

July 29-August 4, 2024

Alma 36–38

“LOOK TO GOD AND LIVE”

Summary:

The commandments of Alma to his son Helaman.
Comprising chapters 36 and 37.

Alma 36. Alma testifies to Helaman of his conversion by an angel—He suffered the pains of a damned soul; he called upon the name of Jesus, and was then born of God—Sweet joy filled his soul—He saw concourses of angels praising God—His converts have tasted and seen as he did. [About 74B.C.]

Alma 37. The plates of brass and other scriptures are preserved to bring souls to salvation—The Jaredites were destroyed because of their wickedness—Their secret oaths and covenants must be kept from the people—Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings—As the Liabona guided the Nephites, so the word of Christ leads men to eternal life. [About 74B.C.]

The commandments of Alma to his son Shiblon.
Comprising chapter 38.

Alma 38. Shiblon was persecuted for righteousness' sake—Salvation is in Christ, who is the life and the light of the world—Bridle all your passions. [About 74B.C.]

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

What is the association of “lifted up” and “salvation?”

The greatest deliverance of the Children of Israel was from Egypt. Yet, the great national exodus was a learning experience. A complete generation had to die and only the next generation was willing to keep the commandments enough to be saved and able to be delivered and then enter the promised land to prosper there. Alma witnessed a similar pattern through his languishing experience of three days and three nights as dead and then coming alive again being lifted up and saved. You will find that most of the scriptural references with a time factor of three days and three nights have something to do with being lifted up and being delivered and saved. Often this is a “center” of a chiasmus, a focal point of redemption, a testimony of the Savior.

What are the Old and New Testament salvation-verses with “three- day/nights?”

Old Testament:

1. **(Genesis 30:36)** - And he set three days' journey betwixt himself and Jacob: and Jacob fed the rest of Laban's flocks.
2. **(Genesis 40:12)** - And Joseph said unto him, This is the interpretation of it: The three branches are three days:
3. **(Genesis 40:13)** - Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thine head, and restore thee unto thy place: and thou shalt deliver Pharaoh's cup into his hand, after the former manner when thou wast his butler.
4. **(Genesis 40:18)** - And Joseph answered and said, This is the interpretation thereof: The three baskets are three days:
5. **(Genesis 40:19)** - Yet within three days shall Pharaoh lift up thy head from off thee, and shall hang thee on a tree;

- and the birds shall eat thy flesh from off thee.
6. **(Genesis 42:17)** - And he put them all together into ward three days.
 7. **(Exodus 3:18)** - And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.
 8. **(Exodus 5:3)** - And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword.
 9. **(Exodus 8:27)** - We will go three days' journey into the wilderness, and sacrifice to the LORD our God, as he shall command us.
 10. **(Exodus 10:22)** - And Moses stretched forth his hand toward heaven; and there was a thick darkness in all the land of Egypt three days:
 11. **(Exodus 10:23)** - They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days: but all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings
 12. **(Exodus 15:22)** - So Moses brought Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.
 13. **(Numbers 10:33)** - And they departed from the mount of the LORD three days' journey: and the ark of the covenant of the LORD went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them.
 14. **(Joshua 1:11)** - Pass through the host, and command the people, saying, Prepare you victuals; for within three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in to possess the land, which the LORD your God giveth you to possess it.
 15. **(Joshua 2:16)** - And she said unto them, Get you to the mountain, lest the pursuers meet you; and hide yourselves there three days, until the pursuers be returned: and afterward may ye go your way.
 16. **(Joshua 2:22)** - And they went, and came unto the mountain, and abode there three days, until the pursuers were returned: and the pursuers sought them throughout all the way, but found them not.
 17. **(Joshua 3:2)** - And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host;
 18. **(Joshua 9:16)** - And it came to pass at the end of three days after they had made a league with them, that they heard that they were their neighbours, and that they dwelt among them.
 19. **(1 Samuel 9:20)** - And as for thine asses that were lost three days ago, set not thy mind on them; for they are found. And on whom is all the desire of Israel? Is it not on thee, and on all thy father's house?
 20. **(1 Samuel 20:19)** - And when thou hast stayed three days, then thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business was in hand, and shalt remain by the stone Ezel.
 21. **(1 Samuel 21:5)** - And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy, and the bread is in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel.
 22. **(1 Samuel 30:12)** - And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins: and when he had eaten, his spirit came again to him: for he had eaten no bread, nor drunk any

- water, three days and three nights.
23. **(1 Samuel 30:13)** - And David said unto him, To whom belondest thou? and whence art thou? And he said, I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I fell sick.
 24. **(1 Kings 12:5)** - And he said unto them, Depart yet for three days, then come again to me. And the people departed.
 25. **(1 Kings 17:21)** - And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again.
 26. **(2 Kings 2:17)** - And when they urged him till he was ashamed, he said, Send. They sent therefore fifty men; and they sought three days, but found him not.
 27. **(Ezra 10:8)** - And that whosoever would not come within three days, according to the counsel of the princes and the elders, all his substance should be forfeited, and himself separated from the congregation of those that had been carried away.
 28. **(Nehemiah 2:11)** - So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days.
 29. **(Esther 4:16)** - Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish.
 30. **(Ezekiel 4:5)** - For I have laid upon thee the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days: so shalt thou bear the iniquity of the house of Israel.
 31. **(Jonah 1:17)** - Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of

the fish three days and three nights.

New Testament:

1. **(Matthew 12:40)** - For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.
2. **(Matthew 15:32)** - Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.
3. **(Matthew 26:61)** - And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.
4. **(Matthew 27:40)** - And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.
5. **(Matthew 27:63)** - Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.
6. **(Mark 8:2)** - I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat:
7. **(Mark 8:31)** - And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.
8. **(Mark 14:58)** - We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.
9. **(Mark 15:29)** - And they that passed by railed on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days,
10. **(Luke 2:46)** - And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the

doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.

11. **(Luke 13:21)** - It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.
12. **(John 2:19)** - Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.
13. **(John 2:20)** - Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in here days?
14. **(Acts 9:9)** - And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink.
15. **(Acts 28:17)** - And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

How is a land blessed when its people are righteous?

Several times throughout scriptural history, people and the land they live in are lifted up and begin to prosper. In 1841, the Apostle Orson Hyde dedicated the Holy Land for another return of its heirs. Among many prophetic statements, some repeated from previous prophets, he spoke about the land and the people. "Grant, therefore, O Lord, in the name of Thy well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to remove the barrenness and sterility of this land, and let springs of living water break forth to water its thirsty soil. Let the vine and olive produce in their strength and the fig-tree bloom and flourish. Let the land become abundantly fruitful when possessed by its rightful heirs; let it again flow with plenty to feed the returning prodigals who come home with a spirit of

grace and supplication; upon it let the clouds distill virtue and richness, and let the fields smile with plenty. Let the flocks and the herds greatly increase and multiply upon the mountains and the hills . . ." **(History of the Church, Vol.4, Ch.26, p.457)** The return of Jews to their land is a righteous thing and those who oppose it are opposing the will of the Lord. Their future may hold an opposite of "prospering." "Let that nation or that people who shall take an active part in behalf of Abraham's children, and in the raising up of Jerusalem, find favor in Thy sight. Let not their enemies prevail against them, neither let pestilence or famine overcome them, but let the glory of Israel overshadow them, and the power of the Highest protect them; while that nation or kingdom that will not serve Thee in this glorious work must perish, according to Thy word---Yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." **(History of the Church, Vol.4, Ch.26, p.457)**

What is genuine instruction for youth?

Alma's advice to his son continues to echo the past as it becomes an advice to all sons and daughters in the present. It echoes a strong doctrinal point of teaching our youth. "O, remember, my son, and learn wisdom in thy youth; yea, learn in thy youth to keep the commandments of God." **(Alma 37:35)** "As I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle;" **(Job 29:4)** "O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works." **(Psalms 71:17)** "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." **(1 Timothy 4:12)**

When do prophets begin to be instructed?

The advice Alma gives his son transcends

parental responsibility. It is in some instances an instruction to the next prophet. At all times, there was a worthy prophet-in-waiting, much like Elder Dallin H. Oaks is today. "Counsel with the Lord in all thy doings, and he will direct thee for good; yea, when thou liest down at night lie down unto the Lord, that he may watch over you in your sleep; and when thou risest in the morning let thy heart be full of thanks unto God; and if ye do these things, ye shall be lifted up at the last day." (**Alma 37:37**) "Surely the Lord GOD will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." (**Amos 3:7**) As Alma taught Helaman to counsel with the Lord in all his doings, so does God counsel with his prophets in all the doings that pertain to mankind.

Relic, lucky charm or reminder cue?

Throughout time there have been symbolic and functional artifacts that brought to our minds or reinforced God's counsel to his children. To this day, Jews are counseled to place a "Mezuzah" on their door posts and on their gates so that in all their comings and goings and in all their "doings" they may remember the Lord. The word itself actually means 'doorpost' but has come to refer to the scroll. On it are written verses from **Deuteronomy (6: 4--9 and 11:13--21)** in square Assyrian letters, traditionally arranged in 22 lines. The Torah commands of these verses that 'you shall write them on the doorposts (*mezuzot*) of your house and in your gates.' The 12th century rabbinic authority, Maimonides, stresses that this commandment is to be observed purely from love of God, and that the *mezuzah* is not a good luck charm with power to ward off evil spirits. Many people, however, are accustomed to kiss the *mezuzah* or to touch it and

then kiss the fingers when entering or leaving." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

A Sovereign's Orb or God's directional device?

In the Book of Mormon, the functional Liahona led the righteous descendants of Lehi. Its presence was a reminder that the Lord would lead his people. In the Bible, the cloud and pillar (as well as the raised serpent) was a reminder that God would lead Israel through the wilderness. "The Tabernacle stood in the center of the Israelite camp and a cloud rested over it. When the cloud lifted, it was considered a divine signal to move the camp. A silver trumpet was sounded, the Levites dismantled the Tabernacle and transported it to its next resting place." (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) "To typify Christ and point attention to the salvation which would come because he would be lifted up on the cross, Moses (as commanded by the Lord) made a brazen serpent and lifted it up on a pole. Then those of the children of Israel who were bitten by poisonous serpents were healed by looking upon the serpent, while those who refused to look died of the poisonous bites. (**Num. 21:4-9.**) This performance was a ceremony in Israel which was intended to show the people that by looking to Christ they would be saved with eternal life, but by refusing to look to him they would die spiritually (**John 3:14-15; Alma 33:1922; Hela. 8:14-15**) The brazen serpent was kept as a symbol in Israel until the time of Hezekiah, who broke it in pieces to keep apostate Israel of his day from burning incense to it. (**2 Kings 18:4.**)" (**Bruce R. McConkie, Mormon Doctrine, p.104**) The pattern of directional tools is a metaphor to have us "look up" to be "lifted up."