

Par. mm – Like beginnings “he Alma”]

[Par. nn – Simple alternating parallelism]

[Par. oo – Simple alternating parallelism]



- 21 **And** he [**his father**] **caused** 05  
**that** a multitude should be gathered \_\_\_\_\_ together  
**that** they might **witness**  
**what** [**He**] **the Lord** had **done** for **his son**  
and also for those that were with him
- 22 **And** he [**his father**] **caused**  
**that** the priests should assemble themselves together  
**and** **they** began to fast  
and [**began**] **to pray** to **the Lord Their God** [Prayer] P  
**that** **He** [**the Lord**] would \*open the **mouth** [see Note] 06  
of Alma  
**that** he [Alma] might **speak**  
**and also**  
**that** **his limbs** might receive their strength [see Note]  
**that** the **eyes** of the people [see Note]  
might be opened  
to **see**  
**and** [to] **know**  
of the **goodness**  
**and** [of the] **glory**  
of **God**
- 23 **And** **it came to pass**  
**after** **they** had **fasted**  
**and** **prayed for the space of** **two days**  
**and** **two nights**  
[or on the third day]  
the **limbs**  
of Alma<sub>2</sub> **received their strength**

[Note: The use of the word “limbs” can be metaphorical. The “arm,” the “hand,” the “finger,” the “feet,” represent various manners in which the power of the Lord is delivered. Note the color change of “Alma” to *light blue*, implying not only a change in character but also as a sign of his role in upholding the covenant order.]

[Heb. 05 – Use of “caused that”]

[Heb. 06 – Idiom]

[Mosiah 27]

and he [Alma] stood up pp  
and [he] Alma began to speak unto them  
bidding them  
to be of good comfort

24 For \_\_\_\_\_ said  
he [Alma]  
I [Alma] have repented of my sins  
[1'] and [I] Alma have been redeemed  
of the Lord  
[2'] behold I [Alma] am born of the Spirit

25 And [He] the Lord said unto me

Marvel NOT that ALL mankind qq  
Yea [ALL] men  
and [ALL] women  
[and] ALL nations  
[and] ALL kindreds  
[and] ALL tongues  
and [ALL] people

MUST be born again  
yea born of God

changed  
from their carnal  
and fallen state  
to a state of righteousness

being redeemed of God 07  
becoming His sons  
and [His] daughters

[see Mosiah 5:7; Romans 8:14]

26 And thus they become new creatures [new creations]  
and unless they do this  
they can in NO wise inherit the kingdom [no way]  
of God

[Par. pp – Like beginnings “he Alma”]  
[Par. qq—Distribution]

[Heb. 07 – Use of “of” meaning “by”]

27 I [Alma] say unto you

Unless **this** be the case  
they MUST be **cast off**

and [that] **this** [be the case]  
I [Alma] know

because I [Alma] was like {AG}  
to be **cast off**

### 28 Nevertheless

[and **after** <sup>^wading / wandering</sup> through MUCH tribulations <sup>[^P / 1830] {AG}</sup>  
**after** **repenting** nigh unto **death**

[He] **the Lord** in mercy  
hath seen fit to snatch me out

of **an everlasting burning**

and I [Alma] am **born** of **God**  
29 My soul hath been **redeemed**

from the **gall of bitterness\***  
and [from the] **bonds of iniquity**

[Note: According to McConkie and Millet, our first biblical reference to gall, a bitter and poisonous herb, is found in Deuteronomy 29:18, where it is used as a metaphor to describe the spiritual state of those who turn from the God of Israel to embrace idolatry. The doctrine being taught by Alma's comment is that to leave righteousness and truth to embrace wickedness and falsehood embitters and poisons the soul toward those covenants that have been abandoned. Thus it is to be expected that those leaving the Church to satiate carnal appetites will not be able to remain neutral toward it, but rather will be characterized by a bitter and poisonous spirit. Alma<sub>2</sub> was a classic example of this sequence and here announces that he has been freed from the spirit of bitterness. (See also Alma 36:18; 41:11; Mormon 8:31; Moroni 8:14; Acts 8:23.) (Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. II, p. 308.)]

I [Alma] was in \_\_\_\_\_ **the darkest abyss\*** rr  
*[a seemingly bottomless pit]*

but **now** I [Alma] behold **the marvelous light**  
of **God**

**My soul** was **wrecked / ^racked** [?; 1830 / ^ 1879]  
with **eternal torment**

but **[now]** I [Alma] am snatched [out  
of **such torment]**

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Par. rr – Contrast]

[Mosiah 27]

and my soul is \_\_\_\_\_ **pained**  
NO MORE

30 I [Alma] **rejected** **my Redeemer**  
and [Alma] **denied** **That**  
which had been spoken of by **our fathers**

but **now** [Alma **know**]  
that they [the prophets] may **foresee**

~~and~~ that **He** [the Lord] **will** **come** ["and" added in 1837, subsequently deleted]  
and that **He** [the Lord] **remembereth** EVERY creature  
of **His** creating 08

and **He** [the Lord] **will** make **Himself** manifest [~~deleted in 1837~~]  
unto ALL

31 **Yea** EVERY **knee** shall bow  
and EVERY **tongue** confess [~~personification~~]  
before **Him**

**Yea** **even at the last day**  
**when** ALL men **shall** stand  
to be **judged**  
of **Him**

that **then** **shall they confess**  
**He** [the Lord] \_\_\_\_\_ IS **God**

[and] **then** **shall they confess**  
who live without **God**  
in the world

that is the **judgment** of **an everlasting punishment**  
**just** upon them

\_\_\_\_\_  
[Heb. 08 – Noun & Verb with the same root “creat”]

and they shall quake  
 and [they shall] tremble  
 and [they shall] shrink  
 beneath the glance of His ALL searching eye [Poetic Language] PL

*Alma and the Sons of Mosiah Publish Peace  
 To All the King's (Mosiah's) People*

32 And **now** **it came to pass**

[3'] that [he] Alma **began** from this time forward  
 to teach the people

and those who were with Alma  
 at the time the angel appeared  
 unto them

[began] *traveling* **round about**  
**through ALL the land**

09

**publishing** to ALL the people  
 [ALL] the things  
 which they had heard  
 and seen  
 and **preaching** [to ALL the people]  
 the word  
 of God  
 in MUCH tribulation  
 being GREATly **persecuted** by those who were **unbelievers**  
 being **smitten** by MANY of them

33 But notwithstanding ALL this

[4'] they did impart MUCH consolation  
 to the church  
 confirming their faith

[Par. kk – Like beginnings “they shall”]

[Heb. 09 – Compound prepositions “round about through”]

and exhorting **them**  
with long **suffering**  
and **MUCH** **travail**  
to **keep the commandments**  
**of God**

34 **And four**  
of **them** [who **were** with **Alma**  
**at the time** the **angel** appeared  
unto **them**]

**were** the **sons** of **[king] Mosiah** LL  
**and** their names **were** **Ammon**<sub>2</sub>  
**and** **Aaron**<sub>2</sub>  
**and** **Omner**  
**and** **Himni**

[**and**]these **were**  
the names of the **sons** of **[king] Mosiah**

35 [5'] **And they** **traveled** **throughout ALL the lands of Zarahemla**  
**and** among **ALL** the people mm  
who **were** under the reign  
of **king Mosiah**

[6'] zealously striving to **repair** **ALL** the **injuries**  
**which they** had done to the **church**

[7'] confessing **ALL** their **sins**  
**which they** had publishing **ALL** the **things**  
**seen**

and explaining the **prophecies**  
and **[ALL]the scriptures**  
to **ALL**  
who desired to **hear them**

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[Par. LL – Detailing]

[Par. mm – General irregular repetition “ALL”]

36 **And thus** they were instruments in the hands 10  
 [8'] of God  
 in bringing MANY  
 to the knowledge of the truth nn  
yea to the knowledge of Their Redeemer

37 **And** how \_\_\_\_\_ **blessed**  
**are**  
they

**For** they did publish peace oo  
 [and] they did publish good tidings of good

**and** they did **declare** unto the **people**  
**that** [He] the Lord **reigneth**

{Original 1830 Chapter Break—end of Chapter XI}

[Heb. 10 – Metaphor “instruments”]

[Par. oo – Simple synonymous parallelism]

[Par. nn – Simple synonymous parallelism]

[Note: According to Blair G. Van Dyke, “the conversion of Alma the Younger provides a template for determining whether true conversion has transpired in the heart of an individual.” Van Dyke identifies 8 specific contrasts found in Alma’s conversion account in Mosiah 27 that elucidate his character before and after his conversion. (Blair G. Van Dyke, “Light or Dark, Freedom or Bondage: Enhancing Book of Mormon Themes through Contrasts,” *Religious Educator: Perspectives on the Restored Gospel* 6/3 (2005): 104-107.) What Van Dyke doesn’t say is that these 8 specific points can be represented in two separated extended alternating contrasting parallels with a long chiasmic structure sandwiched in between, which I have marked in the above structured chapter 27.

**Before Repentance**

- [1] Rejected Jesus in unbelief (v. 8)
- [2] Embraced wickedness and darkness (v. 8)
- [3] Used language skills to flatter and mislead (v. 8)
- [4] Led many people to iniquity (v.8)
- [5] Hindered prosperity of the Church (v. 9)
- [6] Stole the hearts of the people (v. 9)
- [7] Performed evil works in secrecy (v. 10)

**After Repentance**

- [1'] Redeemed of the Lord through repentance (v. 24)
- [2'] Born of the Spirit and brought to the light (v. 25)
- [3'] Used language skills to teach the gospel (v. 32)
- [4'] Imparted consolation / confirmed others’ faith (v. 33)
- [5'] Traveled extensively building up the Church (v. 35)
- [6'] Strove zealously to repair spiritual injuries (v. 35)
- [7'] Published all the things he had seen (v. 35)
- [8'] Was an instrument in the hands of God (v. 36)

[Mosiah 27]

[Note: According to H. Clay Gorton, **Mosiah 27:11-18** can be viewed as a conceptual **chiastic parallelism**. A brief outline of the pertinent elements is as follows:

11 And as I said unto you, as they were going about rebelling against God, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto them; and he descended as it were in a cloud;

A and **he spake as it were with a voice of thunder, which caused the earth to shake** upon which they stood;

12 B And **so great was their astonishment,**

C that **they fell to the earth,**

D and understood not **the words which he spake unto them.**

13 E 1 **Nevertheless he cried again, saying:**

E 2 **Alma, arise and stand forth,**

E 3 **for why persecutes thou the church of God?**

F **For the Lord hath said: This is my church and I will establish it; and nothing shall overthrow it, save it is the transgression of my people.**

14 G And again, the angel said: Behold, the Lord hath heard the prayers of his people, and also the prayers of his servant Alma, who is thy father; for he has prayed with much faith concerning thee that thou mightiest be brought to the knowledge of the truth; therefore, for this purpose have I come to **convince thee of the power and authority of God, . . .**

15 G **And now behold, can ye dispute the power of God? For behold, doth not my voice shake the earth? And can ye not also behold me before you? And I am sent from God.**

16 F Now I say unto thee: Go, and **remember the captivity of thy fathers in the land of Helam, and in the land of Nephi;** and **remember how great things He [the Lord] has done for them;** for they were in bondage, and he has delivered them.

E 1 **And now I say unto thee,**

E 2 **Alma, go thy way.**

E 3 **and seek to destroy the church no more,** that their prayers may be answered, and this even if thou wilt of thyself be cast off.

17 D And now it came to pass that these were **the last words which the angel spake** unto Alma, and he departed.

18 C And now **Alma and those that were with him fell again to the earth,**

B **for great was their astonishment;** for with their own eyes they had beheld an angel of the Lord;

A and **his voice was as thunder, which shook the earth,**

And they knew that there was nothing save the power of God that could shake the earth and cause it to tremble as though it would part asunder.

(H. Clay Gorton, *A New Witness for Christ: Chiastic Structures in the Book of Mormon*, 1997, p. 348.)]



*[Note: In considering the life and circumstances of Alma the Younger, one finds striking parallels between him and another great leader, one whose life and teachings are recounted in the New Testament—the apostle Paul. The reader should be aware that patterns and parallels are an essential part of scripture. According to Alan Goff, a primary characteristic of biblical narrative is extensive allusion, connecting it to other biblical narratives. When the Bible "borrows" from other stories within its corpus, such a practice increases our appreciation for the text ("Reduction and Enlargement: Harold Bloom's Mormons" in Review of Books on the Book of Mormon, F.A.R.M.S., Vol. 5, 1993, p. 100-105.) In other words, similarities are purposely included in scriptural stories so as to direct one's thoughts to other parallel scripture.*

*However, despite the similarities, one should also be aware of the differences. While aware that Christ is the "chief editor" of the content of the Book of Mormon, I have taken the liberty of not only listing some of the similarities between the accounts of Alma and Saul (Paul), but also some of the differences.*

### **Similarities between the Conversion of Alma<sup>2</sup> and Saul (Paul)**

1. Both Alma and Paul were very wicked men before their conversion. (Mosiah 27:8; 1 Timothy 1:12-13)
2. Both were very skillful, talented and influential. (see Mosiah 27:8; Acts 22:3; Acts 9:1-2)
3. Both Alma and Paul traveled about trying to destroy the church of God. (Alma 36:6; 1 Corinthians 15:9)
4. Both persecuted the followers of Christ. (see Mosiah 27:9-10; Acts 8:3)
5. Both Alma and Paul were vigorous in their persecution of the church. (Alma 36:14; Acts 22:4)
6. Both Alma and Paul were out on one of their missions of persecution on the day of their conversion. (Mosiah 27:10-11; Acts 26:11-13)
7. Alma and Saul each received a divine manifestation which resulted in their conversion to the gospel of Christ. (see Mosiah 27:11-12; Acts 9:3-6)
8. In both cases the people present fell to the earth. (Mosiah 27:12; Acts 26:14)
9. The companions of both Alma and Paul were unable to understand the voice that spoke. (Mosiah 27:12; Acts 22:9)
10. In the vision both Alma and Paul were asked why they fought against the work of the Lord. (Mosiah 27:13; Acts 9:4; 22:7)
11. Both Alma and Paul became helpless after the vision and had to be helped by their friends. (Mosiah 27:19; Acts 9:8)
12. Both Alma and Saul's were afflicted as a result of the powerful manifestations they received, which afflictions were followed by their respective conversions to the gospel. In each case, the affliction lasted three days. (see Alma 36:6-26; Acts 9:9, 18-20)
13. Apparently both went without food for a period of three days. (Mosiah 27:23, see Alma 36:10; Acts 9:9)
14. In each case, a righteous man was an instrument in God's hands in bringing about the recovery and conversion of Alma and Saul. (See Mosiah 27:14, 20-23; Acts 9:10-18.)
15. Both Alma and Paul were greatly affected by the Spirit or Holy Ghost. Alma was "born of the Spirit" (Mosiah 27:23-24) and Paul was "filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 9:17).
16. In the cases of both Alma and Saul, their earlier pride led them to seek to destroy the Church of Christ, but they each learned great humility that helped them to be content in their allotted circumstances. (See Alma 29:3-6; Philippians 4:11-12).
17. After their conversion both Alma and Paul traveled about preaching the word of God. (Mosiah 27:32; Acts 9:20)
18. Both accounts are told more than once in the scriptural text. (Alma 27, 36; Acts 9, 26)

[Mosiah 27]

**Some Differences between the Conversion of Alma and Saul (Paul)**

**Alma**

**Paul**

**Alma** led members astray by preaching (Mos 27:10)

*Paul persecuted members by legal "letters," by "compelling them to blaspheme," leading to punishment, prison and death (Acts 9:1-2; 26:10-11)*

**Alma** persecuted members illegally (Mos. 27:2, 10)

*Paul persecuted members by official sanction (Acts 9:1-2)*

With **Alma**, an angel descended upon them "as it were in a cloud" (Mos. 27:11)

*With Paul, at midday a light shone round about them above the brightness of the sun (Acts 9:3; 26:13)*

With **Alma**, a voice spoke as thunder which shook the earth (Mos. 27:11)

*With Paul, just a voice spoke, no modifying words or phrases (Acts 9:4)*

With **Alma**, an angel of the Lord appeared (Mos. 27:11)

*With Paul, Jesus Christ appeared (Acts 9:5, 17; 26:15)*

**Alma's** companions fell to the earth (Mos. 27:12; 27:18)

*Paul has two different accounts: 1st they stood (Acts 9:7) 2nd they all fell (Acts 26:14)*

With **Alma**, no mention is made of language. "Why persecutest thou the church of God" (Mos. 27:13; Mos. 26:22)

*Christ spoke to Paul: "Saul, Saul, Why persecutest thou me?" But He used a phrase also found in the writings of Euripedes ("Why kick against the pricks") (Acts 9:4-5; 26:14)*

The Angel came to **Alma** in response to the prayers of the people and Alma's father (Mos. 27:14)  
He came to convince Alma of the power & authority of God.

With **Paul**, no mention is made.

**Alma's** companions beheld the angel (Mos. 27:18) They understood not at first (Mos. 27:12)

*Paul's companions heard a voice but saw no man (Acts 9:7)*

**Alma**

**Paul**

**Alma** did not hear after the initial message (Alma 36:11) Alma's companions heard the angel (Alma 36:11)

***Paul** could apparently still hear (Acts 9:6, 17)*

**Alma** saw God sitting upon a throne (Alma 36:22)

*With **Paul**, no mention is made*

**Alma's** speech is taken away (struck dumb) (Mos. 27:19; Alma 36:10)

***Paul's** sight is taken away by "scales" (Acts 9:9, 18)*

**Alma's** limbs lost their strength (Mos. 27:22)

***Paul** stood and walked (Acts 9:8)*

**Alma** was taken to his father (Mos. 27:19)

*Ananias came to **Paul** (Christ had spoken to Ananias in vision) (Acts 9:10-17)*

**Alma's** father called the priests to fast & pray (Mos. 27:22)

*With **Paul**, no mention is made of any help*

**Alma's** account deals with his redemption process (Mos. 27:23-31) Racked with eternal torment (Alma 36:17-21) ) An additional theme was deliverance from bondage as a people (Alma 36:28-30)

***Paul's** account focuses on Paul's calling to testify of Christ. Paul, as a "chosen vessel is to declare Christ's name to the Gentiles, to kings, and to the children of Israel. (Acts 9:15), turning them from darkness to light. (Acts 26:18)*

[Mosiah 27]

[Note: In a 17-page paper, Matthew Bowen provides literary and scriptural details on how the Book of Mormon does an amazing wordplay on the actual meaning of the name “Alma” (Mosiah 27:10). He writes:

*Latter-day Saint scholars have put together a convincing case that Alma constitutes an example of a Semitic name attested in the Book of Mormon but unattested in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere I have proposed that Mormon’s narratological introduction of the name Alma into the Book of Mormon text in juxtaposition with the description “and he was a young man” (Hebrew ‘elem = “young man”) constitutes a deliberate wordplay — or play on meaning — involving the name Alma.<sup>2</sup>*

*But there was one among them whose name was Alma (‘almā), he also being a descendant of Nephi. And he was a **young man** (Hebrew ‘elem), and he believed the words which Abinadi had spoken . . . (Mosiah 17:2)*

*I have further argued that Mormon’s subsequent statements regarding Alma’s being “hidden” and “concealed” and going about “privately” while writing the words of Abinadi and establishing a church constitute an interpretive (or midrashic) paronomasia on the name Alma in terms of the Semitic/Hebrew root ‘lm (“conceal,” “hide”) possibly employing one of its synonyms.*

*But the king was more wroth, and caused that Alma should be cast out from among them, and sent his servants after him that they might slay him. But he fled from before them and hid himself [cf. Hebrew \*wayyit‘allēm, wayyissātēr or \*wayyēḥābē] that they found him not. And he being concealed [cf. Hebrew ne‘lam or \*‘ullam] for many days did write all the words which Abinadi had spoken. (Mosiah 17:3-4)*

*However, Mormon’s narrative art goes even further. . . . Mormon crafted his description of Alma the Younger’s furtive attempts to **destroy** his father’s church in Mosiah 27:8–10 as a narratological inversion of his (Mormon’s) earlier description of Alma the Elder’s proselyting and efforts at **building and establishing a church** in Mosiah 18:1–6, especially the statement, “he went about **privately**” (Mosiah 18:1). In particular, Mormon subtly reworks Alma the Younger’s autobiographical statement, “For I went about with the sons of Mosiah **seeking to destroy the Church**” (Alma 36:6), into the more vivid biographical description, “for he did go about **secretly** with the sons of Mosiah **seeking to destroy the Church**” (Mosiah 27:10). . . . Mormon’s addition of an expression rendered “secretly” (Mosiah 27:10) constitutes an additional interpretive pun — or paronomasia — on the name Alma, exploiting the latter in terms of the meaning of the Semitic/Hebrew root \*‘lm, to “hide” or “conceal,” probably in terms of one of its synonyms.*

Footnote 1: Hugh W. Nibley, *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, 3rd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 76; Paul Y. Hoskisson, “Alma as a Hebrew Name,” *JBMS* 7/1 (1998): 72–73; Terrence L. Szink, “New Light: Further Evidence of a Semitic Alma,” *JBMS* 8/1 (1999): 70. See further Terrence L. Szink, “The Personal Name ‘Alma’ at Ebla,” *Religious Educator* 1/1 (2000): 53–56. [etc.] . . .

Footnote 2: See Matthew L. Bowen, “‘And He Was a Young Man’: The Literary Preservation of Alma’s Autobiographical Wordplay,” *Insights* 30/4 (2010): 2–4; Matthew L. Bowen, “Alma — Young Man, Hidden Prophet,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 19 (2016): 343–353.

(Matthew L. Bowen, “‘He Did Go About Secretly’: Additional Thoughts on the Literary Use of Alma’s Name,” *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 27 (2017): 197–212.)]

[Note: According to Greg Wright (1976:39), **Mosiah 27:32-37** can be seen as a chiastic **parallelism**. A brief outline of that parallelism is as follows:

- 32 **A** Alma began from this time forward **to teach the people**, and those who were with Alma at the time the angel appeared unto them, **traveling round about through all the land [publishing]**
- B** **publishing to all the people the things which they had heard and seen**
- C** and **preaching the word of God in much tribulation . . .**
- 33 **D** But notwithstanding all this, **they did impart much consolation to the church confirming their faith, and exhorting them with long suffering and much travail . . .**
- 34 **E** **1** And four of them were **the sons of Mosiah**  
**2** And **their names were**  
**3** **Ammon, and Aaron, and Omner, and Hlmeni**  
**2** These **were the names**  
**E** **1** \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ **the sons of Mosiah**
- 35 **D** And **they traveled . . . zealously striving to repair all the injuries which they had done to the church,**
- B** confessing all their sins, and **publishing all the things which they had seen**
- C** and **explaining the prophecies and the scriptures to all who desired to hear them**
- 36-7 **A** And thus they were instruments in the hands of God. . .  
For **they did publish peace,**  
**they did publish good tidings of good;** and  
**they did declare unto the people that the Lord reigneth.**

*[Mosiah 27]*