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# “To Stir Them Up in the Ways of Remembrance”: Lamanites and Memory in the Book of Mormon

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My dad was voted “Friendliest Boy” by his high school classmates. He is a hero of mine for a lot of reasons, but I don’t think that any accolade he has received meant as much to me while I was growing up as did that senior class superlative, “Friendliest Boy.” My mom would tell us how she was simply swept off her feet by this friendly young man, and I wanted to be that way. I wanted to be just as kind and outgoing and friendly. But more often than not, I felt shy and nervous and insecure. Whenever introversion threatened to dominate, however, I would think of my dad. His goodness reminded me of a better way, and I was inspired as I remembered.

What a wonderful gift is memory! And what a wonderful blessing it is to have people in our lives who spark those memories and who motivate us to action through our remembering. President Kimball once asked, “When you look in the dictionary for the most important word, do you know what it is?” Then he answered his own question with this stirring proposal: “It could be ‘remember.’ Because all of you have made covenants—you know what to do and you know how to do it—our greatest need is to remember. That is why everyone goes to sacrament meeting every Sabbath day—to take the sacrament and listen to the priests pray that they ‘may always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them.’ Nobody should ever forget to go to sacrament meeting. ‘Remember’ is the word. ‘Remember’ is the program.”<sup>1</sup>

“‘Remember’ is the program”—that statement seems to resonate so well with us because of our shared experiences in life. So much of righteousness and happiness is caused by our remembering our covenants, and so much of misery and heartache is caused by forgetting the same. Is it any wonder, then, that “the most correct of any book on earth,” the book by whose precepts we all may “get nearer to God . . . than by any other book,”<sup>2</sup> would have as one of its explicit purposes the reminding of “the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever”? (title page of the Book of Mormon). “Remember the words of thy dying father,” Lehi pled with Joseph (2 Nephi 3:25). “Remember . . . the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God,” Helaman pled with Nephi and Lehi (Helaman 5:12). “Remember these things,” Moroni pled in the closing chapter of the book (Moroni 10:27). These pleas, President Benson reminded us, were “meant for us,”<sup>3</sup> and they are everywhere in the Book of Mormon: some form of the word “remember” appears over 180 times in the book’s pages.<sup>4</sup> For our purposes here, what interests us is the very first time the word is used.

At the end of the second chapter in the book of Mormon, the Lord gave Nephi this sober warning: “If it so be that [thy seed] rebel against me, [the seed of thy brethren] shall be a scourge unto thy seed, to stir them up in the ways of remembrance” (1 Nephi 2:24). Nephi later recorded that same declaration at the time of his people’s fateful break with the Lamanites (see 2 Nephi 5:25). The literal fulfillment of this prophecy becomes a theme that appears again and again in the Book of Mormon, but in many instances, the Lamanites’ role is less than obvious because their work in stirring up remembrance was often not through scourging. Nephite memories were indeed pricked not only through Lamanite fighting but also through the powerful examples of Lamanite families and Lamanite faith.

The connection between the Lamanites’ actions and the Nephites’ remembering seems worthy of attention for several reasons. First (and this is just an intriguing side note), it is impressive that this theme of the Lamanites’ role in inspiring Nephite remembrance—an idea introduced in only the second chapter of the Book of Mormon—weaves its way throughout the narrative. Noting how often the Lamanites played a crucial role in stirring up the Nephites’ memories speaks to the remarkable internal consistency and inspired authorship/translation of the Book of Mormon. The pervasiveness of this theme—interwoven with so many other recurring themes—resonates with this statement by

John Welch about the work of the Prophet Joseph Smith: “How could any author keep all of these potential lines of evidence concurrently in his head while dictating the Book of Mormon without notes or a rough draft”—especially considering that the dictation was completed in less than three months’ working time?<sup>5</sup> The suggestion here is that we can identify a very good answer to that question: Joseph Smith really did what he said he did, and that was translate the record by the “gift and power of God” (introduction to the Book of Mormon).

Second, and most important, the varied and sometimes subtle examples of this Lamanite-inspired remembrance of the Lord underscore the purpose and power of the Book of Mormon in our lives: the power to convince us of the divinity of the Savior Jesus Christ and to remind us constantly of the “great things the Lord hath done” anciently (title page of the Book of Mormon). Remembering this *past* points our minds to the *present*, to the great things that He can—and *does*—do in our day, for us. We can be forewarned of the same types of forgetfulness that plagued the Nephites and thus learn from the examples of Lamanite families and faith *before* we’re faced with scourging. The Lamanites of old, like “[voices] crying from the dust,” can “stir [*us*] up in the ways of remembrance” as well (2 Nephi 33:13; 1 Nephi 2:24).

### **Lamanite Fighting**

Perhaps the most apparent way in which the Lamanites served to stir up the Nephites to remembrance is through the Lamanites’ fierce fighting. This approach seems to fit especially the Lord’s descriptive warning to Nephi that the Lamanites would be a scourge in times of Nephite rebellion or forgetfulness. Examples of this type of memory-jarring warfare abound in the Book of Mormon, but a few typical instances seem to be especially instructive.

Imagine not having the record of King Benjamin and his people! They were a people who “did contend against” the Lamanites “in the strength of the Lord,” a people only three or four generations removed from a time when “the more wicked part of the Nephites were destroyed” because so many had forgotten the crucial connection between righteousness and prosperity (Words of Mormon 1:14; see also Omni 1:5–6, 10). Benjamin’s father, Mosiah, had led “as many as would hearken unto the voice of the Lord” to “flee” from the land of Nephi and find the land of Zarahemla (Omni 1:12). Thus, the whole course of the Nephite nation, together with the national salvation of the floundering Mulekites, turned on this response of righteous Nephites to promptings from the Lord. Those who remembered and recognized

prophetic counsel when faced with an onslaught of Lamanite attacks were blessed with a deliverance that was both physical and spiritual.

King Benjamin understood well this miracle of deliverance that had come to his father's people, as well as to his own people (see Omni 1:24; Words of Mormon 1:13, 18). A solemn commemoration of that deliverance seems to be at least one of the primary motivations behind Benjamin's final, unforgettable speech. He desired to remind his people that if the Lord "had not extended his arm in the preservation of our fathers they must have fallen into the hands of the Lamanites, and become victims to their hatred" (Mosiah 1:14). King Benjamin's subsequent call for deeper righteousness was founded on that which he had witnessed, "that if this highly favored people of the Lord should fall into transgression, and become a wicked and an adulterous people, that the Lord [would] deliver them up, that thereby they become weak like unto their brethren" (Mosiah 1:13; compare Words of Mormon 1:12–18). Benjamin's words seem to take on a fresh urgency in that context: "All that [God] requires of you is to keep his commandments, . . . for which if ye do, he doth immediately bless you . . . and ye are still indebted unto him, . . . therefore, of what have ye to boast?" (Mosiah 2:22, 24); or "Watch yourselves, and your thoughts, and your words, and your deeds, . . . and continue in the faith" (Mosiah 4:30); or "I would that ye should remember to retain the name written always in your hearts, . . . that ye hear and know the voice by which ye shall be called" (Mosiah 5:12). How vivid had their encounters with the Lamanites made this fervent plea: "O man, remember, and perish not" (Mosiah 4:30).

The immediacy of King Benjamin's testimony must have been powerfully reinforced in the minds of the people when, during the reign of his son Mosiah, the descendants of Zeniff's long-lost band were reunited with their Zarahemla compatriots. This newly returned group of Nephites told of Abinadi, whose prophetic message had fallen on mostly deaf ears in King Noah's court. Tragically, many of Noah's people clamored for the life of that fearless prophet who challenged them to "remember that only in and through Christ ye can be saved" (Mosiah 16:13). With the exception of Alma and his fugitive band of believers, Noah's people refused to remember. Again, Lamanite aggression was instrumental in reminding this people of the promises of the prophet they had initially ignored.

Their "carnal security" (2 Nephi 28:21) was shattered when Gideon's serious misgivings about the king were tragically realized in Noah's treachery and cowardice when faced with an attacking Lamanite army (see Mosiah 19). The literal fulfillment of Abinadi's prophecies, coupled

with subsequent years of Lamanite dominance, softened the hearts of these same Nephites, now ruled by Noah's son, Limhi. By the time that Ammon's search party discovered Limhi's people, much had changed. This people that had once congratulated themselves on their invincibility now recognized that "because of [their] iniquities and abominations" they were "brought . . . into bondage" (Mosiah 7:20). They now longed to join with those who had "entered into a covenant with God to serve him" (Mosiah 21:31). The connection between this new humility—a humility largely compelled by Lamanite victories—and memory is highlighted in Limhi's call to remember the Israelite exodus and to see in that exodus story a glimmer of hope: "If ye will turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart, and put your trust in him, and serve him with all diligence of mind, if ye do this, he will, according to his own will and pleasure, deliver you out of bondage" (Mosiah 7:33).

The concurrent experiences of Alma's group of long-suffering Saints speak to the role that oppression under Lamanite (and dissident Nephite) overlords played in their humble petitions for divine deliverance—yet with an important contrast to Limhi's group. Limhi's people "murmured . . . because of their afflictions" (again, mostly *self-induced* afflictions), but they finally "did humble themselves" only after being "[driven] back" and "suffering much loss" during three successive attempts to avenge their losses by taking up arms against the Lamanites (Mosiah 21:8, 11, 15). Theirs seemed to be a collective memory that engaged only slowly; correspondingly, "the Lord was slow to hear their cry because of their iniquities" (v. 15). One of the reassuring messages of the Book of Mormon is that "nevertheless," even in this case, "the Lord did hear their cries," although he did not "yet . . . see fit to deliver them out of bondage" (v. 15). Yet Limhi's people apparently had more to remember—like, for example, the "widows and . . . children" among them or the importance of covenants and baptism (see vv. 17, 33).

On the other hand, though Alma's group was also suffering at the hands of Lamanite captors, their experience was markedly different. When Alma's covenant community was discovered by a wandering contingent of the Lamanite army that had become lost while looking for Limhi's escaping people, they were understandably "much frightened because of the appearance of the Lamanites" (Mosiah 23:26). But in this case, instead of fleeing or fighting, options that Noah's and Limhi's people had variously exercised, Alma "exhorted them that they should not be frightened, but that they should remember the Lord their God and he would deliver them" (v. 27). This people did not need multiple defeats or tragic bloodshed to quicken their memories;

instead, at Alma's urging, they "hushed their fears, and began to cry unto the Lord that he would soften the hearts of the Lamanites" (v. 28). "And it came to pass that the Lord *did*" (v. 29; emphasis added). The contrast between Limhi's group's "[murmuring] because of their afflictions" and Alma's group's "[crying] mightily to God" and then "[submitting] cheerfully" points to a lesson that finds culmination in the way each group was eventually delivered (Mosiah 21:6; 24:10, 15; compare also Mosiah 22:5–16 and 24:16–25). This telling juxtaposition of parallel histories speaks to us: the message is memory but is even more specifically the speed and degree of willingness with which our spiritual memories respond to promptings!

So many other stories in the Book of Mormon come to mind when we think about Lamanite fighting and Nephite remembrance. The "great . . . afflictions" that resulted from the combined Amlicite and Lamanite attacks had "awakened" the Nephites "to a remembrance of their duty" (Alma 4:3). This awakening had a profound effect on the spiritual readiness of many in the Nephite church. Alma, who had prayed to be "an instrument in [the Lord's] hands to save and preserve this people" in battle, now was able to be an instrument "in bearing down in pure testimony" to save and preserve the people, "to stir them up in remembrance of their duty" while their hearts were open (Alma 2:30; 4:19).

Here we might think of Captain Moroni, who based his title of liberty rallying cry on sacred memory and then led his armies to victory against the invading Lamanites (see Alma 46:12). Moroni's efforts in heightening remembrance of covenantal responsibilities make this surprising summary more understandable (and most applicable for our day): "But behold there never was a happier time among the people of Nephi, since the days of Nephi, than in the days of Moroni" (Alma 50:23).

Yet, in the days of another Moroni, Mormon's son, the terrible concluding scenes of the Book of Mormon provide the starkest examples of Lamanite scourging and Nephite forgetfulness when Nephite barbarism and depravity are contrasted with that of the Lamanites (see Moroni 9:7–22). The tragic conclusion of the book, where the Nephites are scourged to the point of extinction by the Lamanites because the Nephites would not remember, makes Mormon's lament that much more poignant: "O ye fair ones, how could ye have departed from the ways of the Lord! O ye fair ones, how could ye have rejected that Jesus, who stood with open arms to receive you!" (Mormon 6:17). Through the Nephites' departing, rejecting, and forgetting, we hear the echoes of Mormon's pained "and thus we see" observations (Helaman 12:3).

Although warfare and destruction seem to best fit the “scourge” metaphor, we also see other subtle ways in which Lamanites served to stir up Nephite remembrance. We need something of the perspective of a Zeniff, who saw “that which was good among” the Lamanites and “contended” for that goodness against the “blood-thirsty” Nephite commander who wanted only to destroy them (Mosiah 9:1–2). We see evidence of that goodness in the ways that righteous Lamanite families also reminded the Nephites of the most important covenants.

### **Lamanite Families**

Jacob’s powerful reproof of Nephite husbands and fathers is made all the more memorable because of his incisive comparisons with their Lamanite contemporaries. His words must have carried a special pointedness, as evidenced by our considering the self-righteous way in which many Nephites despised and dismissed the Lamanites for “their filthiness and the cursing which hath come upon their skins” (Jacob 3:5). “Behold,” Jacob solemnly told his people, “the Lamanites . . . are more righteous than you” (v. 5). He used the examples of Lamanite husbands and fathers who were loving and loyal and who—though blinded by incorrect traditions—were living more righteous lives than were many of the Nephites because the Lamanites had not “broken the hearts of [their] tender wives, and lost the confidence of [their] children” (Jacob 2:35; see also Jacob 3:3–12). Importantly, Jacob noted that the Lamanites had “not forgotten the commandment of the Lord” regarding marriage (Jacob 3:5). Jacob tied the Lamanites’ family fidelity directly to the importance of Nephite memory, pleading with his people to “revile no more against [the Lamanites] because of the darkness of their skins” but instead “remember your own filthiness” and then, most important, “remember your children, how that ye have grieved their hearts because of the example that ye have set before them” (Jacob 3:9–10).

Along with this powerful Book of Mormon discourse on marriage, one of the book’s most significant lessons about righteous parenting also comes from the records of a Lamanite community. The valiant sons of Helaman attributed their unshakable faith to the teachings of their converted Anti-Nephi-Lehi mothers. Helaman obviously was moved by their faithfulness, as were their fellow soldiers—and as Mormon himself eventually was, judging by the amount of precious room on the plates he dedicated to their story.

When Helaman’s two thousand young warriors were pressed unexpectedly into battle, he reported to Captain Moroni that he “never had . . . seen so great courage, nay, not amongst all the Nephites” (Alma



56:45). Almost as if in answer to some unspoken question about what made these stripling soldiers so courageous, so “true at all times in whatsoever thing they were entrusted,” Helaman explained that “they had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them” (Alma 53:20; 56:47). The very fact that Helaman could write that the young men “*rehearsed . . . the words of their mothers*” says something about the deep impression that parental faith—and, undoubtedly, oft-repeated testimony—had made on these sons (Alma 56:48; emphasis added). And understandably so—theirs were parents who had demonstrated in the most real sense that they were willing to “suffer even unto death rather than commit sin” (Alma 24:19).

Significant also is the fact that in a time when Captain Moroni was struggling against dissidents who “withheld . . . provisions from” the Nephite armies, “the fathers of those . . . two thousand sons” sent “many provisions” to Helaman and his men (Alma 60:9; 56:27). These people of Ammon were so “perfectly honest” that they fully honored the initial compact they had made with the Nephites upon “[inheriting] the land of Jershon”: the Nephites would “guard them from their enemies . . . on condition that they [would] give . . . a portion of their substance to assist” in the Nephite army’s maintenance (Alma 27:24, 27). We thus understand a little better why their sons would “obey and observe to perform every word of command with exactness” (Alma 57:21). As they were raised in homes where such exactness was natural, exactness had also become *their* nature.

In battle after battle, “their preservation was astonishing to our whole army,” Helaman reported to Moroni, “and we do justly ascribe it to the miraculous power of God” (Alma 57:26). When “the remainder of [the Nephite] army [was] about to give way before the Lamanites, behold, those two thousand and sixty were firm and undaunted,” such that they often inspired their fellow soldiers to “take courage” and to “remember the Lord their God from day to day” (Alma 57:20; 58:12, 40). The role these young men played in stirring up faith among their companions explains why their miraculous deliverance brought “joy” to the “whole army” (Alma 57:25).

We should not be surprised, then, that this Anti-Nephi-Lehi community affected the Nephite church for a generation. It began with the way in which Nephite perceptions of the Lamanites were changed by the missionary success of the sons of Mosiah. Initially, Ammon recalled, their countrymen ridiculed Mosiah’s sons for even imagining that they could “convince the Lamanites of the incorrectness of the traditions of their fathers, as stiffnecked a people as they [were]” (Alma 26:24).

Those Nephites “laughed” Ammon and his brothers “to scorn,” and that scorn stung to the point that the missionaries “were about to turn back” (Alma 26:23, 27). But they did not turn back—because they were “comforted” with the Lord’s promise that He would “give unto [them] success” (Alma 26:27). Success, indeed! Those earlier naysayers scarcely could have imagined the change that would occur in thousands of Lamanite hearts. That change, both in Nephite perceptions and in Lamanite beliefs, highlights a third way in which the Lamanites stirred up remembrance among the Nephites: by their faith.

### **Lamanite Faith**

Theirs was a brand of faith so remarkable and exemplary that Mormon, with his unique perspective, could write that “as the Lord liveth, as many of the Lamanites as believed in [the preaching of Ammon and his brethren], and were converted unto the Lord, never did fall away” (Alma 23:6). The contrast between these constant and faithful Lamanites, as opposed to those apostate and “more hardened” Nephite dissenters who “had great knowledge of things pertaining to righteousness, and then [had] fallen away into sin and transgression,” was not lost on Mormon, and neither should it be lost on us (Alma 24:30).

King Lamoni and his wife seem to be representative of this remarkable faith. Lamoni’s humble willingness to “believe all [of Ammon’s] words” was matched by his wife’s willingness to “believe,” even though she “had no witness save [Ammon’s] word” (Alma 18:23; 19:9). Ammon was so moved at the queen’s simple trust that he told her, “Blessed art thou because of thy exceeding faith” (Alma 19:10). Then, like Mormon, he was moved to describe that faith in superlative fashion: “I say unto thee, woman, there has not been such great faith among all the people of the Nephites” (v. 10). Blessings did follow their faith. Lamoni testified, “I have seen my Redeemer; and he shall come forth, and be born of a woman, and he shall redeem all mankind who believe on his name” (v. 13). His wife later “cried with a loud voice, saying: O blessed Jesus, who has saved me from an awful hell!” (v. 29). The depth of their conversion, and the subsequent conversion of thousands of their people, is evident in the realization that “their hearts had been changed; that they had no more desire to do evil” (v. 33).

Perhaps nothing better symbolizes that change in desire than the burying of their weapons, followed by the collective willingness of those converted Lamanites to lay down their lives rather than break covenants. Something is sacred in the type of “greater-love” sacrifice that led these Lamanites to “lie down and perish, and [praise] God even in the very act

of perishing under the sword” (Alma 24:23; see also John 15:13). They stirred up many of their own people to remembrance in this instance, such that “the people of God were joined that day by more than the number who had been slain” (Alma 24:26). In a tragic turn of dramatic irony, this very Lamanite army that had been driven to kill their converted countrymen became enraged at shedding the blood of their own people, and they unleashed that rage on the Nephite city Ammonihah, the city whose hard-hearted residents seemed to be the spiritual antithesis of the submissive Anti-Nephi-Lehies. A series of battles and setbacks followed as the descendants of King Noah’s priests urged the Lamanites on and on until finally, sadly, the Lamanites again assumed the role of “scourge,” hunting “the seed” of those wicked priests who had refused to remember prophetic warnings (see Alma 25:1–9). Yet even in the midst of these terrible tragedies—largely because of them, really—still more Lamanites joined “the people of God” and did “bury their weapons of war” (Alma 25:13–14).

When we consider all these developments, we should then think of the miracle that occurred when the Nephites offered the land of Jershon to their former mortal enemies! The report of “all the things that had happened . . . in the land of Nephi, among their brethren, the Lamanites” must have powerfully moved the Nephites to remember this truth: the Lord’s “arm is extended to all people who will repent and believe on his name” (Alma 27:20; 19:36). This outcome brings the story full circle, to the unforgettable contributions of those fearless stripling warriors in inspiring the Nephites to victory after victory.

A generation later, Helaman’s sons Nephi and Lehi led another mission among the Lamanites, and the success they enjoyed was equally miraculous. The Nephites had suffered a devastating blow, losing Zarahemla to a combined force of Lamanites and Nephite dissenters. Yet “this great loss . . . would not have happened had it not been for their wickedness” (Helaman 4:11). Pride, that spiritual cancer, had led the Nephites to foolishly “[*boast*] in their own strength”; it seems only fitting, therefore, that “they were *left* in their own strength” and “[became] weak, like unto their brethren the Lamanites . . . [such] that the Spirit of the Lord did no more preserve them” (Helaman 4:13, 24; emphasis added). This recognition was the beginning of remembrance. In addition, the Lamanite conquest of Zarahemla proved providential: Nephi and Lehi preached to both the dissenters and to the Lamanites in Zarahemla, and this exposure to the “great power and authority” of their preaching led to the baptisms of “eight thousand of the Lamanites who were in the land of Zarahemla,” as well as the baptisms of “many of

those dissenters” (Helaman 5:18–19). Interestingly, a hardened group of expatriate Nephites first associated themselves with the Lamanite army and then, because of that association, invaded Zarahemla, where they unknowingly opened a way for their close contact with the gospel message. Remembrance for these dissidents meant “immediately [returning] to the Nephites to endeavor to repair unto them the wrongs which they had done” (Helaman 5:17).

Another Nephite dissenter experienced a similar type of conversion through the work of Nephi and Lehi when they moved on to preach in the land of Nephi. While being held in prison, Nephi and Lehi were “encircled about with a pillar of fire . . . that . . . burned them not” (Helaman 5:24). Their Lamanite captors were astonished to the point of virtual paralysis. In that setting, “a Nephite by birth, who had once belonged to the church of God but had dissented,” was moved by the fear and awe evident in his Lamanite neighbors (v. 35). Remembrance was rekindled in this Aminadab, and he told the Lamanites (and he surely spoke to himself, as well), “You must repent, and cry unto the voice, even until ye shall have faith in Christ” (v. 41). What an awakening this was for Aminadab, as he remembered that “when ye shall do this, the cloud of darkness shall be removed from overshadowing you” (v. 41). The cloud of darkness was removed from overshadowing all of them; but in an especially poignant way, the real cloud of darkness was apparently removed from overshadowing *him* as he remembered faith in Christ.

These converted Lamanite multitudes took their newfound enthusiasm for the gospel back to the struggling Nephites and “did preach with exceedingly great power and authority, unto the bringing down many of them into the depths of humility” (Helaman 6:5). Unfortunately, however, in these dark days preceding the Savior’s ministry among the Book of Mormon peoples, the Nephites were all but consumed by the evils of secret combinations. Not so with the faithful Lamanite converts. Importantly, the Lamanites “utterly destroyed” the “band of robbers” from among them by “[preaching] the word of God” to them (v. 37). Is it any wonder that the “Lord began to pour out his Spirit upon the Lamanites, because of their easiness and willingness to believe in his words”? (v. 36). In language reminiscent of Jacob, Nephi pointed to the Lamanites to remind the Nephites that “they are more righteous than you” (Helaman 7:24).

The message was one that certainly hit home for some because only one generation later, “all the Lamanites who had become converted unto the Lord did unite with their brethren, the Nephites

. . . against those Gadianton robbers” (3 Nephi 2:12). This unity in righteousness is a high point in the long history of Nephite-Lamanite interaction, and the unity prefigured that coming age when universal remembrance of Christian covenants would mean that no “manner of -ites” was found among the people (4 Nephi 1:17). Conversely, forgetting and rebelling against those covenants are the outcomes that eventually destroyed that “in-one”-ness (see 4 Nephi 1:11, 38). In the end, Mormon’s summary proved to be a regrettably accurate description of Nephite remembrance and Lamanite scourging: “And thus we see that except the Lord doth chasten his people with many afflictions, . . . they will not remember him” (Helaman 12:3). His sober lament seems to beg one crucial question: What about us?

**“For Our Day . . .”<sup>6</sup>**

“We should constantly ask ourselves,” President Benson counseled, “‘Why did the Lord inspire Mormon (or Moroni or Alma) to include that in his record? What lesson can I learn from that to help me live in this day and age?’”<sup>7</sup> This penetrating question leads to discoveries that are both personal and powerful, confirming President Benson’s promise that “there is example after example of how that question will be answered.”<sup>8</sup> Such examples can make this recurring Book of Mormon theme of stirring up remembrance more vital, more meaningful.

When we think of Lamanites like Abish or Samuel, stalwart Saints who risked serious personal harm to share their testimonies of the truth, we hear President James E. Faust’s call to rise to a new level of courageous obedience.<sup>9</sup> Are we ready for the consecrated commitment of Lamoni’s father, who expressed in heartfelt prayer a willingness to “give away all my sins to know thee”? (Alma 22:18).

In a day when President Gordon B. Hinckley has “[issued] a challenge” to “run from the tide of sleaze that would overcome”<sup>10</sup> us, the fidelity of Lamanite husbands and fathers of Jacob’s day can point the direction in which we should run. Theirs is a clarion call for “husbands [who] love their wives” and “husbands . . . [who] love their children” (Jacob 3:7). Can our resolve be strengthened to live in such a way that *no* “sobblings of [the] hearts” of our wives and children ever need “ascend up to God against” *us*? (Jacob 2:35).

In the midst of the book of Alma’s account of the major Nephite-Lamanite wars comes this observation, rich in symbolism for us: “The Nephites were not slow to remember the Lord their God”; therefore, “they *could not* be taken in [the] snares” of their enemies (Alma

55:31; emphasis added). What a motto for our day! When we think of those all-too-present snares, (which sometimes seem *overwhelmingly* all too present!), we can remember the Lamanites' success in destroying the Gadianton robbers from among them. Their victory came through preaching the gospel! Do we hear what this Lamanite triumph can say to us about protecting the sanctity of our homes and our "people"?

Recently, Elder Jeffrey R. Holland reminded us that "no child in this Church should be left with uncertainty about his or her parents' devotion to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Restoration of His Church, and the reality of living prophets and apostles."<sup>11</sup> The examples of the people of Ammon can prompt all parents to consider carefully whether we are doing what Elder Holland went on to recommend: "Live the gospel as conspicuously as you can."<sup>12</sup> Do we specifically and repeatedly teach our children that "there [is] a just God, and whosoever [does] not doubt, . . . they should be preserved by his marvelous power"? (Alma 57:26). Can they "rehearse" what we have taught, and can they confidently say, "We do not doubt our [parents] knew it"? (see Alma 56:48). Perhaps even more important, are we, like those Lamanite parents, "perfectly honest"? Is obeying with exactness *our* nature? Do our future warriors see that in us? Elder Holland asked, "Have our children ever unexpectedly opened a closed door and found us on our knees in prayer?"<sup>13</sup> That is the type of image of faith that these sons of Helaman must have seen in their parents.

"God will have a humble people," President Benson told the Church. "Either we can choose to be humble or we can be compelled to be humble."<sup>14</sup> The underlying message of much of the Nephite-Lamanite history seems to come down to this: so much of pride is essentially *forgetting*, and so much of humility is essentially *remembering*. "Let us choose to be humble," President Benson counseled, and it seems reasonable that representatives from the ranks of both the Nephites and Lamanites would commend his words to us. Thus, though the words are President Kimball's, we can read them in the spirit of those prophets who "speak unto [us] as if [we] were present" (Mormon 8:35): "'Remember' is the program."<sup>16</sup> **RE**

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## Notes

1. Spencer W. Kimball, *Circles of Exaltation*, address to seminary and institute personnel, June 28, 1968, 8.
2. Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 194; also quoted in the Introduction to the Book of Mormon.
3. Ezra Taft Benson, *A Witness and a Warning: A Modern-day Prophet Testifies of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988), 2.
4. Computer-searchable texts of all of the standard works can be found in the “Gospel Library” section of the Church’s Web site, [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org). A search for all words with the stem “rememb-” in the Book of Mormon yields the figure used here (183 instances).
5. John W. Welch, “The Power of Evidence in the Nurturing of Faith,” in *Nurturing Faith through the Book of Mormon: The 24th Annual Sidney B. Sperry Symposium* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995), 169. For a concise treatment of the time line of the translation of the Book of Mormon, see John W. Welch and J. Gregory Welch, *Charting the Book of Mormon: Visual Aids for Personal Study and Teaching* (Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1999), charts 9–10.
6. Benson, *Witness and a Warning*, 2.
7. Benson, *Witness and a Warning*, 20.
8. Benson, *Witness and a Warning*, 20.
9. See James E. Faust, ““That We Might Know Thee,”” *Ensign*, January 1999, 5.
10. Gordon B. Hinckley, “Loyalty,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 59.
11. Jeffrey R. Holland, “A Prayer for the Children,” *Ensign*, May 2003, 85–86.
12. Holland, “Prayer for the Children,” 86.
13. Holland, “Prayer for the Children,” 87.
14. Ezra Taft Benson, “Beware of Pride,” *Ensign*, May 1989, 6.
15. Benson, “Beware of Pride,” 6.
16. Kimball, *Circles of Exaltation*, 281; emphasis added.