

# CHAPTER 29

## *Alma 30–31*

### Introduction

Chapters 30–31 of Alma identify people and ideas that oppose Jesus Christ. President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) said:

“The Book of Mormon brings men to Christ through two basic means. First, it tells in a plain manner of Christ and his gospel. . . .

“Second, the Book of Mormon exposes the enemies of Christ. It confounds false doctrines and lays down contention. (See 2 Ne. 3:12.) It fortifies the humble followers of Christ against the evil designs, strategies, and doctrines of the devil in our day. The type of apostates in the Book of Mormon are similar to the type we have today. God, with his infinite foreknowledge, so molded the Book of Mormon that we might see the error and know how to combat false educational, political, religious, and philosophical concepts of our time” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1975, 94–95; or *Ensign*, May 1975, 64).

By studying how Korihor sought to destroy the faith of the Nephites, you will better recognize those same destructive arguments in our day. By studying Alma’s response to Korihor, you will be better prepared to defend yourself and others from those who would destroy your faith.

### Commentary

#### **Alma 30. Modern-day Korihors**

- Elder Gerald N. Lund, formerly of the Seventy, explained that Korihor has many modern-day equivalents:

“Today, the world is permeated with philosophies similar to those taught by Korihor. We read them in books, see them championed in the movies and on television, and hear them taught in classrooms and sometimes in the churches of our time. . . .

“. . . We see clear evidence of Mormon’s inspiration to give us a full account of Korihor and his teachings. Korihor’s teachings are old doctrine, and yet they are ideas as modern as today’s high-speed printing presses and satellite dishes” (“Countering Korihor’s Philosophy,” *Ensign*, July 1992, 20).

#### **Alma 30:6. Anti-Christ**

- The Bible Dictionary states that an anti-Christ is “anyone or anything that counterfeits the true gospel or plan of salvation and that openly or secretly is set up in opposition to Christ. The great antichrist is Lucifer, but he has many assistants both as spirit beings and as mortals” (“Antichrist,” 609).

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles further taught: “An *antichrist* is an opponent of Christ; he is one who is in opposition to the true gospel, the true Church, and the true plan of salvation. (1 John 2:19; 4:4–6.) He is one who offers salvation to men on some other terms than those laid down by Christ. Sherem (Jac. 7:1–23), Nehor (Alma 1:2–16), and Korihor (Alma 30:6–60) were antichrists who spread their delusions among the Nephites” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], 39–40).

#### **Alma 30:7, 11. “No Law against a Man’s Belief”**

- If there was “no law against a man’s belief,” some people might ask why Korihor was arrested. King Mosiah had issued a proclamation declaring that it was against Nephite law for any “unbeliever [to] persecute any of those who belonged to the church of God” (Mosiah 27:2).

Clearly, Korihor was entitled to his beliefs, but when he sought to destroy the Church, he broke King Mosiah’s proclamation. It is interesting to note that whereas many in Zarahemla embraced Korihor and his teachings, the people of Ammon, who had lived most of their lives following Korihor-like beliefs, “caused that he should be carried out of the land” (Alma 30:21; see also vv. 18–20). They understood the danger of Korihor’s teachings.

#### **ALMA 30:12–18**

*How do Korihor’s teachings fit the arguments used to attack our faith in these days?*

### Alma 30:12–18. Strategies of Korihor

• One gospel scholar explained how closely Korihor’s philosophy aligns with many modern philosophies: “Korihor insisted on a strictly rational and scientific approach to all problems, anything else being but ‘the effect of a frenzied mind’ (Alma 30:13–16); he crusaded against the tyranny of ancient traditions and primitive superstitions, which led people to believe things which just ‘are not so’ (Alma 30:16), calling for an emancipation from ‘the silly traditions of their fathers’ (Alma 30:31). He called for a new morality with the shedding of old inhibitions (Alma 30:17–18, 25). He called for economic liberation from priestly exploitation (Alma 30:27), demanding that all be free to ‘make use of that which is their own’ (Alma 30:28). He preached a strict no-nonsense naturalism: ‘When a man was dead, that was the end thereof’ (Alma 30:18), and its corollary, which was a strict materialism: ‘Every man fared in this life according to the management of the creature’ (Alma 30:17). From this followed a clear-cut philosophy of laissez-faire: ‘Therefore every man prospereth according to his genius, and . . . every man conquered according to his strength,’ with right and wrong measured only by nature’s iron rule of success and failure: ‘And whatsoever a man did was no crime’ (Alma 30:17). It was survival of the fittest applied to human behavior, and the removal of old moral and sentimental restraints was good news to many people, ‘causing them to lift up their heads in their wickedness, yea, leading many away . . . to commit whoredoms’ (Alma 30:18). Along with his attitude of emancipation Korihor cultivated a crusading zeal and intolerance of any opposition, which has been thoroughly characteristic of his school of thought in modern times, calling all opposition ‘foolish’ (Alma 30:13–14), ‘silly’ (Alma 30:31), and the evidence of frenzied and deranged minds (Alma 30:16). And while for Alma a free society was one in which anybody could think and say whatever he chose (Alma 30:7–12), for Korihor the



only free society was one in which everyone thought exactly as *he* thought (Alma 30:24)” (Hugh W. Nibley, *Since Cumorah*, 2nd ed. [1988], 379–80).

### Alma 30:15–16. Korihor’s False Teaching

• Korihor’s teaching that “ye cannot know of things which ye do not see” is the philosophy that all ideas and knowledge are derived from and can be tested by experience and that we can only know those things we experience through our senses: sight, smell, touch, hearing, or taste. Since spiritual experiences involving revelation from God rarely pass through the senses of sight, smell, touch, hearing, or taste, those who hold to Korihor’s philosophy count them as meaningless.

President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, described an experience he had that illustrated the fact that spiritual matters do not typically include the common five senses:

“I will tell you of an experience I had before I was a General Authority which affected me profoundly. I sat on a plane next to a professed atheist who pressed his disbelief in God so urgently that I bore my testimony to him. ‘You are wrong,’ I said, ‘there is a God. I *know* He lives!’

“He protested, ‘You don’t *know*. Nobody *knows* that! You can’t *know* it!’ When I would not yield, the atheist, who was an attorney, asked perhaps the ultimate question on the subject of testimony. ‘All right,’ he said in a sneering, condescending way, ‘you say you know. Tell me *how* you know.’

“When I attempted to answer, even though I held advanced academic degrees, I was helpless to communicate.

“Sometimes in your youth, you young missionaries are embarrassed when the cynic, the skeptic, treat you with contempt because you do not have ready answers for everything. Before such ridicule, some turn away in shame. (Remember the iron rod, the spacious building, and the mocking? See 1 Ne. 8:28.)

“When I used the words *Spirit* and *witness*, the atheist responded, ‘I don’t know what you are talking about.’ The words *prayer*, *discernment*, and *faith*, were equally meaningless to him. ‘You see,’ he said, ‘you

don't really know. If you did, you would be able to tell me *how you know*.'

"I felt, perhaps, that I had borne my testimony to him unwisely and was at a loss as to what to do. Then came the experience! Something came into my mind. And I mention here a statement of the Prophet Joseph Smith: 'A person may profit by noticing the first intimation of the spirit of revelation; for instance, when you feel pure intelligence flowing into you, it may give you sudden strokes of ideas . . . and thus by learning the Spirit of God and understanding it, you may grow into the principle of revelation, until you become perfect in Christ Jesus.' (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1977, p. 151.)

"Such an idea came into my mind and I said to the atheist, 'Let me ask if you know what salt tastes like.'

"'Of course I do,' was his reply.

"'When did you taste salt last?'

"'I just had dinner on the plane.'

"'You just think you know what salt tastes like,' I said.

"He insisted, 'I know what salt tastes like as well as I know anything.'

"'If I gave you a cup of salt and a cup of sugar and let you taste them both, could you tell the salt from the sugar?'

"'Now you are getting juvenile,' was his reply. 'Of course I could tell the difference. I know what salt tastes like. It is an everyday experience—I know it as well as I know anything.'

"'Then,' I said, 'assuming that I have never tasted salt, explain to me just what it tastes like.'

"After some thought, he ventured, 'Well-I-uh, it is not sweet and it is not sour.'

"'You've told me what it isn't, not what it is.'


"After several attempts, of course, he could not do it. He could not convey, in words alone, so ordinary an experience as tasting salt. I bore testimony to him once again and said, 'I know there is a God. You ridiculed that testimony and said that if I *did* know, I would be able to tell you exactly *how* I know. My friend,

spiritually speaking, I have tasted salt. I am no more able to convey to you in words how this knowledge has come than you are to tell me what salt tastes like. But I say to you again, there is a God! He does live! And just because you don't know, don't try to tell me that I don't know, for I do!'

"As we parted, I heard him mutter, 'I don't need your religion for a crutch! I don't need it.'

"From that experience forward, I have never been embarrassed or ashamed that I could not explain in words alone everything I know spiritually" ("The Candle of the Lord," *Ensign*, Jan. 1983, 51–52).

### Alma 30:17. Korihor Taught That "Whatsoever a Man Did" Was Not Sin

- Despite what some people in the world believe, the gospel teaches that there is no such thing as a relative value system. Some cultures seem to allow or even encourage this value-free approach to life, encouraging subtle forms of dishonesty in government, business, and personal relations. The Book of Mormon teaches us, however, that there is a right and wrong and gives us the key by which to judge (see Moroni 7:16–17 .

- Korihor's philosophy that a person prospers "according to his genius, and that every man conquered according to his strength" precludes the necessity of God in our life. His philosophy that "whatsoever a man did was no crime" would create a self-centered and relative value system in man.

- Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles exposed the selfishness in Korihor's teachings:

"Some of the selfish wrongly believe that there is no divine law anyway, so there is no sin (see 2 Nephi 2:13). Situational ethics are thus made to order for the selfish. So in the management of self, one can conquer by his genius and strength, because there really is no crime whatsoever (see Alma 30:17).

"Unsurprisingly, therefore, selfishness leads to terrible perceptual and behavioral blunders. For instance, Cain, corrupted by his seeking of power, said after slaying Abel, 'I am free' (Moses 5:33; see also Moses 6:15).

“One of the worst consequences of severe selfishness, therefore, is this profound loss of proportionality, like straining at gnats while swallowing camels (see Matthew 23:24; see also Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 23:21, footnote 24a). Today there are, for example, those who strain over various gnats but swallow the practice of partial-birth abortions. Small wonder, therefore, that selfishness magnifies a mess of pottage into a banquet and makes 30 pieces of silver look like a treasure trove” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1999, 29; or *Ensign*, May 1999, 24).

**Alma 30:20–23. The Teachings of Ecclesiastical Leaders**

- The high priest Giddonah confronted Korihor and asked him why he spoke against the prophets and against the reality of Jesus Christ. Korihor evaded the question and mounted a verbal attack against the believers and their leaders. He sought to make it appear foolish for anyone to follow their ecclesiastic leaders. President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency taught to the contrary:

“Korihor was arguing, as men and women have falsely argued from the beginning of time, that to take counsel from the servants of God is to surrender God-given rights of independence. But the argument is false because it misrepresents reality. When we reject the counsel which comes from God, we do not choose to be independent of outside influence. We choose another influence. We reject the protection of a perfectly loving, all-powerful, all-knowing Father in Heaven, whose whole purpose, as that of His Beloved Son, is to give us eternal life, to give us all that He has, and to bring us home again in families to the arms of His love. In rejecting His counsel, we choose the influence of another power, whose purpose is to make us miserable and whose motive is hatred. We have moral agency as a gift of God. Rather than the right to choose to be free of influence, it is the inalienable right to submit ourselves to whichever of those powers we choose.

“Another fallacy is to believe that the choice to accept or not accept the counsel of prophets is no more than deciding whether to accept good advice and gain its benefits or to stay where we are. But the choice not to

take prophetic counsel changes the very ground upon which we stand. It becomes more dangerous. The failure to take prophetic counsel lessens our power to take inspired counsel in the future. The best time to have decided to help Noah build the ark was the first time he asked. Each time he asked after that, each failure to respond would have lessened sensitivity to the Spirit. And so each time his request would have seemed more foolish, until the rain came. And then it was too late” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1997, 33; or *Ensign*, May 1997, 25).



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**Alma 30:25. Anti-Christ's Often Use Half Truths**

- A common tactic used by those who are trying to destroy faith is called a “straw man” argument. This is done by setting up a false image—a straw man—of the truth and then attacking the false image in order to convince others the true image is false. A simple example of this is a child accusing parents who won't let him play until he gets his work done of not wanting him to have any fun. This is faulty reasoning, but it is often used to deceive others.

Sometimes others claim that Latter-day Saints believe something that we don't believe. They claim that the false belief is false and then show that it is false. It has nothing to do with what we really believe but is an attempt to make us seem to be in error. Korihor did this to Giddonah: “This argument is called a straw man. That is, he attributed to Giddonah something that Giddonah does not believe—the idea that children

inherit guilt through Adam’s transgression. Korihor knows that he cannot fight truth fairly and come off victorious, so he attributes bad doctrine to Giddonah, a straw man to which he can give a good verbal licking” (Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Sustaining and Defending the Faith* [1985], 90).

### Alma 30:29. Avoid Arguments and Contention

- The Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44) taught that we should avoid contention: “Let the Elders be exceedingly careful about unnecessarily disturbing and harrowing up the feelings of the people. Remember that your business is to preach the Gospel in all humility and meekness, and warn sinners to repent and come to Christ. Avoid contentions and vain disputes with men of corrupt minds, who do not desire to know the truth. Remember that ‘it is a day of warning, and not a day of many words.’ If they receive not your testimony in one place, flee to another, remembering to cast no reflections, nor throw out any bitter sayings. If you do your duty, it will be just as well with you, as though all men embraced the Gospel” (*History of the Church*, 1:468).

#### **ALMA 30:37–44**

*List at least three approaches Alma used to refute Korihor’s attack on the true Church. How can we similarly be ready to defend the truth?*

### Alma 30:39. The Power of Personal Testimony

- Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained one way to respond to an anti-Christ:

“Korihor ridiculed the ‘foolish . . . [and] silly traditions’ of believing in a Christ who should come.

“Korihor’s arguments sound very contemporary to the modern reader, but Alma used a timeless and ultimately undeniable weapon in response—the power of personal testimony. Angry that Korihor and his like were essentially against happiness, Alma asked, ‘Why do you teach this people that there shall be no Christ,

to interrupt their rejoicings?’ [Alma 30:22] ‘I know there is a God’” (*Christ and the New Covenant* [1997], 121).

### Alma 30:40. “What Evidence Have Ye That There Is No God”

- Elder Gerald N. Lund explained the impossibility of proving that there is no God:

“When questioned, Korihor categorically denies that he believes there is a God. Alma then asks, ‘What evidence have ye that there is no God, or that Christ cometh not? I say unto you that ye have none, save it be your word only.’ (Alma 30:40.)

“It is an inspired insight on Alma’s part. Korihor is not consistent in his own thinking. If we truly can know only those things for which we have empirical evidence, then we cannot teach there is no God unless we have evidence for that belief. And Korihor has no evidence.

“Korihor will consider only evidence that can be gathered through the senses. In such a system, it is much easier to prove there *is* a God than to prove there is not a God. To prove there is a God, all it takes is for one person to see, hear, or otherwise have an experience with God, and thereafter the existence of God cannot be disproved. But here is what it would take to *prove* there is no God: Since God is not confined to this earth, we would have to search throughout the universe for him. We assume God is able to move about, so it would not be enough to start at point A in the universe and search through to point Z. What if after we leave point A, God moves there and stays there for the rest of the search?

“In other words, for Korihor to say that there is no God, based on the very criteria he himself has established, he would have to perceive every cubic meter of the universe simultaneously. This creates a paradox: In order for Korihor to prove there is no God, *he would have to be a god* himself! Therefore, in declaring there is no God, he is acting on ‘faith,’ the very thing for which he so sharply derides the religious leaders!” (“Countering Korihor’s Philosophy,” *Ensign*, July 1992, 21).

**Alma 30:41. “I Have All Things as a Testimony That These Things Are True”**

- President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) spoke of the power of God’s creations to strengthen testimony when he said:

“Can any man who has walked beneath the stars at night, can anyone who has seen the touch of spring upon the land doubt the hand of divinity in creation? So observing the beauties of the earth, one is wont to speak as did the Psalmist: ‘The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.’ (Ps. 19:1–2.)

“All of beauty in the earth bears the fingerprint of the Master Creator” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1978, 90; or *Ensign*, May 1978, 59).

**Alma 30:48. Sign Seekers**

- The Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “Whenever you see a man seeking after a sign, you may set it down that he is an adulterous man” (*History of the Church*, 3:385).

Later, the Prophet noted: “When I was preaching in Philadelphia, a Quaker called out for a sign. I told him to be still. After the sermon, he again asked for a sign. I told the congregation the man was an adulterer; that a wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and that the Lord had said to me in a revelation, that any man who wanted a sign was an adulterous person. ‘It is true,’ cried one, ‘for I caught him in the very act,’ which the man afterwards confessed, when he was baptized” (*History of the Church*, 5:268).

- President Joseph F. Smith (1838–1918) further explained the dangers of depending on miracles for our faith: “Show me Latter-day Saints who have to feed upon miracles, signs and visions in order to keep them steadfast in the Church, and I will show you members of the Church who are not in good standing before God, and who are walking in slippery paths” (*Gospel Doctrine*, 5th ed. [1939], 7).

**Alma 30:52. Lies and Lying**

- To better understand the evils of lying, Robert J. Matthews, a former dean of religion at BYU, explained

that “the seriousness of lying is not measured only in injury or pain inflicted on the one deceived. Lying has a devastating effect also on the perpetrator. It robs the liar of self-respect, and deadens his ability to recognize the difference between truth and error. When a lie is told often enough, even the one who knowingly spread it may begin to believe it. This was the case with the antichrist Korihor in the Book of Mormon (see Alma 30:52–53)” (“Thou Shalt Not Bear False Witness,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1994, 56).

- The Prophet Joseph Smith spoke of the tragedy of individuals like Korihor: “Nothing is a greater injury to the children of men than to be under the influence of a false spirit when they think they have the Spirit of God” (*History of the Church*, 4:573).

**Alma 30:53. The Devil’s Deception and the Carnal Mind**

- To be carnally minded is to focus on physical pleasures or material things rather than on the things of the Spirit. It is hard for carnally-minded people to experience the things of the Spirit. Elder Neal A. Maxwell noted that they are “‘past feeling,’ having been sedated by pleasing the carnal mind” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1999, 29; or *Ensign*, May 1999, 24).

**Alma 31:3, 8–29. The Zoramites’ False Theology**

- Even though the Zoramites killed Korihor, they seem to have adopted a similar belief system. Note the following phrases from Alma 31 that describe the Zoramite beliefs:



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“They had fallen into great errors” (v. 9).

They had rejected traditions that they felt were “handed down . . . by the childishness of their fathers” (v. 16).

They did not want to “be led away after the foolish traditions of [their] brethren, which doth bind them down to a belief of Christ” (v. 17).

They refused “to believe in things to come, which they knew nothing about” (v. 22).

- Elder Jeffrey R. Holland commented about Korihor’s influence on the Zoramites’ false teachings:

“[Korihor’s] brand of teaching inevitably had its influence among some of the less faithful who, like the neighboring Zoramites, were already given to ‘perverting the ways of the Lord.’

“Zoram and his followers are one of the most memorable apostate groups mentioned in the Book of Mormon primarily because they considered themselves so unusually righteous. . . . Once a week they stood atop a prayer tower called a Rameumptom and, using always ‘the selfsame prayer,’ thanked God that they were better than everyone else, ‘a chosen and a holy’ people ‘elected’ by God to be saved while all around them were equally ‘elected’ to be cast down to hell. In the reassuring safety of all this, they were also spared any belief in such ‘foolish traditions’ (evidence of Korihor’s legacy emerging here) as a belief in a Savior, for it had been ‘made known’ to them there should be no Christ. . . .

“Alma lost little time in countering such unholy prayer and its equally unholy theology with his own prayer for divine assistance against this form of self-serving iniquity that made him literally sick at heart” (*Christ and the New Covenant*, 121–22).

#### **ALMA 31:5**

*According to Alma, why is the preaching of the word so powerful? How does this help explain why daily scripture study is so important?*

#### **Alma 31:5. The Power of the Word**

- The virtue or power of the word of God is in part explained by the fact that it is attended by the witness of the Spirit. The Lord said that when His words are conveyed by His Spirit they are His voice (see D&C 18:34–36). Alma considered resorting to preaching the word to the apostate Zoramites even though they had already heard and rejected it (see Alma 31:8–9).

President Boyd K. Packer explained one reason why we must learn the doctrines of the kingdom:

“True doctrine, understood, changes attitudes and behavior.

“The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior. . . . That is why we stress so forcefully the study of the doctrines of the gospel” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 20; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 17).

- President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) spoke of the power of scriptures to help us draw nearer to God: “I find that when I get casual in my relationships with divinity and when it seems that no divine ear is listening and no divine voice is speaking, that I am far, far away. If I immerse myself in the scriptures, the distance narrows and the spirituality returns. I find myself loving more intensely those whom I must love with all my heart and mind and strength, and loving them more. I find it easier to abide their counsel” (“What I Hope You Will Teach My Grandchildren and All Others of the Youth of Zion” [address to Church Educational System religious educators, July 11, 1966], 4).



- President Ezra Taft Benson explained how the scriptures can be a powerful way to bless us and answer the difficult questions of life: “Often we spend great effort in trying to increase the activity levels in our stakes. We work diligently to raise the percentages of those attending sacrament meetings. We labor to get

a higher percentage of our young men on missions. We strive to improve the numbers of those marrying in the temple. All of these are commendable efforts and important to the growth of the kingdom. But when individual members and families immerse themselves in the scriptures regularly and consistently, these other areas of activity will automatically come. Testimonies will increase. Commitment will be strengthened. Families will be fortified. Personal revelation will flow” (“The Power of the Word,” *Ensign*, May 1986, 81).

**Alma 31:9–11. Avoiding the Causes of Apostasy**

- In Antionum, the missionary force of Alma and his companions came across a group of Nephite dissenters known as the Zoramites. Mormon not only recorded that the Zoramites had previously had the word of God preached unto them, but he further identified the cause of their apostasy: they would not keep the commandments, they no longer petitioned the Lord daily in prayer, they perverted the ways of the Lord, and what prayers they did offer to the Lord were vain and meaningless. They ignored the basics, such as having a daily habit of meaningful prayer and scripture study.

Elder Donald L. Staheli of the Seventy emphasized the importance of daily consistency in the basics of the gospel:

“Daily fervent prayers seeking forgiveness and special help and direction are essential to our lives and the nourishment of our testimonies. When we become hurried, repetitive, casual, or forgetful in our prayers, we tend to lose the closeness of the Spirit, which is so essential in the continual direction we need to successfully manage the challenges of our everyday lives. Family prayer every morning and night adds additional blessings and power to our individual prayers and to our testimonies.

“Personal, sincere involvement in the scriptures produces faith, hope, and solutions to our daily challenges. Frequently reading, pondering, and applying the lessons of the scriptures, combined with prayer, become an irreplaceable part of gaining and sustaining a strong, vibrant testimony” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2004, 40; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 39).

**Alma 31:6–38. Apostate Zoramites**

- Alma 30:59 indicates that the Zoramites had dissented from the Nephites under the leadership of a man named Zoram. The following is a summary of what we know about their apostate beliefs and practices:

They did not observe the law of Moses (see Alma 31:9).

They had forsaken daily prayer (see v. 10).

They perverted the ways of the Lord (see v. 11).

They built synagogues for the purpose of worshipping one day a week (see v. 12).

Today there are those who have also fallen into similar false practices. Unless we are careful to guard against it, we too could fall into some of the same traps of routine prayers, worshipping only weekly during the three-hour block and not thinking of God again during the week, only praying in a set place, or becoming materialistic and prideful.

**ALMA 31:26–35**

*Read Alma’s prayer on behalf of the Zoramites. What do we learn about how a disciple of Christ should feel toward his or her fellowmen?*

**Alma 31:26–35. Alma’s Prayer in Behalf of the Zoramites**

- Alma recognized that the souls of the apostate Zoramites were precious to God. Thus, Alma prayed for the power and wisdom to bring them back to the Lord. Alma’s prayer exemplifies the attitude all members and missionaries must develop. All people are of great worth, and through the power of God they can be brought back to Him.

While serving as a member of the Seventy, Elder Carlos E. Asay (1926–99) taught that all people are precious to God and should be to us:

“The souls of our brothers and sisters who may seem to be more feeble and less honorable are precious. The Church has need of them. We should make every attempt to know them and to help them claim the full blessings and joys of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our



prayers should be as Alma's: 'Give unto us, O Lord, power and wisdom that we may bring these, our brethren, again unto thee.' (See Alma 31:35.)

"We must remember that our salvation is intertwined with the salvation of others. We must *care more* for those who seem to *care less* for their faith" ("Nurturing the Less Active," *Ensign*, Oct. 1986, 15).

### Alma 31:31–33. Comfort in Afflictions

- President Lorenzo Snow (1814–1901) spoke of the blessings that come through tribulation:



"I suppose I am talking to some who have had worry and trouble and heart burnings and persecution, and have at times been caused to think that they never expected to endure quite so much. But for everything you have suffered, for everything that

has occurred to you which you thought an evil at that time, you will receive fourfold, and that suffering will have had a tendency to make you better and stronger and to feel that you have been blessed. When you look back over your experiences you will then see that you have advanced far ahead and have gone up several rounds of the ladder toward exaltation and glory. . . .

"Take it individually or take it collectively, we have suffered and we shall have to suffer again; and why? Because the Lord requires it at our hands for our sanctification" (*The Teachings of Lorenzo Snow*, comp. Clyde J. Williams [1984], 117–18).

## Points to Ponder

- Why would Korihor's teachings seem attractive to certain individuals? What are some examples of such teachings today?
- Alma seemed to be motivated to reclaim the Zoramites out of love of God and love of the Zoramites. How can we develop this same kind of love?
- How was Alma's prayer different from the Zoramites' prayer? In what ways might our prayers be similar to the Zoramites' prayers? (see Alma 31:15–18). How might they be similar to Alma's prayers? (see Alma 31:30–35).

## Suggested Assignments

- What were some of the false teachings of Korihor? Explain to a friend why such arguments ultimately fail (see Alma 30:13–18).
- When Korihor asked for a sign of God's existence, what signs did Alma put forth as evidence that God lives? (see Alma 30:44). How have these evidences helped strengthen your faith? Write a paragraph that briefly explains how the design and order in the universe is evidence of God's existence.