



Type: Book Chapter

---

## Chapter XVI

Author(s): George Reynolds

Source: *The Story of the Book of Mormon*

Published: Salt Lake City; Joseph Hyrum Parry, 1888

Pages: 112-118

---

**Abstract:** The Unbelief of the Youth of Zarahemla—The Younger Alma and the Sons of Mosiah—They Encourage the Persecutions Against the Church—They are Met by an Angel—His Message—Alma's Awful Condition—His Vision and Testimony—The Changed Life of the Young Men

---

and so did all his people. Then Alma baptized them in the same manner as he had their brethren. He afterwards, by Mosiah's direction, went through the land, organizing and establishing churches and ordaining priests and teachers over every church. Thus were seven churches established at this time in the land of Zarahemla.

---

## CHAPTER XVI.

THE UNBELIEF OF THE YOUTH OF ZARAHEMLA—THE YOUNGER ALMA AND THE SONS OF MOSIAH—THEY ENCOURAGE THE PERSECUTIONS AGAINST THE CHURCH—THEY ARE MET BY AN ANGEL—HIS MESSAGE—ALMA'S AWFUL CONDITION—HIS VISION AND TESTIMONY—THE CHANGED LIFE OF THE YOUNG MEN.

IN THE course of years many of the rising generation gave no heed to the word of God. These were mostly such as were too young to enter into covenant with the Lord at the time that king Benjamin anointed Mosiah to be his successor. Not only did they themselves reject the doctrines of the atonement, the resurrection and other gospel principles, but they led away many of the members of the church into darkness and iniquity, and abused, reviled and persecuted those who remained faithful to the cause of Christ. Neither the fear of the civil nor of the divine law restrained them. Their course, and that of those in the church who gave way to evil doing, gave much trouble, and caused deep



THE BAPTISM OF LIMIL.



anxiety to Mosiah and Alma, the latter now the High Priest of the whole church. When sought in prayer, the Lord directed what action should be taken with transgressors in the church, and after due consultation with his priests, with Alma and others, Mosiah issued a proclamation of equality to his people, forbidding all his subjects to persecute, vex or abuse their fellows because of their faith or religion, and announcing that in matters of conscience all men were equal before the law, and all were the subjects of his protection. Still it required a greater than an earthly king to bring to naught the evil intents of the disbelievers, who were greatly encouraged in their misdeeds by the fact that the king's four sons and one of the sons of Alma were their leaders.

Frequent and fervent were the prayers offered by Mosiah and the elder Alma in behalf of their rebellious sons, and those prayers prevailed with him who sits on heaven's eternal throne.

One day, as Alma and his company were going about persecuting the members of the church, an holy angel descended in a cloud and stopped them in the way. When he spoke his voice was as thunder, that caused the whole earth to tremble beneath their feet. Naturally this manifestation of the power of God spread terror and dismay in the hearts of those who witnessed it. They fell to the ground; and so confused and terrified were they that they failed to understand the words of the holy messenger. Arise, Alma, and stand forth, he cried; and when Alma arose, his eyes were opened to see who stood before him. Why persecutest thou the Church of God? he was asked, for the Lord hath said, This is my Church, and I will establish it; and

nothing shall overthrow it, save it is the transgression of my people. If thou wilt of thyself be destroyed, seek no more to destroy the Church of God. Besides this, the angel spoke to him of his father's prayers in his behalf, and that because of those prayers, he told him, he was sent to convince him of the power of God. He also recounted to Alma the captivity of his fathers in the lands of Helam and Nephi, and of their miraculous deliverance therefrom. But Alma heard none of these latter sayings, for the terrors of the first salutation had overpowered him.

When the angel departed Alma was overcome and, dismayed and soul-stricken, he sank to the ground. When his companions gathered around him, they found he could not move, neither could he speak. Outwardly he was dead to the world; but the torments of the damned had taken hold of his soul, and in the most bitter pain and mental anguish he lay racked with the remembrance of all his past sins. The thought of standing before the bar of God to be judged for his iniquities overwhelmed him with horror. He desired to become extinct both body and soul without being brought before his Creator. Thus he continued for three days and three nights to suffer the pains of hell, which, to his racked conscience, must have seemed an eternity.

When his companions found that he could neither speak nor move, they carried him to his father, and related to him all that had happened. Strange as it must have seemed to them, the elder Alma's heart was filled with joy and praise when he looked upon the body of his much-loved son, for he realized it was God's power that had wrought all this, and that his long-continued

prayers had been answered. In his joy he gathered the people to witness this mighty manifestation of the goodness and power of Jehovah. He assembled the priests, sought their co-operation, and unitedly, in God's own way, they prayed and fasted for the stricken youth. For two days they continued their cries to heaven, at the end of which time Alma stood upon his feet and spoke. He comforted them by declaring, I have repented of my sins, and have been redeemed of the Lord, behold I am born of the Spirit.

In later years Alma, in relating to his son Heleman the details of his conversion, thus describes the causes that led him to bear this testimony. He says: Behold, I remembered also to have heard my father prophesy unto the people concerning the coming of one Jesus Christ, a Son of God, to atone for the sins of the world. Now as my mind caught hold upon this thought, I cried within my heart, O Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy on me, who art in the gall of bitterness and art encircled about by the everlasting chains of death. And now, behold, when I thought this, I could remember my pains no more; yea, I was harrowed up by the memory of my sins no more. And oh, what joy, and what marvelous light I did behold; yea, my soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was my pain; yea, I say unto you my son, there could be nothing so exquisite and so bitter as my pain. Yea, and again I say unto you, my son, that on the other hand, there can be nothing so exquisite and sweet as was my joy; yea, methought I saw, even as our father Lehi saw, God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels, in the attitude of singing and praising their God; yea, my soul did long to be there.

From that time to the end of his mortal career, Alma labored without ceasing to bring souls to Christ, and to guide his fellow man in the paths of salvation.

What effect had this heavenly visit upon the sons of Mosiah? A very great one. From that moment they were changed men. As the voice of the angel reached their astonished ears, the essence of divinity entered their souls, they knew, they felt, they realized there was a God and that they had been fighting against him. The sense of their own utter unworthiness filled their hearts; remorse and anguish reigned supreme therein, and they condemned themselves as the vilest of sinners. By and by the bitterness of their remorse was swallowed up in their faith in the coming of Christ, and they determined by God's help, to their utmost strength, to undo the evil that their previous course had wrought. These resolutions they faithfully carried out. If they had been energetic in their wrong-doing they were yet more active in their works of restitution. They journeyed from city to city, from land to land, and everywhere bore triumphant testimony of the incidents of their miraculous conversion, and in no equivocal tones proclaimed the glorious gospel message of love to God, salvation to mankind.

