



Type: Book Chapter

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Source: *The Temple in Time and Eternity*

Editor(s): Donald W. Parry and Stephen D. Ricks

Published: Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Brigham Young University, 1999

Page(s): 183–231



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CHAPTER 8

CONFLICTING ORDERS:
ALMA AND AMULEK IN AMMONIHAH

Thomas R. Valletta

During the tenth year of the reign of the judges, enmity between two fiercely competing orders of Nephite society erupted into open violence in Ammonihah, a city in the land of Melek. The records describing these hostilities, appearing in Alma 8–14, provide considerable insight into the holy order of the Son of God and its spurious counterpart, the order of Nehor. The theology, priesthood, temple worship, legal practices, and monetary system of the Nephites during the first century B.C. are subjects generously illuminated in these chapters.¹ This paper focuses on the conflict between the holy order of the Son of God and the order of Nehor. The former was patterned after the Savior's life and was rooted in keeping sacred covenants centered in the temple as a symbol of eternity. The latter was patterned after an ambitious murderer and rooted in prideful competition in which individuals were resolute on attaining money as a means of power and riches. Important comparisons and contrasts between these two opposing orders emerge from these chapters; their sources of authority and power,

heroes, centers and rituals of worship, doctrines and standards of behavior, and aspirations and purposes are a few of the most obvious.

The catalyst for the confrontation at Ammonihah occurred over a year earlier when Alma, concerned about increasing pride and wickedness among his people, “delivered up the judgment-seat to Nephiah, and confined himself wholly to the high priesthood of the holy order of God, to the testimony of the word, according to the spirit of revelation and prophecy” (Alma 4:20). Alma began a mission “to deliver the word of God unto the people, first in the land of Zarahemla, and from thence throughout all the land” (Alma 5:1).

Alma’s preaching throughout the land met with mixed success. Ammonihah was one of the least receptive cities to the word of God. Mormon editorialized that “Satan had gotten great hold upon the hearts of the people of the city” (Alma 8:9). Alma had “labored much in the spirit, wrestling with God in mighty prayer, that he would pour out his Spirit upon the people who were in the city; . . . Nevertheless, they hardened their hearts” (Alma 8:10–11). Despite Alma’s valiant efforts, many of the inhabitants of Ammonihah “withstood all his words, and reviled him, and spit upon him, and caused that he should be cast out of their city” (Alma 8:13).

Only by divine intervention and a visit from an angel of the Lord to Alma was Ammonihah given another chance to hear God’s word through the prophet (see Alma 8:14–18). Returning to Ammonihah, Alma found a spiritually receptive Amulek readily confessing that he knew, also by angelic visitation, that Alma was “a holy prophet of God” (Alma 8:20). After spending “many days with Amulek” (Alma 8:27), presumably teaching and preparing him for

the ministry, Alma received revelation that they both were to “go forth and prophesy” unto the people of Ammoniah (Alma 8:29).

The subsequent confrontation between these righteous men of God and the wicked leaders of Ammoniah involved far more than a disagreement between individuals or even a clash of personalities. It was the continuation of an age-old confrontation between priestcraft and true priesthood—in this case, between the keepers of the purse and the keepers of the mysteries of God. In this classic conflict between two competing orders of society, Alma and Amulek acted as agents of the Son of God, while Zeezrom and his comrades assumed the role of minions of Satan, claiming authority from a false priesthood called the order of Nehor.

The High Priesthood of the Holy Order of God

Alma’s commission to teach and testify was “according to the holy order of God, which is in Christ Jesus” (Alma 5:44). During his mission, Alma variously refers to his authority as

- “the high priesthood of the holy order of God” (Alma 4:20; 13:6),
- “the holy order of God” (Alma 5:54; 7:22; 8:4),
- “the holy order” (Alma 6:8),
- “his holy order, which was after the order of his Son” (Alma 13:1),
- “the order of his/the Son” (Alma 13:2, 7, 9),
- “the high priesthood of the holy order” (Alma 13:8),
- “the holy order, or this high priesthood” (Alma 13:10),
- “the high priesthood according to the holy order of God” (Alma 13:18).

“The Holy Priesthood, after the order of the Son of God,” is referred to in modern revelation as the Melchizedek Priesthood, “out of respect or reverence to the name of the Supreme Being, to avoid the too frequent repetition of his name” (D&C 107:3–4). It has long been convincingly reasoned, in my opinion, that the righteous Nephites functioned under the power and authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood rather than the Levitical order.²

That the Melchizedek Priesthood was present among the righteous Nephites is evident by the resulting effects and blessings of that priesthood. Modern revelation indicates that

this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God. Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest. And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh; For without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live. (D&C 84:19–22)

The Book of Mormon is replete with references to ordinances and blessings that relate to the higher priesthood, including the gift of the Holy Ghost³ as well as the right to bestow that gift, the spirit of prophecy and revelation, ordinations, healing the sick, raising the dead, a knowledge of the mysteries of God, seership, sealing power, promises of eternal life, visitations of God, and the keys of the kingdom (see, for example, 1 Nephi 1:8; 2 Nephi 2:4; 11:2; Mosiah 8:13–18; 28:16; Alma 6:1; 9:20–21; 15:5; 17:2–3; 19:13; 31:36; 3 Nephi 7:22; 19:4). Joseph Fielding Smith declared that “all through the Book of Mormon we find references to the Nephites officiating by virtue of the Higher Priesthood after the holy order.”⁴ Elder Bruce R. McConkie concluded

that “the Nephite branch of the house of Israel was subject to the higher priesthood during all its history.”⁵ The remainder of this paper is based on the assumption that righteous Nephites administered under the power and authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood.

High Priesthood and Temple Worship

Intimately connected with priesthood authority are the ordinances and covenants of the temple (see, for example, Numbers 1:48–53; 16:9; Hebrews 7; D&C 124:28, 39, 41–42). The Prophet Joseph Smith alluded to these connections in a talk given on 27 August 1843. He taught that “the Priesthood of Aaron . . . administers in outward ordinances, and the offering of sacrifices.” That the ancient Israelites were limited to the Levitical Priesthood was the result of their refusing the “blessing or knowledge” that Moses offered them at Mt. Sinai. Joseph Smith explained that although the Levitical Priesthood was for performing temple service (see Numbers 1:48–53), it only allowed for “priests to administer in outward ordinances, made without an oath.” To receive the higher orders of the priesthood, such as the “patriarchal authority,” the Prophet admonished the Saints to “go to and finish the temple, and God will fill it with power, and you will then receive more knowledge concerning this priesthood.” Those holding the “fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood,” according to Joseph, “are kings and priests of the Most High God, holding the keys of power and blessings.” To receive this “anointing and sealing is to be called, elected and made sure.”⁶ Alma made it clear that these blessings were available to faithful believers if they would humble themselves before God and “bring forth fruit meet for repentance” (Alma 13:13; see Alma 13:10–19).

The Prophet Joseph Smith had learned early in his ministry of the strong relationship between priesthood and temple. In one of the earliest revelations of this dispensation, Joseph Smith was informed that the priesthood would be revealed by the “hand of Elijah the prophet”; otherwise, “the whole earth would be utterly wasted at [the Lord’s] coming” (D&C 2:1, 3). The young Joseph soon discovered that this was “because he [Elijah] holds the keys of the authority to administer in all the ordinances of the Priesthood; and without the authority . . . , the ordinances could not be administered in righteousness.”⁷ Later, Joseph taught that “the spirit, power, and calling of Elijah is, that ye have the power to hold the key of the revelations, ordinances, oracles, powers and endowments of the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood and of the kingdom of God on the earth; and to receive, obtain, and perform all the ordinances belonging to the kingdom of God.”⁸ In addition, he explained that “if a man gets a fullness of the priesthood of God he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord.”⁹

Only a temple complete with all the ordinances and covenants can provide opportunity for a generation to receive the fulness of the priesthood. As previously noted, Alma’s teachings in Ammonihah include several references to the holy order of the Son of God (see Alma 13:1, 2, 6–9, 16). Concerning this order, President Ezra Taft Benson taught: “To enter into the order of the Son of God is the equivalent today of entering into the fullness of the Melchizedek Priesthood, which is only received in the house of the Lord.”¹⁰ Alma’s claim that his calling and authority was of “the high priesthood of the holy order of God” strongly suggests that he was intimately familiar with higher ordi-

nances and covenants received in temples that included more than Levitical authority (see Alma 4:20; see also Alma 13:6, 8).

Importance of Temples in the Book of Mormon

In antiquity, “the Holy Temple was the very heart and soul” of God’s chosen people.¹¹ According to Menahem Haran, the temple constituted “the most conspicuous and prominent of all cultic institutions in ancient Israel.”¹² “As the ritual center of the universe,” wrote Hugh Nibley, “the temple was anciently viewed as the one point on earth at which men and women could establish contact with higher spheres.”¹³ “The central rite of the temple was certainly the offering of sacrifice—the slaughtering of beasts; yet,” according to Nibley, “the activities we read about in the Bible simply take that for granted and tell us of preaching, of feasting, and of music. The place seemed to be a general center of activity.”¹⁴ Joshua Berman agreed that,

Contrary to the popular misconception that the Temple is solely a sacrificial center, the Temple needs to be construed as part of an organic whole and cannot be studied in isolation. As the center of Israel’s national and spiritual life, it relates integrally to many of the institutional pillars of the Jewish faith—the Sabbath, the land of Israel, kingship, and justice, to mention just a few.¹⁵

“The presence of the temple represented stability and cohesiveness in the community,” reported Stephen Ricks, “and its rites and ceremonies were viewed as essential to the proper functioning of the society.”¹⁶ “If there is no temple,” stressed Nibley, “there is no true Israel; and where there is no true temple, civilization itself is but an empty shell.”¹⁷ As might be expected for a covenant people with direct claims to ancient Israel, “evidence in the Book of

Mormon indicates that temples were equally important among the Nephites, both in their religion and in their society.”¹⁸ As examined below, much of this evidence is provided in the account of Alma in Ammonihah.

The importance of temples in the Book of Mormon is demonstrated by the centrality of such holy places at each of the Nephite capitals (see 2 Nephi 5:16; Mosiah 1:18; 2:1; 7:17; 11:10, 12; Alma 16:13; 23:2; 26:29; Helaman 3:9, 14; 3 Nephi 11:1). The first order of business that Nephi undertook as he assumed leadership over the faithful was to “observe to keep the judgments, and the statutes, and the commandments of the Lord in all things, according to the law of Moses” (2 Nephi 5:10), and to initiate the construction of a temple (see 2 Nephi 5:16). Temples are noted in the Book of Mormon as places of sacrifice and offerings, special instruction, coronations, and covenant ceremonies (see 2 Nephi 5:10; Jacob 1:17; 2:2, 11; Mosiah 2:1–7, 37; 13:30; Alma 16:13; 23:2; 26:29; 30:3; 34:10; 3 Nephi 9:19–20).¹⁹ Various sermons and writings in the Book of Mormon relate to the most sacred teachings associated with holy temples (see Mosiah 1–6, Alma 12–13, and 3 Nephi 11–18).²⁰ With references to ridding one’s garments from people’s sins (see Jacob 2:2), to the garments becoming “white through the blood of the Lamb” (Ether 13:10), and to God not dwelling “in unholy temples” (Alma 7:21; Helaman 4:24), temple imagery and allusion appear liberally in the text of the Book of Mormon. The temple and its related teachings are an important aspect of the Book of Mormon.

Nephites and the Higher Temple Ordinances

Since the Nephites had the fulness of the gospel and functioned under the direction of the high priesthood after the holy order of the Son, their temples were not likely lim-

ited to Levitical ordinances.²¹ The Book of Mormon makes it clear that some Nephites, before the coming of Christ, entered into sacred ordinances pertaining to the holy order of the Son, were familiar with sacred garments, viewed great and wondrous revelations, received the mysteries of God, attained the sealing powers, and received promises of eternal life (see Jacob 2; Mosiah 26:20; Alma 13; Helaman 10). As Robert Millet expressed it:

They were Former-day Saints who enjoyed transcendent spiritual blessings. They had the veil parted and saw the visions of heaven. They knew the Lord, enjoyed his ministration, and received from him the assurance of eternal life. They built temples (see 2 Nephi 5:16; Jacob 1:17; 2:2, 11; Mosiah 1:18; Alma 10:2; 16:13; 26:29; 3 Nephi 11:1), not to perform work for the dead, for such was not done until the ministry of Christ to the world of spirits, but to receive the covenants and ordinances of exaltation. During the Nephite “mini-millennium” and, we would suppose, during those prior periods of Nephite history when the people qualified themselves for such, “they were married, and given in marriage, and were blessed *according to the multitude of the promises which the Lord had made unto them*” (4 Nephi 1:11 italics added). These were the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the promise of the gospel, the priesthood, and eternal life (see D&C 2; Abraham 1:2–3; 2:8–11).²²

Some have questioned the Melchizedek nature of the Nephite temples prior to the ministry of Jesus Christ based on a misunderstanding of Nephi’s declaration that he “did build a temple . . . [and] construct it after the manner of the temple of Solomon save it were not built of so many precious things; . . . it could not be built like unto Solomon’s temple. But the manner of the construction was like unto the temple of Solomon; and the workmanship thereof was

exceedingly fine” (2 Nephi 5:16). It should be realized that Nephi was not, in this verse, referring to the kind of ordinances that were being performed, but rather the manner of construction. “When Nephi said that the ‘manner of construction’ was the same as in Jerusalem,” according to John L. Sorenson, “he could only have meant that the general pattern was similar. What was that pattern, and what was its function?” Sorenson explained:

The temple of Solomon was built on a platform, so people literally went “up” to it. Inside were distinct rooms of differing sacredness. Outside the building itself was a courtyard or plaza surrounded by a wall. Sacrifices were made in that space, atop altars of stepped or terraced form. The levels of the altar structure represented the layered universe as Israelites and other Near Eastern peoples conceived of it. The temple building was oriented so that the rising of the sun on solstice day (either March 21 or September 21) sent the earliest rays—considered “the glory of the Lord”—to shine through the temple doors, which were opened for the occasion, directly into the holiest part.²³

John W. Welch added concerning the Temple of Solomon:

In the opinion of some scholars, Solomon’s temple was distinctive in that it “consisted of three rooms one behind the other, with a narrow front. . . . What is characteristic of the Jerusalem Temple is rather that the three rooms stand one behind the other in a straight line, and that the building is the same width all along its length” with the middle room being the largest.²⁴

Constructing such a temple would not restrict the ordinances performed therein to a Levitical order. Nor would a temple operating under the Melchizedek Priesthood prohibit the performance of Levitical ordinances. Welch wrote:

The Nephites clearly understood the gospel of Jesus Christ and the doctrines of the Messiah, but that understanding was superimposed on their observance of the law of Moses to give even further meaning to this already profoundly rich system of symbolism and religious devotion to the Holy One of Israel. Instead of abrogating the Israelite system, the Nephite understanding infused it with joy that brought its commandments more to life. Accordingly, it is important to allow room for all the ordinances of the law of Moses as well as the ceremonies of Christ's eternal gospel to operate concurrently in Nephite temples down to the coming of Christ.²⁵

Evidence of Melchizedek Temple Ordinances in Alma 8 through 14

Many references in Alma 8–14 suggest that Alma, and probably some of his contemporaries, were familiar with the ordinances, covenants, and teachings associated with temple rites of the Melchizedek Priesthood. These include repeated mention of the holy order of the Son of God; the sacred manner of the calling and ordination with a holy ordinance to this high priesthood (see Alma 13:1–12); how the mysteries of God are known and imparted (see Alma 12:8–12); a caution that we will be judged by our hearts, words, works, and thoughts (see Alma 12:12–14); and a warning that those who once had the mysteries and rejected them will suffer a second death of everlasting destruction (see Alma 12:11–18).²⁶

The presentation of God's eternal plan by Alma and Amulek while preaching in Ammonihah includes elements that compare to known temple themes, for example, the premortal existence (see Alma 13:3–5); Adam and Eve's partaking of the forbidden fruit (see Alma 12:21–23); cherubim

and a flaming sword guarding the way to the tree of life (see Alma 12:21); the resulting death and mortal probation as a time given when men should “prepare to meet God” (Alma 12:24); angels being sent to converse with and teach Adam and Eve (see Alma 12:29); angels teaching men to “call on his [God’s] name” and to make “known unto them the plan of redemption” (Alma 12:30); men being given commandments and warned of the penalty for doing evil (see Alma 12:32); sacred ordinances given to cleanse one’s garments from sin through the blood of the Lamb (see Alma 13:1–12); sanctification and entering into God’s rest through humility, repentance, and obedience (see Alma 13:13); the great King Melchizedek as an example (see Alma 13:14–18); and ordinances given to help one look forward to and rely on Jesus Christ as a type of his order (see Alma 13:16). There seems to be a strong link between the pattern of these teachings and the Nephite temple ceremony.

The Manner after Which They Are Ordained

One of the sacred ordinances discussed by Alma in Ammonihah, which seems especially related to temple ritual, is the “holy ordinance” of ordination as priests to the holy order of God. As noted earlier, entering this holy order in its fulness is intimately connected with the temple. Alma may have been alluding to Nephite temple ceremony and imagery as he discussed the calling, preparation, and ordination to the holy order. As might be expected from one who was steeped in ancient temple ceremony, Alma initiated his discussion of this sacred ordinance by alluding to his earlier remarks concerning the beginning of time, after Adam and Eve had been driven out from the Garden of Eden (see Alma 12:28–34). He “cite[d their] minds forward” (Alma 13:1) to the forepart²⁷ of temporal history

when “God gave these commandments [of which he had been speaking] unto his children” and “ordained priests, after his holy order, which was after the order of his Son, to teach these things unto the people” (Alma 13:1). It is not clear from the text, but Alma may have had in mind a mental image of the temple, which, if patterned after Solomon’s Temple (see 2 Nephi 5:16), would have had three main levels, symbolizing telestial, terrestrial, and celestial worlds.²⁸ For Alma to cite his hearers’ minds “forward” when the commandments were first given may have had reference to the outer area of the Nephite temples. This first level, or forepart of the temple, might have represented the fallen or telestial world into which Adam and Eve were cast to begin their probationary state. In any case, Alma cited their minds forward to the time when God first gave commandments to his children and ordained priests.

These priests after his holy order, according to Alma, “were ordained after the order of his Son, in a manner that thereby the people might know in what manner to look forward to his Son for redemption” (Alma 13:2). It has long been understood by the Saints of this dispensation that “all the ancient prophets and all righteous men who preceded our Lord in birth were, in one sense or another, patterns for him.”²⁹ Alma’s point here is that those who were ordained into the “holy order of the Son of God” were ordained in a manner that was in similitude of the Son’s redemption. He supported this by listing several points of comparison:

- They were “called and prepared from the foundation of the world” (Alma 13:3).
- This calling and preparation was according to the “foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works” (Alma 13:3).
- In the first place, they were left to choose good or

evil, and they chose good and exercised exceedingly great faith (see Alma 13:3). Alma's reference to "the first place" is generally assumed to mean the first estate or premortal existence. He may have been alluding to an actual "place" in the temple that symbolized the premortal calling and preparation of those ordained after the order of the Son.

- Their holy calling was "prepared with, and according to, a preparatory redemption for such" (Alma 13:3). Among the Nephites, the holy calling to the high priesthood was accomplished in such a way as to typify the Lord's redemption as well as to rely on it. Verse three also suggests a preparatory or conditional aspect to the calling of a high priest, which somehow signified how the redemption was prepared. As an ordinance of the holy order, the calling was based on the redemption of Jesus Christ. Although the atonement was in the meridian of time, its effects are beyond the bounds of time. It is an infinite and eternal sacrifice (see Alma 34:10–14). As such, it is the basis and the model for the holy callings of those ordained priests after his holy order.

- These holy callings were prepared "from the foundation of the world for such as would not harden their hearts" (Alma 13:5).

- Their holy calling is "in and through the atonement of the Only Begotten Son, who was prepared" (Alma 13:5).

- They are called and ordained "to teach his commandments unto the children of men, that they also might enter into his rest" (Alma 13:6).

- "This high priesthood [is] after the order of his Son, which order was from the foundation of the world; or in other words, being without beginning of days or end of years, being prepared from eternity to all eternity, according to his foreknowledge of all things" (Alma 13:7).

- They are “called with a holy calling, and ordained with a holy ordinance, and taking upon them the high priesthood of the holy order, which calling, and ordinance, and high priesthood, is without beginning or end” (Alma 13:8).

A careful examination of these passages detailing the calling and ordination of those entering the holy order suggests that more than one comparison may be involved. Alma was, without question, revealing the similitude of the holy calling of priests of the holy order and “in what manner to look forward to his Son for redemption” (Alma 13:2). He also seemed to be alluding to the pattern of how the calling and ordaining of these priests was symbolized in the Nephite temple ceremony. In the words of Welch:

After stating the fundamentals of the plan of salvation, Alma continued his discourse in words that apparently retrace the steps of a sacred Nephite rite that evidently involved an ordination to the priesthood (see Alma 13:1) and prepared the way for obedient people to “enter into the rest of the Lord” (Alma 13:16). This Nephite ordinance was evidently a symbolic ritual, since Alma says that it was performed “in a manner” that looked forward to the redemption of the Son of God (Alma 13:2). That manner, however, is mentioned by Alma only in veiled terms. At a minimum, it appears that the Nephite ceremony referred to a premortal existence, for the candidates were assured that they had been “called and prepared from the foundation of the world” with a “holy calling” (Alma 13:3, see also vv. 5, 8). That calling “was prepared with, and according to, a preparatory redemption for such,” implying that it was provided by God before the world began (Alma 13:3); and it was patterned after, in, and through the preparation of the Son (see Alma 13:5). In this setting, the participants

were “ordained with a holy ordinance,” “taking upon them the high priesthood of the holy order” (Alma 13:6, 8). Thereby they became “high priests forever, after the order of the Son.” After these preparatory ordinances, and after making a choice “to repent and work righteousness rather than to perish,” the candidate was sanctified by the Holy Ghost, his garments were washed white, and he “entered into the rest of the Lord” (Alma 13:9–10, 12).³⁰

The Order of Nehor: An Imitative Priesthood

Since before the beginning of time, Satan has sought to destroy the eternal plan of God through any means, including lies and deception (Moses 4:1–3, 5). As a result of his rebellion in the premortal existence, “he became Satan, yea, even the devil, the father of all lies, to deceive and to blind men, and to lead them captive at his will, even as many as would not hearken unto my voice” (Moses 4:4). “The devil has great power to deceive,” stated the Prophet Joseph Smith. “He will so transform things as to make one gape at those who are doing the will of God.”³¹ During this mortal probation of mankind, Satan’s deception has included imitating and counterfeiting true religion. “In relation to the kingdom of God,” taught Joseph Smith, “the devil always sets up his kingdom at the very same time in opposition to God.”³² Commenting on this satanic ploy, Bruce R. McConkie said:

Since the kingdom of God or true church has been on earth from age to age, so also has the kingdom of the devil or the church of the devil. Adam and Abel had true worship and offered sacrifices in the way the Lord ordained. On the other hand, “Cain loved Satan more than God.” That is, he chose to live after the manner of the

world, and it was Satan, not the Lord, who told Cain, "Make an offering unto the Lord." (Moses 5:18.) Thus the pattern was set for all ages. Satan tells men to worship the Lord, but the proposed worship that he gives them is false and without saving power.³³

Satan's cunning artifice of imitation has successfully misled many throughout history. It is a tactic not to be underestimated. As President Joseph F. Smith warned:

Let it not be forgotten that the evil one has great power in the earth, and that by every possible means he seeks to darken the minds of men, and then offers them falsehood and deception in the guise of truth. Satan is a skillful imitator, and as genuine gospel truth is given the world in ever-increasing abundance, so he spreads the counterfeit coin of false doctrine.³⁴

Such warnings should be considered when pondering the influences driving the wicked leaders in Ammonihah in opposition to Alma and Amulek.

The order of Nehor was a schismatic apostate group that originated in the early years of the reign of the judges. Its name was derived from the heretic Nehor who introduced priestcraft into Nephite society (see Alma 1:12).³⁵ Nehor's doctrine and approach included "bearing down against the church; declaring unto the people that every priest and teacher ought to become popular; and they ought not to labor with their hands, but that they ought to be supported by the people" (Alma 1:3). His movement fits well within the broader rubric of priestcraft, which Nephi defined as "men preach[ing] and set[ting] themselves up for a light unto the world, that they may get gain and praise of the world; but they seek not the welfare of Zion" (2 Nephi 26:29). *Priestcraft*, a word not in most modern dictionaries, is defined by the 1828 *American Dictionary of the English*

Language by Noah Webster as “the stratagems and frauds of priests; fraud or imposition in religious concerns; management of selfish and ambitious priests to gain wealth and power, or to impose on the credulity of others.”³⁶ This is in contrast to the same dictionary’s definitions of *priesthood*: (1) “the office or character of a priest” and (2) “the order of men set apart for sacred offices; the order composed of priests.”³⁷ From these definitions, it is clear that priestcrafts, including the order of Nehor, are counterfeits or frauds of priesthood or the sacred priestly order.

Fundamental to Nehor’s dogma was his teaching that “all mankind should be saved at the last day, and that they need not fear nor tremble, but that they might lift up their heads and rejoice; for the Lord had created all men, and had also redeemed all men; and, in the end, all men should have eternal life” (Alma 1:4). As is evidently not uncommon among apostates, Nehor attempted to enforce his priestcraft by the sword in his murder of Gideon.³⁸ As a result, he was condemned to die according to the law set forth by King Mosiah (see Alma 1:13–14). The description of his execution suggests a ceremonial invoking of a covenantal cursing, and, as has been suggested by Nibley, may hark back to an ancient tradition of the fallen angel Shamhozai, who “repented, and by way of penance hung himself up between heaven and earth.”³⁹ In the case of Nehor, he was carried to “the top of the hill Manti, and there he was caused, or rather did acknowledge, between the heavens and the earth, that what he had taught to the people was contrary to the word of God; and there he suffered an ignominious death” (Alma 1:15).

Nehor’s confession and ritual execution “did not put an end to the spreading of priestcraft through the land; for there were many who loved the vain things of the world”

(Alma 1:16). Within five years Amlici, another scheming demagogue after the order of Nehor, arose to prominence. His cunning and worldly wisdom drew away many people and created a great contention among the Nephites. Amlici sought political power in an effort to deprive the people “of their rights and privileges of the church” and ultimately to “destroy the church of God” (Alma 2:4). Rejected by the voice of the people, Amlici’s own followers consecrated him to be their king (see Alma 2:7–9). These dissenters marked themselves in such a way as to separate themselves from their brethren (see Alma 3:4). Following in the tradition of many apostates, the proclivities of Amlici and his followers turned violent (see Genesis 6:11–13; Ether 8–9; Moses 5:32, 47; 6:28; 8:28–30). Amlici’s first order of business as a factional monarch was to command his followers to “take up arms against their brethren” that “he might subject them to him” (Alma 2:10). A terrible and bloody slaughter followed (see Alma 2:16–20). Though routed, the Amlicites refused to quit and eventually joined with the Lamanites (see Alma 2:21–24). A series of ferocious battles continued with an appalling loss of lives on both sides (see Alma 2:25–3:3).

The Order of Nehor at Ammonihah

Notwithstanding the violence and trouble that accompanied the order of Nehor, it thrived during this era of Nephite history. By the tenth year of the reign of the judges, Ammonihah was a hotbed of this order of dissidents. It is not clear from the scriptures whether Ammonihah had its own particular strain of the order or whether the descriptions of the order in Ammonihah can be generalized to the entire order. Specific details, however, are given in the scriptures concerning the order of Nehor in Ammonihah.

They were a hard-hearted people who were familiar with Alma and yet rejected his authority as the high priest, believing that he had no power over them (see Alma 8:11–12). Their disagreement with Alma was vehement to the point of bigoted derision and physical abuse (see Alma 8:13). The angel who appeared to Alma after his expulsion from Ammonihah described their wickedness as so serious that “except they repent the Lord God will destroy them” (Alma 8:16). This angel declared that the wicked in Ammonihah, in accordance with what Satan and his minions have historically sought, “do study at this time that they may destroy the liberty of thy people, (for thus saith the Lord) which is contrary to the statutes, and judgments, and commandments which he has given unto his people” (Alma 8:17; see Moses 4:3; Galatians 2:4 JST; 2 Peter 2:19; Helaman 1:8; 3 Nephi 6:30).

After Alma’s return to Ammonihah and while he was spiritually preparing Amulek, the people “did wax more gross in their iniquities” (Alma 8:28). Again Alma “went forth,” this time with Amulek, “to declare the words of God unto” the wicked of Ammonihah (Alma 8:30). Filled with the Holy Ghost, Alma and Amulek preached and prophesied “according to the spirit and power which the Lord had given them” (Alma 8:32). Alma was the first to speak, but his spirit and power seemed not to influence the people. They reacted contentiously (see Alma 9:1). Not yet realizing that Alma had proselytized a powerful ally, they scoffed at the notion that “we shall believe the testimony of one man” (Alma 9:2). In addition, having long since lost the Spirit and forgotten the power of God, “they knew not that the earth should pass away” (Alma 9:3); so they ridiculed the idea that their “great city should be destroyed in one day” (Alma 9:4). All this was because they “knew not that

God could do such marvelous works, for they were a hard-hearted and a stiffnecked people" (Alma 9:5). Like the apostates in all dispensations, the reaction of those in the order of Nehor is best described by the Prophet Joseph Smith when he taught that "the apostate is left naked and destitute of the Spirit of God. . . . When once that light which was in them is taken from them, they become as much darkened as they were previously enlightened, and then, no marvel, if all their power should be enlisted against the truth, and they, Judas like, seek the destruction of those who were their greatest benefactors."⁴⁰

A Once-Enlightened People

Alma's response to the people at this juncture is revealing. He initially inquired: "O ye wicked and perverse generation, how have ye forgotten the tradition of your fathers; yea, how soon ye have forgotten the commandments of God" (Alma 9:8). Then he continued,

Do ye not remember that our father, Lehi, was brought out of Jerusalem by the hand of God? Do ye not remember that they were all led by him through the wilderness? And have ye forgotten so soon how many times he delivered our fathers out of the hands of their enemies, and preserved them from being destroyed, even by the hands of their own brethren? (Alma 9:9–10)

Alma repetitively asked if they had "forgotten" or if they did not "remember." Alma spoke as though he was not teaching these people anything new, but reminding them of covenants and commandments with which they had once been conversant (see Alma 9:8–14). In a similar vein, Joseph Smith once told a member of the church that "When you joined this Church you enlisted to serve God. When you did that you left the neutral ground, and you never can

get back on to it. Should you forsake the Master you enlisted to serve it will be by the instigation of the evil one, and you will follow his dictation and be his servant.”⁴¹ This is the principle taught by Alma to these people who had once been “such a highly favored people of the Lord; yea, after having been favored above every other nation, kindred, tongue, or people” because of their obedience to covenants (Alma 9:20; see Alma 9:15–19).

Revelation in our own dispensation makes it clear that “he who sins against the greater light shall receive the greater condemnation” (D&C 82:3). Exactly how much light and knowledge these Ammonihah apostates previously received is not clear in the text, but considering the accessibility of the higher priesthood and the Melchizedek temple ordinances, it may be that they had at one time entered into very sacred covenants of the holy order. Alma reminded the people of many of their past blessings, such as “having had all things made known unto them . . . ; Having been visited by the Spirit of God; having conversed with angels, and having been spoken unto by the voice of the Lord; and having the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and also many gifts” (Alma 9:20–21). He warned “that if this people, who have received so many blessings from the hand of the Lord, should transgress contrary to the light and knowledge which they do have, . . . it would be far more tolerable for the Lamanites than for them” (Alma 9:23). This caution resembles a later passage in the book of Alma: “And thus we can plainly discern, that after a people have been once enlightened by the Spirit of God, and have had great knowledge of things pertaining to righteousness, and then have fallen away into sin and transgression, they become more hardened, and thus their state becomes worse than though they had never known

these things” (Alma 24:30). Rather than repent, as Alma pled for them to do, “the people were wroth” with Alma because he told them “that they were a hard-hearted and a stiffnecked people” and “a lost and a fallen people.” They became angry and “sought to lay their hands upon [Alma], that they might cast [him] into prison” (Alma 9:30–32).

Learned in All the Arts and Cunning Devices

When Amulek provided support for Alma’s testimony, those of the order of Nehor in Ammonihah attempted to “question them, that by their cunning devices they might catch them in their words” (Alma 10:13). These men were “lawyers, . . . learned in all the arts and cunning of the people; and this was to enable them that they might be skillful in their profession” (Alma 10:15). A once-enlightened people of the Lord had degenerated to the level of marshaling all their secular skills and tactics in their efforts to destroy the representatives of God (see Alma 10:14).

Not realizing that he “perceived their thoughts,” they began “to question Amulek, that thereby they might make him cross his words, or contradict the words which he should speak” (Alma 10:16–17). Amulek wisely employed this discernment to his advantage, emphatically declaring:

O ye wicked and perverse generation, ye lawyers and hypocrites, for ye are laying the foundations of the devil; for ye are laying traps and snares to catch the holy ones of God. Ye are laying plans to pervert the ways of the righteous, and to bring down the wrath of God upon your heads, even to the utter destruction of this people.
(Alma 10:17–18)

“The guilty taketh the truth to be hard” (1 Nephi 16:2), and Amulek’s words only enraged these people more. “They cried out, saying: This man doth revile against our

laws which are just, and our wise lawyers whom we have selected" (Alma 10:24). Amulek

stretched forth his hand, and cried the mightier unto them, saying: O ye wicked and perverse generation, why hath Satan got such great hold upon your hearts? Why will ye yield yourselves unto him that he may have power over you, to blind your eyes, that ye will not understand the words which are spoken, according to their truth? For behold, have I testified against your law? Ye do not understand; ye say that I have spoken against your law; but I have not, but I have spoken in favor of your law, to your condemnation. (Alma 10:25–26)

Cutting to the core issue of the debate, Amulek exclaimed, "I say unto you, that the foundation of the destruction of this people is beginning to be laid by the unrighteousness of your lawyers and your judges" (Alma 10:27).

Filthy Lucre

The unrighteousness of the Ammonihahite lawyers and judges consisted not so much in their chosen profession, but rather that "their hearts [were] set so much upon the things of this world" (D&C 121:35). The record is clear that it was their "sole purpose to get gain" (Alma 11:20). Their law and their lucre had become their God. Their craving for the things of this world was so intense that "they did stir up the people to riotings, and all manner of disturbances and wickedness, that they might have more employ, that they might get money according to the suits which were brought before them" (Alma 11:20). Possibly this emphasis on "gain" as a driving force of the order of Nehor was a major reason that Alma 11 includes the only extant scriptural account of the Nephite monetary system.⁴² The interpolation of the Nephite monetary system at this point

in the narrative fits well with the introduction of the characters representing the order of Nehor in Ammonihah. Zeezrom, who had just stepped forward to contend with Amulek, carried a name with a peculiar affinity to one of the units of silver employed as money (*ezrom*, in Alma 11:12). When his confidence waned, Antionah stepped in for the rescue. His name also exhibits a fascinating connection with one of the gold measures noted (*antion*, in Alma 11:19). The two characters representing the order of Nehor both seem to have names closely associated to the monetary system.⁴³

It does not seem merely coincidental that immediately after the textual interpolation explaining the monetary system, Zeezrom offered Amulek a bribe if he would deny “the existence of a Supreme Being” (Alma 11:22). The only description in the Book of Mormon of a monetary system functions well to emphasize the greed in Ammonihah, as well as to accentuate the value of the bribe that Zeezrom subsequently offered to Amulek. Zeezrom’s motivation for such a curious proposition is difficult to determine, but Amulek revealed that Zeezrom had no intent to pay the enticement even if it did succeed (see Alma 11:25). It is possible that Zeezrom, having been brought up in a society where anything and everything could be bought with money,⁴⁴ and knowing that Amulek had prospered in the same environment, figured that the ploy was workable. Amulek’s terse response was damning: “O thou child of hell, why tempt ye me? Knowest thou that the righteous yieldeth to no such temptations? Believest thou that there is no God? I say unto you, Nay, thou knowest that there is a God, but thou lovest that lucre more than him” (Alma 11:23–24).

Doctrinal Conflicts of the Orders

Little is known concerning the behavior and doctrine of the order of Nehor in Ammonihah other than the fact that they were apostate, corrupt, contentious, and money hungry. Their theology is difficult to pin down because of limited information and the polemical nature of the material available. The interrogation of Amulek by Zeezrom in Alma 11:21–46 and the subsequent questioning of Alma by Antionah beginning in Alma 12:20 provide a few clues, however, to some of their false beliefs. Most of their questions concern aspects of the plan of salvation and teachings evidently related to the Nephite temple ceremony.⁴⁵

The nature of Zeezrom's questions to Amulek suggests that he, and perhaps the entire order of Nehor in Ammonihah, had difficulty understanding the concept that the Son of God would redeem mankind from their sins (see Alma 11:34–40). Years earlier Nehor had taught "that all mankind should be saved at the last day, and that they need not fear nor tremble, but that they might lift up their heads and rejoice; for the Lord had created all men, and had also redeemed all men; and, in the end, all men should have eternal life" (Alma 1:4). This belief evidently persisted in the order of Nehor in Ammonihah. Alma 15:15 describes these people as "of the profession of Nehor, and did not believe in the repentance of their sins." It could logically follow in a belief system espousing that all are redeemed and automatically given eternal life that repentance would be unnecessary. This teaching may explain Zeezrom's challenge of Amulek's assertion that God "shall not save his people in their sins" (Alma 11:36; see Alma 11:35).

Amulek's response suggests that Zeezrom may have had a problem not only with believing in the consequences of sin and the need for repentance, but also with the funda-

mental doctrines of the resurrection and the judgment. Amulek reasoned that God declared “that no unclean thing can inherit the kingdom of heaven; therefore, how can ye be saved, except ye inherit the kingdom of heaven? Therefore, ye cannot be saved in your sins” (Alma 11:37). Amulek further explained that Christ “shall come into the world to redeem his people; and he shall take upon him the transgressions of those who believe on his name; and these are they that shall have eternal life, and salvation cometh to none else” (Alma 11:40). He got to the crux of the issue when he declared that “the wicked remain as though there had been no redemption made, except it be the loosing of the bands of death; for behold, the day cometh that all shall rise from the dead and stand before God, and be judged according to their works” (Alma 11:41). Amulek explained the doctrine of the restoration in the resurrection with emphasis on the fact that in the judgment “we shall be brought to stand before God, knowing even as we know now, and have a bright recollection of all our guilt” (Alma 11:43). There everyone will be restored to a perfect frame, brought before the bar of Christ, and judged according to his works (see Alma 11:44).

As Amulek completed his powerful testimony of the resurrection, the “people began again to be astonished, and also Zeezrom began to tremble” (Alma 11:46). The people’s reaction may be partially explained by the power and truthfulness of Amulek’s teachings. Also, Amulek was known among them previously as “a man of no small reputation,” who had “acquired much riches” through his own industry (Alma 10:4). Like many of these people before him, Amulek had hardened his heart and “rebell[ed] against God” (Alma 10:6). But now he was here before them as one willing to consecrate “all his gold, and silver,

and his precious things, which were in the land of Ammonihah," including his family and friends, "for the word of God" (Alma 15:16). He exhibited unusual integrity for a wealthy citizen of Ammonihah when he called the bluff on Zeezrom's bribe (see Alma 11:22–25). In addition, he proved himself a formidable foe even against a lawyer of the stature of Zeezrom (see Alma 10:31; 11:21). Zeezrom's specific reaction, on the other hand, arose because "he beheld that Amulek had caught him in his lying and deceiving to destroy him," as well as a "consciousness of his [own] guilt" (Alma 12:1). Zeezrom began to shrink from further confrontation. He was later healed, baptized, and taught the gospel (see Alma 15). The experience with Zeezrom is reminiscent of Alma's own dramatic conversion after having vehemently opposed the church (see Mosiah 27:8–32).

The Nehorite confusion concerning the consequences of sin, the resurrection, and the judgment were evidently widespread in Ammonihah. When Antionah stepped forward to question Alma, he seems to have been baffled by some of these same concerns. His questions suggest that he, and perhaps others of his order, confounded immortality with eternal life. On the other hand, Antionah may simply have been attempting to trap Alma into making a contradiction. His first question was "What is this that thou hast said, that man should rise from the dead and be changed from this mortal to an immortal state, that the soul can never die?" (Alma 12:20). In rapid-fire succession, Antionah immediately asked his second question: "What does the scripture mean, which saith that God placed cherubim and a flaming sword on the east of the garden of Eden, lest our first parents should enter and partake of the fruit of the tree of life, and live forever?" (Alma 12:21). His second

question seems intended to cast doubt on what he assumed would be Alma's response to the first question. Rather than wait for Alma's response, Antionah gave his own conclusion: "And thus we see that there was no possible chance that they should live forever" (Alma 12:21). In other words, Antionah's evident purpose was not to learn from the prophet Alma but to snare him into a logical contradiction. His strategy seems to have included an attempt to show that Alma was teaching contrary to his own scriptures, a common tactic among apostates even today. If, on the other hand, Antionah's bewilderment was sincere, it reveals that he was doubting the possibility of eternal life, the fairness of the consequences of Adam and Eve's transgression, or even the justice of God.⁴⁶

Alma's inspired response implied that he recognized Antionah's mixed motives in posing his questions. Alma asserted that the real contradiction would have arisen if Adam and Eve had been able to partake of the fruit of the tree of life immediately after their fall. Then "there would have been no death, and the word would have been void, making God a liar, for he said: If thou eat thou shalt surely die" (Alma 12:23). Alma then explained that temporal "death comes upon mankind," but that "a space [is] granted unto man in which he might repent; therefore," declared Alma, "this life became a probationary state; a time to prepare to meet God; a time to prepare for that endless state which has been spoken of by us, which is after the resurrection of the dead" (Alma 12:24). Alma taught that this was all part of the plan of redemption, and that if, in fact, "our first parents could have gone forth and partaken of the tree of life they would have been forever miserable, having no preparatory state" (Alma 12:26). "But behold," testified Alma, "it was appointed unto men that they must

die; and after death, they must come to judgment, even that same judgment of which we have spoken" (Alma 12:27). Thus Alma showed that what he and Amulek were teaching was indeed consistent with the scripture that Antionah questioned and with the assertion that mortality is a preparatory state given in order to repent and prepare for the judgment and resurrection. Nothing in this scripture nor in what Alma and Amulek were teaching was inconsistent with the plan and justice of God.

In a presentation that easily could have been modeled after a sacred temple drama, Alma explained how God would use mortal probation to teach man about "the things whereof he had appointed unto them" (Alma 12:28). After death came upon man, God "sent angels to converse with them, who caused men to behold of his glory" (Alma 12:29). "From that time forth," declared Alma, they began "to call on his name; therefore God conversed with men, and made known unto them the plan of redemption, which had been prepared from the foundation of the world; and this he made known unto them according to their faith and repentance and their holy works" (Alma 12:30). Alma clarified that men, having chosen mortality, "plac[ed] themselves in a state to act" (Alma 12:31). "Therefore God gave unto them commandments, after having made known unto them the plan of redemption, that they should not do evil" (Alma 12:32). Doing evil, contrary to the commandments, would bring the penalty of "a second death, which was an everlasting death as to things pertaining unto righteousness; for on such the plan of redemption could have no power, for the works of justice could not be destroyed, according to the supreme goodness of God" (Alma 12:32). The eternal plan of God provided opportunity to repent (see Alma 12:33), according to Alma, "therefore, whosoever

repenteth, and hardeneth not his heart, he shall have claim on mercy through mine Only Begotten Son, unto a remission of his sins; and these shall enter into my rest" (Alma 12:34). Alma here adds the stiff warning that "whosoever will harden his heart and will do iniquity, behold, I swear in my wrath that he shall not enter into my rest" (Alma 12:35).

Having answered Antionah's questions in the abstract, Alma now personalized his remarks to Antionah and his friends. He warned them directly "that if ye will harden your hearts ye shall not enter into the rest of the Lord" and reminded them that "your iniquity provoketh him that he sendeth down his wrath upon you as in the first provocation" (Alma 12:36), when the children of Israel led by Moses refused the higher law and the fulness of the blessings of the priesthood (see Psalm 95:8; Hebrews 3:8, 15; Jacob 1:7; D&C 84:23–26). With a knowledge of this impending punishment, Alma pled for the Ammonihahites to act: "And now, my brethren, seeing we know these things, and they are true, let us repent, and harden not our hearts, that we provoke not the Lord our God to pull down his wrath upon us in these his second commandments which he has given unto us; but let us enter into the rest of God, which is prepared according to his word" (Alma 12:37). Alma's plea suggests that the Nephites possessed what the ancient Israelites refused, but that they could also lose it and bring upon them the wrath of God in doing so.

Zeezrom Begins to Repent

Apostasy had so infected the people of Ammonihah that many had no understanding of the doctrines and principles of the gospel. At one time in the glorious past, they had been "a highly favored people of the Lord" (Alma 9:20).

They had “been visited by the Spirit of God; having conversed with angels, and having been spoken unto by the voice of the Lord; and having the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation” (Alma 9:21). But that was gone because they had transgressed “contrary to the light and knowledge” which they had (Alma 9:23). An earlier Book of Mormon prophet warned: “How unsearchable are the depths of the mysteries of him; and it is impossible that man should find out all his ways. And no man knoweth of his ways save it be revealed unto him; wherefore, brethren, despise not the revelations of God” (Jacob 4:8).

Now, Zeezrom, caught in his lies and conscious of his guilt, began the arduous path back into the light. He would become an example to future readers of the Book of Mormon that there truly is a way back (see Alma 15:1–12). Ammon, a contemporary of Zeezrom serving the Lord in another land, confirmed:

Yea, he that repenteth and exerciseth faith, and bringeth forth good works, and prayeth continually without ceasing—unto such it is given to know the mysteries of God; yea, unto such it shall be given to reveal things which never have been revealed; yea, and it shall be given unto such to bring thousands of souls to repentance, even as it has been given unto us to bring these our brethren to repentance. (Alma 26:22)

Earlier, the prophet Nephi taught that “he that diligently seeketh shall find; and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them, by the power of the Holy Ghost” (1 Nephi 10:19). Zeezrom “began to inquire of [Alma and Amulek] diligently, that he might know more concerning the kingdom of God” (Alma 12:8).

The Mysteries of God

“Alma began to expound” the things of the kingdom unto Zeezrom, but with an important caveat: “It is given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless,” Alma warned, “they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him” (Alma 12:9). “He that will harden his heart,” cautioned Alma, “the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word.” On the other hand, Alma promised, “he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full” (Alma 12:10). And in an appropriate description of the wicked in Ammonihah, Alma declared that “they that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning his mysteries; and then they are taken captive by the devil, and led by his will down to destruction. Now this is what is meant by the chains of hell” (Alma 12:11).

The term *mysteries* is used in various ways in the scriptures.⁴⁷ It describes God and his eternal plan, as well as the sacred knowledge given to the faithful through divine revelation (see, e.g., D&C 76:1–10; compare 1 Nephi 10:17–19; Moses 1:5).⁴⁸ Significantly, given its context in Alma 12, it has also been used historically and scripturally to refer to priesthood and temple ordinances.⁴⁹ The King James Version of the New Testament employs the Greek word *mysterion* which means “a ‘secret’ or ‘mystery’ (through the idea of *silence* imposed by *initiation* into *religious* rites). The word is from a derivative of the Greek ‘muō’ which meant ‘to shut the mouth.’”⁵⁰ William Vine noted that “among the

ancient Greeks ‘the mysteries’ were religious rites and ceremonies practiced by secret societies into which any one who so desired might be received. Those who were initiated into these ‘mysteries’ became possessors of certain knowledge, which was not imparted to the uninitiated, and were called ‘the perfected.’”⁵¹ Another scholar has clarified that

in ancient religions, for example from the Hellenistic world, the word *mysteries* was often used to describe “cultic rites . . . portrayed by sacred actions before a circle of devotees,” who “must undergo initiation” and who are promised “salvation by the dispensing of cosmic life,” which is sometimes “enacted in cultic drama,” accompanied by a strict “vow of silence.”⁵²

Strikingly similar to these Greek definitions are those found in Webster’s 1828 dictionary. Webster included several definitions for the word: “In *religion*, any thing in the character or attributes of God, or in the economy of divine providence, which is not revealed to man”; and “a kind of ancient dramatic representation.”⁵³

In our own dispensation, the “keys of the mysteries, and the revelations” (D&C 28:7) were given to the Prophet Joseph Smith in connection with the Melchizedek Priesthood, which priesthood “administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God” (D&C 84:19; see D&C 28:7; 35:18; 107:18–19). It is “in the ordinances thereof, [that] the power of godliness is manifest” (D&C 84:20). And, as the revelation emphasized, “without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh; for without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live”

(D&C 84:21–22). These passages reveal a similar link between priesthood, knowledge, ordinances, temple, and mysteries, as is evident in Alma 12. Even if Alma was employing the term in a broader scriptural sense, it would not exclude a temple allusion. As President Benson explained:

Everything we learn in the holy places, the temples, is based on the scriptures. These teachings are what the scriptures refer to as the “mysteries of godliness” [see 1 Timothy 3:16; D&C 19:10]. They are to be comprehended by the power of the Holy Ghost, for the Lord has given this promise to His faithful and obedient servants: “Thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things” (D&C 42:61).⁵⁴

Those with Hearts Hardened against the Word

Alma forewarned concerning the awful state of those who have hardened their hearts “against the word.” Not only will the word not be found within them, but their state will be awful, “for then [they] shall be condemned” (Alma 12:13). In the day of judgment, “if we have hardened our hearts against the word [of God], . . . our words will condemn us, yea, all our works will condemn us; we shall not be found spotless; and our thoughts will also condemn us” (Alma 12:13–14). And, cautioned Alma, “in this awful state we shall not dare to look up to our God; and we would fain be glad if we could command the rocks and the mountains to fall upon us to hide us from his presence” (Alma 12:14). To those who have rejected the word of God after having been such a highly favored and blessed people of the Lord, and who have lost the mysteries after having had a fulness, the day of judgment will bring “a death, even a second death, which is a spiritual death” (Alma 12:16). This is a

time, declared Alma, “that whosoever dieth in his sins, as to a temporal death, shall also die a spiritual death; yea, he shall die as to things pertaining unto righteousness” (Alma 12:16). “Then is the time,” explained Alma, “when their torments shall be as a lake of fire and brimstone, whose flame ascendeth up forever and ever: and then is the time,” emphasized Alma, “that they shall be chained down to an everlasting destruction, according to the power and captivity of Satan, he having subjected them according to his will” (Alma 12:17).

Alma’s harsh warning to these Ammonihahites of “a death, even a second death, which is a spiritual death . . . when their torments shall be as a lake of fire and brimstone, whose flame ascendeth up forever and ever” (Alma 12:16–17) can be understood in at least two ways. Alma may have been referring to the fate of those who are spiritually alienated from God and who will suffer for their sins until the second resurrection (see D&C 19:4–12; 76:99–109), or he may have had in mind the destiny of those who would become sons of perdition. To warn of such a dire fate for his audience would suggest that at least some in Ammonihah had once received the Holy Ghost, had the heavens opened unto them, knew God, and then turned against him.

As the Prophet Joseph Smith further explained: “He has got to say that the sun does not shine while he sees it; . . . [he has got] to deny the plan of salvation with his eyes open to the truth of it; and from that time he begins to be an enemy. This is the case with many apostates of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.”⁵⁵ Modern revelation has also revealed the fate of these “vessels of wrath, doomed to suffer the wrath of God” in language similar to that employed in Alma 12 (D&C 76:33; see D&C 76:31–38). Phrases such as *second death* and *lake of fire and*

brimstone are used both in Alma's discourse and in latter revelation to refer to the sons of perdition. Still, it is difficult to determine exactly what Alma had in mind in this part of his discourse. He may have deliberately left his intent ambiguous, "that it might work upon the hearts" of those to whom he referred (D&C 19:7). In any case, Alma's discourse on the second death intimated that his listeners would be held accountable for having once been enlightened but subsequently hardening their hearts against the word, therefore losing the mysteries.

Entering into the Rest of the Lord

In contrast to the awful fate of whosoever will "harden his heart and will do iniquity" (Alma 12:35), Alma relayed the divine promise in his final major address to the people of Ammonihah that "whosoever repenteth and hardeneth not his heart, he shall have claim on mercy through mine Only Begotten Son, unto a remission of his sins: and these shall enter into my rest" (Alma 12:34). Entering into the rest of the Lord was the principal focus of this segment of Alma's discourse. He used a variation of the phrase *enter into the rest of the Lord* nine times between Alma 12:34 and 13:29.⁵⁶

The phrase *rest of the Lord* is used in various ways in the scriptures. The Savior promised "rest" to all "that labour and are heavy laden" who "come unto [him]" (Matthew 11:28).⁵⁷ The word *rest* is also used in the scriptures to describe the reception of postmortal spirits of the righteous "into a state of happiness, which is called paradise, a state of rest, a state of peace, where they shall rest from all their troubles and from all care, and sorrow" (Alma 40:12; see Alma 60:13). Further, it is employed to describe eternal life after the resurrection and judgment (see Moroni 7:3).

Modern revelation sometimes equates the “rest” of the Lord with entering into the presence of God, or receiving the “fulness of his glory” (D&C 84:24). We learn that Moses

sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God; But they hardened their hearts and could not endure his presence; therefore, the Lord in his wrath, for his anger was kindled against them, swore that they should not enter into his rest while in the wilderness, which rest is the fulness of his glory. Therefore, he took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy Priesthood also. (D&C 84:23–25; see Exodus 34:2 JST)

This interpretation of “the rest of God” is consistent with Alma’s use of the phrase in his teachings in Ammonihah. Alma even evoked the memories of Israel’s first provocation of God as he similarly pled with his people not to “pull down his wrath upon” them, but instead, to “enter into the rest of God” (Alma 12:37). Alma’s plea was voiced in the hope that the people of Ammonihah could avert God’s wrath by repenting and accepting what Israel earlier rejected—the greater priesthood and the ordinances thereof, in the which the power of godliness is manifest. Only then could they enter into the rest of God. Entering into the rest of the Lord is closely bound to the sacred ordinances connected with the holy order of God. At one point in his exhortation, Alma declared concerning the ancients:

They were called after this holy order, and were sanctified, and their garments were washed white through the blood of the Lamb. Now they, after being sanctified by the Holy Ghost, having their garments made white, being pure and spotless before God, could not look upon sin save it were with abhorrence; and there were many, exceedingly great many, who were made pure and entered into the rest of the Lord their God. (Alma 13:11–12)

This, of course, can be understood on various levels, but as

Robert Millet reminded us, “we encounter the holy order of God through receiving the ordinances of the temple, through receiving the endowment and the blessings of eternal marriage.”⁵⁸

Melchizedek as a Model of Righteousness

In contrast with the wicked people of Ammonihah, who had chosen Nehor as their model, the faithful were admonished by Alma to “humble [themselves] even as the people in the days of Melchizedek, who was also a high priest after this same order which I have spoken” (Alma 13:14). Whereas Nehor was a lying murderer and a promoter of priestcraft, Melchizedek was a man of “mighty faith” who “received the office of the high priesthood according to the holy order of God” (Alma 13:18). Whereas the name of Nehor brings to mind popular priests supported by money from the deceived masses (see Alma 1:3–6), Melchizedek “did preach repentance unto his people” and “did establish peace in the land in his days; therefore he was called the prince of peace, for he was the king of Salem” (Alma 13:18).

Melchizedek, whose name likely means “my king of righteousness,” is an intriguing model for Alma to employ as an illustration of entering the rest of God. History and legends abound from Jewish and Christian sources presenting a conflicting and enigmatic portrait of Melchizedek.⁵⁹ Modern revelation, however, strongly supports Alma’s invoking his name as an illustration of powerful faith and righteousness (see Genesis 14:25–40 JST; Hebrews 5:7–8 JST; D&C 107:3–4). In light of what has been restored through the Joseph Smith Translation, Alma was not exaggerating when he claimed: “Now, there were many before him, and also there were many afterwards, but none were greater” (Alma 13:19).

Most intriguing is the way Alma employed Melchizedek as a model for “receiv[ing] the office of the high priesthood according to the holy order of God” and righteously using this power and authority to “preach repentance” and to “establish peace,” with the purpose of helping his fellow Saints “enter into the rest of the Lord” (Alma 13:18, 16). The temple themes to which Alma has been alluding seem to be almost personified by Melchizedek’s example. Other sources have connected Melchizedek with the temple and its sacred ordinances. For example, Josephus wrote that Melchizedek was the first to build a temple in Jerusalem.⁶⁰ Ancient scripture and modern revelation identify him as a “king” and a “priest of the most high God” (Genesis 14:18; Genesis 14:17 JST; Hebrews 7:1).⁶¹ The Prophet Joseph Smith declared that Melchizedek “had power and authority over that of Abraham, holding the key and the power of endless life.”⁶² Because Melchizedek was such a great high priest, and “out of respect or reverence to the name of the Supreme Being, to avoid the too frequent repetition of his name,” the priesthood was ultimately named after Melchizedek (D&C 107:4).

Melchizedek: A Type of Christ

As with all prophets before and after the meridian of time, Melchizedek is a type of Jesus Christ.⁶³ He was called “the prince of peace” (Alma 13:18) as a type of *the* Prince of Peace. As righteous as Melchizedek was—and, as Alma declared, “none were greater” (Alma 13:19)—Jesus Christ, not Melchizedek, is the righteous one. Alma made it clear through his teaching that while Melchizedek was an excellent example, those who enter into the holy order are “washed white through the blood of the Lamb” (Alma 13:11). The ordinances of the holy order were given in such

a manner “that thereby the people might look forward on the Son of God” (Alma 13:16).

This is in complete contrast to the counterfeit order of Nehor, whose entire existence and scheme was part of “a very subtle plan, as to the subtlety of the devil, for to lie and to deceive this people” (Alma 12:4). To Zeezrom, Alma declared, Satan “hath exercised his power in thee” (Alma 12:5). To all of Ammonihah, Alma gave the warning that Satan had laid a snare “to catch this people, that he might bring you into subjection unto him, that he might encircle you about with his chains, that he might chain you down to everlasting destruction, according to the power of his captivity” (Alma 12:6). Alma admonished that unless they repented “they shall be chained down to an everlasting destruction, according to the power and captivity of Satan, he having subjected them according to his will” (Alma 12:17).

Life or Death

As Alma prophesied, “utter destruction . . . according to the fierce anger of the Lord” was the end result of the order of Nehor in Ammonihah (Alma 9:18; see Alma 16:3, 9). Prior to the final Lamanite invasion that completely destroyed the city, the wicked had turned against even their own blood by “cast[ing] into the fire” their innocent wives and children who had “believed or had been taught to believe in the word of God” (Alma 14:8). The consequences of following the order of Nehor were that “every living soul of the Ammonihahites was destroyed, and also their great city, which they said God could not destroy, because of its greatness” (Alma 16:9). As was later decreed in the Book of Mormon concerning another antichrist, “thus we see the end of him who perverteth the ways of the Lord; and thus we see that the devil will not support his children at the last

day, but doth speedily drag them down to hell” (Alma 30:60). In contrast, those who did repent and did not harden their hearts against the word of God were fully supported and sustained by the Lord. The records make clear that Amulek, Zeezrom, and others who repented and followed Jesus Christ and his holy order went on to lead wonderful lives of gospel learning, obedience, service, and joy (see Alma 15:4–12; 16:13; 31:5–6, 32; 34; Helaman 5:10, 41).

Conclusion

The conflict in Ammonihah between the holy order of the Son of God and the order of Nehor serves as a reminder that a constant war rages for the hearts, minds, and souls of men. Though impossible on the grand scale, Satan continues to strive to frustrate God’s plan for each of his children through the use of lies and deception (see Moses 4:6). Prophets of our own time have warned of Satan’s tactics. President Harold B. Lee warned that Satan “is the master of deceit, adulteration, and counterfeit.”⁶⁴ President Spencer W. Kimball added, “he has devised and concocted every plan imaginable to deceive and fetter man. He is clever. He is experienced. He is brainy. He seeks to nullify all the works of the Savior. He is the arch deceiver.”⁶⁵

The rise of the order of Nehor and its institutional entrenchment in Ammonihah provides an excellent case study for the effects of priestcraft on a community. Consumed with a passion for riches and power, most of the leading lawyers and judges of Ammonihah rejected the true priesthood, doctrines, and ordinances of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Blinded by pride and false belief and having lost the light and the Spirit they once had, these practitioners of priestcraft stooped to bribery, lying, mockery, corrup-

tion, persecution, and murder. Their own ultimate fate was destruction, both physically and spiritually.

Contrast the actions and consequences of this imitative order with that of Alma and the high priesthood. Bound by sacred temple covenants, Alma resigned a powerful government position in order to more effectively consecrate his time and efforts to teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ and building the church. Alma and his companion Amulek gave up comfort and family in order to preach to the hard-hearted who ridiculed and rejected their every invitation to repent and return to the Lord, whom they had forgotten. Called with a holy calling, Alma and those of the holy order sacrificed their all that they might help others enter into the rest of the Lord. In this they were following the pattern of him after whom they were called and ordained.

The conflict between these two orders also provided insight into Nephite temple worship and understanding during this period. Alma and many of his contemporaries held and honored the higher priesthood; they worshiped in holy temples where they received the ordinances and covenants of the Melchizedek Priesthood, thereby learning the mysteries of the kingdom and growing in their knowledge of God. These Nephites patterned their lives after the Savior's life and employed Melchizedek as a model of righteousness. By repenting, humbling themselves, obeying, and serving, they sought to receive the blessings of entering into the rest of God.

Alma's very presence in Ammonihah attests to his desire to help those who once were enlightened to return to the path of eternal life. He taught that the way of salvation is only "according to the power and deliverance of Jesus Christ" (Alma 9:28), who "shall come into the world to redeem his people;

and he shall take upon him the transgressions of those who believe on his name; and these are they that shall have eternal life, and salvation cometh to none else" (Alma 11:40). The teachings of Alma and Amulek to these apostates are permeated with evidence of a knowledge of holy temples containing the highest ordinances, covenants, and theology. All the ordinances are patterned in such a way as to look forward to the Son for redemption (see Alma 13:2; Moses 5:8). An undeviating call for men to "repent, and harden not [their] hearts" against the true mysteries of God and to rely upon the mercy "through mine Only Begotten Son" (Alma 12:33) fills these chapters.

Notes

1. Excellent studies have been published that examine many of these issues. See, for example, Robert L. Millet, "The Holy Order of God," in *The Book of Mormon: Alma, the Testimony of the Word*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1992), 61–88; and John W. Welch, "The Melchizedek Material in Alma 13:13–19," in *By Study and Also by Faith: Essays in Honor of Hugh W. Nibley*, ed. John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1990), 2:238–72.

2. See, for example, Millet, "The Holy Order of God," 61–63; Bruce R. McConkie, *A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 311; Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 427; Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1956), 3:84, 104; Joseph Fielding Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1957–66), 1:123–26; *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 180–81. See also Doctrine and Covenants 84:23–26; 107:1–4; 2 Nephi 6:2; Alma 4:20; 13:1, 6; 43:1–2; and 49:30.

3. In *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 335, Joseph Smith taught that the Levitical Priesthood does not have power to confer the Holy Ghost.

4. Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 1:125; see Alma 13:1; 43:1–2; and Doctrine and Covenants 107:1–4.

5. McConkie, *A New Witness*, 311; see also McConkie, *The Promised Messiah*, 427.

6. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 322–23.

7. *Ibid.*, 172.

8. *Ibid.*, 337.

9. *Ibid.*, 308.

10. Ezra Taft Benson, “What I Hope You Teach Your Children about the Temple,” *Ensign*, August 1985, 8.

11. Leibel Reznick, *The Holy Temple Revisited* (New Jersey: Aronson, 1990), xi.

12. Menahem Haran, *Temples and Temple-Service in Ancient Israel* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1985), 1.

13. Hugh W. Nibley, “Temples: Meaning and Functions of Temples,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4:1459.

14. Hugh W. Nibley, “Return to the Temple,” in *Temple and Cosmos* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 49.

15. Joshua Berman, *The Temple: Its Symbolism and Meaning Then and Now* (Northvale, N.J.: Aronson, 1995), xx.

16. Stephen D. Ricks, “Temples through the Ages,” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4:1463.

17. Nibley, “Temples: Meaning and Functions of Temples,” 4:1462.

18. John W. Welch, “The Temple in the Book of Mormon,” in *Temples of the Ancient World: Ritual and Symbolism*, ed. Donald W. Parry (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1994), 298.

19. McConkie, in *The Promised Messiah*, 427, tentatively wrote: “We suppose their sacrifices were those that antedated the ministry of Moses. . . . There is, at least, no intimation in the Book of Mormon that the Nephites offered the daily sacrifices required by the law or that they held the various feasts that were part of the religious life of their Old World kinsmen.” Welch, “The

Temple in the Book of Mormon," 302–9, argues that the Nephites performed the ordinances, including sacrifices and offerings, of the law of Moses until the end of such requirements was announced in 3 Nephi 9. For the ties between coronation, kingship, and Book of Mormon temples, see *ibid.*, 326–36. For the connection of ancient Israelite festivals and temples in the Book of Mormon, see *ibid.*, 338–39, 352–61; see also John A. Tvedtnes, "King Benjamin and the Feast of Tabernacles," in *By Study and Also by Faith*, 2:197–221; Hugh W. Nibley, "Tenting, Toll, and Taxing," in *The Ancient State* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1991), 33–98; Hugh W. Nibley, "Old World Ritual in the New World," in *An Approach to the Book of Mormon*, 3rd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 295–310; and Terrence L. Szink and John W. Welch, "King Benjamin's Speech in the Context of Ancient Israelite Festivals," in *King Benjamin's Speech: "That Ye May Learn Wisdom"* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1998), 147–223.

20. Welch, "The Temple in the Book of Mormon," 300, refers to these as temple texts, which he defines as writings "that [contain] the most sacred teachings of the plan of salvation that are not to be shared indiscriminately, and that [ordain] or otherwise [convey] divine powers through ceremonial or symbolic means, together with commandments received by sacred oaths that allow the recipient to stand ritually in the presence of God."

21. See McConkie, *The Promised Messiah*, 427; and Smith, *Answers to Gospel Questions*, 121–26.

22. Robert L. Millet, *The Power of the Word* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 132.

23. John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1985), 143.

24. Welch, "The Temple in the Book of Mormon," 323.

25. *Ibid.*, 311.

26. See Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos*, 61–66, for an interesting discussion on secrecy and the temple. For further discussion of the Garden of Eden and the eternal plan of God in ways similar to known temple liturgy, see *ibid.*, 70–77; 306–9; Stephen D. Ricks, "Liturgy and Cosmogony: The Ritual Use of Creation Accounts

in the Ancient Near East," in *Temples of the Ancient World*, 118–25; and Donald W. Parry, "Garden of Eden: Prototype Sanctuary," in *Temples of the Ancient World*, 126–51.

27. See Noah Webster, *American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828 ed., s.v. "forward."

28. See Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos*, 49–54; see also *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 305.

29. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah*, 448.

30. Welch, "The Temple in the Book of Mormon," 365–66.

31. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 227.

32. *Ibid.*, 365.

33. McConkie, *A New Witness*, 340.

34. Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine* (1919; reprint, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1998), 376.

35. Nehor's name may derive from the Hebrew root נָחַר, which means "to snort," suggesting the idea of anger or contentiousness.

36. Webster, *American Dictionary*, 1828 ed., s.v. "priestcraft."

37. *Ibid.*, s.v. "priesthood."

38. See *History of the Church*, 6:314–15.

39. Hugh W. Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), 245: "A like fate was suffered centuries later by the traitor Zemnahiah. This goes back to a very old tradition indeed, that of the first false preachers, Harut and Marut (fallen angels), who first corrupted the word of God and as a result hang to this day between heaven and earth confessing their sin. Their counterpart in Jewish tradition is the angel Shamhozai, who 'repented, and by way of penance hung himself up between heaven and earth.'"

40. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 67.

41. Recalled by Daniel Tyler in *Juvenile Instructor* 27/16, 15 August 1892, 492.

42. Several studies have been published concerning the reason for the detailed description in Alma 11 of the monetary system of Ammonihah. See "Weights and Measures in the Time of Mosiah II" (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1983); John W. Welch, "Weighing and

Measuring in the Worlds of the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 8/2 (1999): 36–46; Paul R. Jesclard, "A Comparison of the Nephite Monetary System with the Egyptian System of Measuring Grain," *Society for Early Historic Archaeology Newsletter* 134 (October 1973): 1–7; and Richard P. Smith, "The Nephite Monetary System," *Improvement Era*, May 1954, 316–17.

43. See Gordon C. Thomasson, "What's in a Name? Book of Mormon Language, Names, and [Metonymic] Naming," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 3/1 (1994): 1–27.

44. See the discussion by Hugh W. Nibley, "Man's Dominion, or Subduing the Earth," in *Brother Brigham Challenges the Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1994), 13–16.

45. See Welch, "The Temple in the Book of Mormon," 366–67.

46. If Antionah is questioning the possibility of eternal life, this might be a departure from Nehor's original dogma that "in the end, all men should have eternal life" (Alma 1:4). If Antionah and the order of Nehor at Ammonihah did not have the doctrine of eternal life among them, then this may be an example of Alma's teaching that "he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word" (Alma 12:10). Perhaps the idea of eternal life still existed in the false order of Nehor, but the concept devolved to the more secular view of living on through one's fame or fortune.

47. See M. Catherine Thomas, "Benjamin and the Mysteries of God," in *King Benjamin's Speech*, 277–94.

48. See Clark D. Webb, "Mysteries of God," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 2:977–78.

49. See Welch, "The Temple in the Book of Mormon," 364.

50. James Strong, *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville: Nelson, 1990), #3466.

51. William E. Vine and John R. Kohlenberger III, eds., *The Expanded Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1984), 769; see also Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1967), 4:803–28.

52. Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 4:803–6, as quoted in Welch, “The Temple in the Book of Mormon,” 364.
53. Noah Webster, *American Dictionary*, 1828 ed., s.v. “mystery.”
54. Ezra Taft Benson, *Come unto Christ* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 19.
55. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 358.
56. See Bruce C. Hafen, *The Broken Heart: Applying the Atonement to Life’s Experiences* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 156–57; McConkie, *The Promised Messiah*, 317–19; Welch, “The Melchizedek Material in Alma 13:13–19,” 2:238–72; Robert L. Millet, *The Power of the Word: Saving Doctrines from the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 138–53; and Millet, “The Holy Order of God,” 61–86.
57. See Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, 58.
58. Millet, “The Holy Order of God,” 75.
59. See Welch, “The Melchizedek Material in Alma 13:13–19,” 238–72.
60. See Josephus, *Wars* 6.10.1.
61. See *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 322.
62. *Ibid.*
63. See Joseph F. McConkie and Donald W. Parry, *A Guide to Scriptural Symbols* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990), 82.
64. Harold B. Lee, *Decisions for Successful Living* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973), 155.
65. *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982), 34.