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Enos and the Words Concerning Eternal Life

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David R. Seely

The Book of Mormon contains many detailed accounts illustrating the power of the “word,” or “words,” in bringing individuals to Christ through repentance. Its inspired authors and editors were conscious of its mission: to come forth in the latter days to bring men to Christ. They were also aware that this mission was to be fulfilled through the words which they were writing. Nephi says of the Book of Mormon, “The words of the faithful should speak as if it were from the dead” (2 Nephi 27:13), and Moroni says the Lord will say to us at the judgment bar: “Did I not declare my words unto you, which were written by this man, like as one crying from the dead, yea, even as one speaking out of the dust?” (Moroni 10:27; see also 2 Nephi 33:13; Mormon 8:26).

The Book of Mormon contains the “words . . . concerning eternal life” (Enos 1:3), meaning the doctrines of salvation as delivered by the Lord and his servants. Through historical examples it demonstrates the power of such words to change lives. In addition, the collection of the words about eternal life contained in the Book of Mormon invites all men to come unto Christ by serving as a witness to the divine work accomplished by Joseph Smith in the restoration of the correct doctrines and the ordinances necessary for salvation (see D&C 20:9-12).

I have been impressed with the story of Enos for two reasons: first, because my own father influenced me in much the same way Enos's did him; and second, the role that words have played in my conversion is similar to the role of words in Enos' conversion. The story of Enos after all is a story of his lifelong conversion to the gospel. It contains many elements that are familiar to all of us since they are common to all of our conversions. At several places in his account Enos mentions the role of words in his conversion: first, they act as a catalyst for his desire to gain a remission of his sins; second, they form a powerful agent in his conversation with the Lord; and finally, they are the means by which he attempts to share the experience of his conversion with others. It is the role of words in the conversion of Enos that I wish to focus on here.

Using the story of Enos as a model, I will examine the Book of Mormon concept of the "word" or "words" as it relates to the conversion process. This paper will consist of two parts. First, I will attempt to illuminate the episode of Enos' conversion by examining three pertinent questions: What was the source of the words concerning eternal life that moved Enos to action? What is the message of these words? and What were the effects of the words on Enos? In the second part I will show that the role of words in the conversions of other Book of Mormon characters is parallel to the conversion of Enos and that this concept of the role of words relates to the mission of the Book of Mormon as a whole.

Enos' Conversion

The first 18 verses of the book of Enos contain the account of Enos' conversion. He writes, "Behold, I went to hunt beasts in the forests; and the words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart" (v 3). The image of the words of his father "concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints" sinking into his heart is a wonderful description of the Holy Ghost working on

his soul, revealing the truth of those words as well as the need to act on them. The natural result of receiving the word through the Holy Ghost is repentance (see Mosiah 4:1-2). The words of Enos' father caused his "soul to hunger" (Enos 1:4), presumably for the "eternal life, and the joy of the saints" of which his father had spoken. Thus the "words . . . concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints" provided the catalyst for Enos to seek the Lord through repentance.

After a day of "mighty prayer and supplication," Enos heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed" (vv 4-5). When Enos asked how this was possible, the Lord said, "Because of thy faith in Christ" (v 8). Enos' repentance was made possible through the Atonement.

In verse nine Enos records, "Now, it came to pass that when I had heard these words I began to feel a desire for the welfare of my brethren, the Nephites; wherefore, I did pour out my whole soul unto God for them." Again the voice of the Lord responded and promised him that the Nephites would be blessed according to their faithfulness. In verse 11 Enos writes, "And after I, Enos, had heard these words [that the Nephites would be blessed on condition of their faithfulness], my faith began to be unshaken in the Lord; and I prayed unto him with many long strugglings for my brethren, the Lamanites" (his enemies!). The Lord once again responded to Enos' request according to his desires. Enos knew the Nephites would be destroyed if they were not faithful, and so he asked the Lord to preserve their record that it could be brought forth at some future day to bring salvation to the Lamanites (v 13). The Lord covenanted that this would be so: "And I, Enos, knew that it would be according to the covenant which he had made; wherefore my soul did rest" (v 17). Thus the experience of Enos demonstrates that a consequence of true conversion is the reception of the gift of charity, a gift of the Spirit, through which an individual feels concern for the welfare and the salvation of his brothers, both friends and enemies.

In the nine remaining verses of his book, Enos writes of his efforts to teach the “words . . . concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints,” to the Nephites and the Lamanites, who were in a state of serious spiritual decline. The experience of Enos demonstrates that the result of receiving the word and feeling the promptings of the Holy Ghost is the desire to share it with others. This brings to mind the injunction Christ later gave to his apostles: “When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren” (Luke 22:32). Near the end of his life Enos said, “And I saw that I must soon go down to my grave, having been wrought upon by the power of God that I must preach and prophesy unto this people, and declare the word according to the truth which is in Christ” (v 26). Enos shared his witness valiantly throughout his life. In the words of Nephi and Jacob, he had “endured to the end” (1 Nephi 22:31; 2 Nephi 9:24; 33:4). In his closing verse Enos expressed his desire to hear the words of the Redeemer, words concerning eternal life: “Come unto me, ye blessed, there is a place prepared for you in the mansions of my Father” (v 27). This final verse provides a wonderful link between the opening and closing of the story of Enos, which begins with the words of his righteous father inspiring him to seek forgiveness of the Lord and ends with the words of the Savior inviting him to come and dwell with his Eternal Father.

The Source of the Words Concerning Eternal Life

Enos identifies the immediate source of the words concerning eternal life as his father Jacob. Enos says of his father in verse one, “I, Enos, knowing my father that he was a just man—for he taught me in his language, and also in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Lehi, in describing Jacob, alludes to the fact that as a young boy Jacob had beheld the glory of the Lord (2 Nephi 2:1-4), and Nephi states it implicitly (2 Nephi 11:3). We can also assess Jacob’s character by studying the accounts we have of his own words: five chapters in 2 Nephi 6-10 and seven chapters in the book of Jacob. Enos further explains the role his father had in teaching him the gospel, “Behold, I went to hunt beasts in the

forests; and the words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart” (Enos 1:3). The observation that his father’s words had “sunk . . . into [his] heart” is reminiscent of the comment Nephi made at the end of his record, “When a man speaketh by the power of the Holy Ghost the power of the Holy Ghost carrieth it unto the hearts of the children of men” (2 Nephi 33:1). Just men who take the time to teach their children by the Holy Spirit have a powerful influence on their lives. This principle is taught by the Book of Mormon in the stories of Enos, Lehi and his sons, Alma the Elder and Alma the Younger, and Mormon and Moroni. The words concerning eternal life have power because they come from the Lord and are confirmed to each individual by the Holy Ghost. As we look for the source of these words, we note that Jacob teaches that the Lord uses three means to teach us the words concerning eternal life: first, living mortals, including parents and other inspired men (Jacob 6:3); second, the scriptures (Jacob 6:3); and third, the Lord himself either directly (Jacob 2:11; 7:5) or through divine messengers (2 Nephi 6:8-11).

The Message of the Words Concerning Eternal Life

Enos says his father Jacob, “taught me in his language, and also in the nurture and admonition of the Lord” (Enos 1:1), and later, “The words which I had often heard my father speak concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints, sunk deep into my heart” (Enos 1:3). Although in a general sense we can understand the phrase, “the words . . . concerning eternal life, and the joy of the saints” to mean the gospel of Jesus Christ, comprising all of those teachings and ordinances necessary for salvation and exaltation as well as the fulfillment gained by righteous living, the precise meaning Enos saw in the words of these two phrases may prove elusive. However, we can still gain some insight by examining the context in which Enos’ father uses them. In fact, even from what little we have (Nephi tells us that he

recorded only a small portion of Jacob's sermons [2 Nephi 11:1]) we see some interesting correlations which suggest that Enos' language may sometimes reflect the teachings of his father Jacob.

Taught me in his language. Judging from similar passages in 1 Nephi 1:1 and Mosiah 1:2-3, 16;¹ the reference to his father's language surely must refer to the level of literacy needed to read and understand the plates as well as to continue the tradition of writing on them. It seems clear in the cases of Nephi, Enos, and Mosiah that their fathers took the responsibility to have them educated in the secular as well as the spiritual matters necessary for the keeping of the records.

Taught me in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. The phrase "in the nurture and admonition" occurs in the Bible only in the King James translation of Ephesians 6:4 where it also occurs in the context of the family.² The English word *nurture* does not occur elsewhere in the Old or New Testament in the KJV and the word *admonition* is only slightly more common. Both Greek words in Ephesians 6:4 (*paideia*, "nurture," and *nouthesia*, "admonition") are quite common in the Septuagint translation of numerous Hebrew verbs both in the context of the Lord and of the family. Thus such a concept could have been known to Enos from the brass plates, and it is at least possible that both passages are derived from a common antecedent in the Hebrew tradition that is no longer extant in our English translation of the scriptures. For our purposes we are interested in seeing if there is anything in the teachings of Jacob to which Enos may have been referring with this phrase.

¹ In 1 Nephi 1:1 Nephi acknowledged that he "was taught somewhat in all the learning" of his father. Benjamin also "caused that [his three sons Mosiah, Helorum, and Helaman] should be taught in all the language of his fathers, that thereby they might become men of understanding; and that they might know concerning the prophecies which had been spoken by the mouths of their fathers" (Mosiah 1:2-3). In Mosiah 1:16 Benjamin gave charge of the records to his son Mosiah who continued to write on the plates.

² Ephesians 6:1-9 is a list of instructions regarding the roles of individuals in a household. Following the KJV, Ephesians 6:4 reads, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

As noted above, the word *nurture* does not occur elsewhere in the Book of Mormon, but it is possible that the concept Enos refers to with *nurture* may be found in its English cognate *nourish* (both of which derive from the Latin root *nutrire*) which occurs 25 times (in various forms) in the book of Jacob, all but one in the context of the allegory of the olive tree where the term is used in reference to the care the Lord and his servants give to the vineyard.³ Jacob also applies it to the people in conjunction with hearing the word when he mentions their being “nourished by the good word of God all the day long” (Jacob 6:7). The same concept may also be found in the English cognate *nursing* which is found in Jacob’s quotation of Isaiah referring to the “nursing fathers” and “nursing mothers” (2 Nephi 6:7). Enos’ use of “nurture of the Lord,” as taught him by his father Jacob, might refer to the Lord’s care for his children as demonstrated by Jacob’s quotations and his discussion of the allegory of the olive trees (Jacob 5-6).

The word *admonition* and its variants *admonish*, *admonished*, *admonishing*, and *admonitions*, occur only eight times in the Book of Mormon. In the small plates they occur four times, once here in Enos 1 and once in the mouth of Jacob when he speaks of “the strict commandment which I have received from God, to admonish you according to your crimes” (Jacob 2:9). It also appears in Nephi’s writings when he remarks, “And it came to pass that not many days after his death, Laman and Lemuel and the sons of Ishmael were angry with me because of the admonitions of the Lord” (2 Nephi 4:13); and in Omni 1:13 we read that Mosiah’s followers “were admonished continually by the word of God.” In each of these cases, as well as in the other four occurrences in the Book of Mormon, “admonish” means “to exhort,” usually with the connotation of repentance (see Mosiah 26:6, 39 [twice]; and Alma 1:7).

³ This word occurs 45 times in the Book of Mormon, 25 of which appear in the writings of Jacob. This also argues for individual authorship apart from the influence of Joseph Smith or the KJV. Only one of the occurrences (Jacob 7:15) appears in a context other than that of the allegory of the olive trees.

The Words Concerning Eternal Life and the Joy of the Saints.

Jacob received the words he spoke from his father, from the scriptures, from the Lord through his voice or in vision, through messengers, and through the Holy Ghost. While the phrases “words . . . concerning eternal life” and “joy of the saints” do not occur in any of Jacob’s sermons, all of the components of these phrases occur enough times separately to give us a sense of what they may have meant to Jacob and thus to Enos.

Jacob mentions “word” 27 times and “words” 39 times. Of note are the occurrences of the phrases: “I have spoken the words of your Maker. I know that the words of truth are hard against all uncleanness; but the righteous fear them not” (2 Nephi 9:40) and, “Remember the words of your God; pray unto him continually by day, and give thanks unto his holy name by night” (2 Nephi 9:52). Both of these passages may be related to the phrase used by Enos because Enos was concerned about repentance and was moved by the weight of the words in his heart to seek a remission of his sins through prayer.

Jacob refers to “life eternal” and “eternal life” three times, always in the context of the need for repentance: “Remember, to be carnally-minded is death, and to be spiritually-minded is life eternal” (2 Nephi 9:39); “Therefore, cheer up your hearts, and remember that ye are free to act for yourselves—to choose the way of everlasting death or the way of eternal life” (2 Nephi 10:23); and, “O then, my beloved brethren, repent ye, and enter in at the strait gate, and continue in the way which is narrow, until ye shall obtain eternal life” (Jacob 6:11). As in these passages, Enos’ use of the phrase “eternal life” very likely refers to his immediate concern about eternal life, repenting and gaining a remission of his sins.

While the phrase “joy of the saints” does not occur in the teachings of Jacob, each part of this phrase is used separately in relevant passages, and synonymous phrases occur in 2 Nephi 9:18, 43. The occurrence that is most likely an antecedent for the language of Enos is a combination of both “joy” and “saints” in the same verse in 2 Nephi 9:18: “But, behold, the righteous, the

saints of the Holy One of Israel, they who have believed in the Holy One of Israel, they who have endured the crosses of the world, and despised the shame of it, they shall inherit the kingdom of God, which was prepared for them from the foundation of the world, and their joy shall be full forever.” This verse gives us a good definition of a saint, one who has believed in the Holy One of Israel, endured the crosses of the world, and who is destined to receive an inheritance in the kingdom of God. It also explains that “the joy of the saints” is the happiness they will feel when they receive their reward of eternal life.⁴ That “the joy of the saints” is closely related to the idea of eternal life is further supported by Lehi’s statement in his vision of the tree of life when he said, “the fruit thereof . . . filled my soul with exceedingly great joy” (1 Nephi 8:12).⁵

Much of the terminology Enos uses to describe his spiritual upbringing, which he attributes to his father, can be found in his father’s teachings. At the core of the teachings of Jacob is the need for repentance, a need expressed and acted upon by Enos.

Results of Hearing the Words

Referring back to the conversion of Enos, we may now summarize the results of these words in his life as follows: first, *receive the words through the Holy Ghost* (vv 1-3); second, *repent* (vv 4-8); third, have *charity* (vv 9-18); fourth, *share the word* (vv 19-26); and fifth, *endure to the end* (vv 25-27). These steps are

⁴ The word *joy* occurs six times, twice in the words of Isaiah (2 Nephi 8:3, 11), once in the context of the hoped-for effects of receiving the words (Jacob 4:3), and three times in the allegory of the olive trees (Jacob 5:60, 71, 75). In light of Enos’ concern for his brethren and his lifelong efforts to convert them to the gospel, it may be significant that joy is explicitly related to missionary work in the Lord’s invitation: “If ye labor with your might with me ye shall have joy in the fruit which I shall lay up unto myself” (5:75). The word *saints* occurs three times—all in Jacob’s discussion of the Fall and Atonement in 2 Nephi 9. The first occurrence, “He delivereth his saints from that awful monster the devil” (v 19), is only generally related to the language of Enos, but the remaining two are much closer (vv 18, 43).

⁵ Incidentally, this definition of the “joy of the saints” is also suggested in section 51 of the Doctrine and Covenants. “And whoso is found a faithful, a just, and a wise steward shall enter into the joy of his Lord, and shall inherit eternal life,” (v 19), as well as in section 52 where the Lord says he will “crown the faithful with joy and with rejoicing” (v 43).

not unique to Enos but are the true fruits of conversion common to all. An understanding of these steps can help us to measure the ongoing processes of our own conversions to Christ and our own spiritual progress.

Other Book of Mormon Examples of Conversion

The story of Enos is typical of the Book of Mormon doctrine of conversion. As other examples, let us look at the conversion of the people of king Benjamin, in Mosiah 2-6, the conversion of Alma the Younger and the sons of Mosiah, as found in Mosiah 27 and Alma 36,⁶ and the Book of Mormon message as a whole.

Mosiah 2-6: The Conversion of the People of King Benjamin

Receive the word through the Holy Ghost. King Benjamin delivered “the words which had been delivered unto him by the angel of the Lord” (4:1). His sermon centered on the atonement of Christ and the need for repentance. His words, through the power of the Spirit, had a mighty impact on the people, and he saw that “they had fallen to the earth, for the fear of the Lord had come upon them” (4:1).

Repentance. The people fell to the earth as they viewed themselves in their carnal state and cried out: “O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins” (4:2). Through their faith in Jesus Christ they received a remission of their sins, peace of conscience, and were filled with joy (4:3).

Charity. King Benjamin continued his sermon telling them that now that they have “come to the knowledge of the glory of God . . . and have tasted of his love, and have received a remis-

⁶ Another example that closely follows this pattern can be found in the story of the conversion of Alma the Elder (Mosiah 17-18).

sion of [their] sins” they should always remember to have charity toward their brothers (4:11-28).

Share the word. The people were all converted and accepted Benjamin’s message by covenant (5:2-6). Priests were appointed to “teach the people . . . and to stir them up in remembrance of the oath which they had made” (6:3). Chapters seven through eight record that the conversion of the people was followed by missionary work in the land of Lehi-Nephi, where it is recorded that Ammon taught the people of Limhi “the last words which king Benjamin had taught them” (8:3).

Endure to the end. While we do not know how many individuals who heard the words of king Benjamin actually endured to the end, the textual evidence suggests that a large number of them did. In Mosiah 26:1, we learn that many of those who had been children at the time “could not understand the words of king Benjamin” and therefore “did not believe the tradition of their fathers.” This suggests that those who had understood the words at the time king Benjamin delivered them had remained faithful their whole lives, but they had not been completely successful in transmitting this same conviction to the next generation.

Mosiah 27 and Alma 36: The Conversion of Alma and the Sons of Mosiah

Receive the word through the Holy Ghost. Alma the Younger did not listen to the words of the Lord as delivered by his father, but the Lord did hear his father’s pleas on his behalf (Mosiah 27:14, 16, 20-24). Consequently, Alma the Younger was granted the “privilege” of receiving the word of the Lord directly from an angel (Mosiah 27:11; Alma 36:5). Alma is described as “a man of many words” who “did speak much flattery to the people; therefore he led many of the people to do after the manner of his iniquities” (Mosiah 27:8). As part of the sign which the Lord gave to Alma he struck him with dumbness, a symbolically fitting punishment since his mouth had before spread only flattery and

dissension. However, when his tongue was finally loosened, it was full of the words concerning eternal life. The words of the angel had a dramatic impact on Alma. He said when the angel spoke to him it was “as it were the voice of thunder” (Alma 36:7), and when he heard the indicting words “seek no more to destroy the church of God”, he “was struck with . . . great fear and amazement lest perhaps [he] should be destroyed” (Alma 36:11). The implication was clear that the first step was repentance.

Repentance. Alma suffered “the pains of a damned soul” (Alma 36:16), but through the atonement of Jesus Christ he received a remission of his sins and “[his] soul was filled with joy as exceeding as was [his] pain” (Alma 36:20). In his excruciating circumstances Alma sought the Lord and his forgiveness through prayer.

Charity. The charity of Alma and the sons of Mosiah is of note. Much like Enos, their concern was for the Nephites, and they ministered to them in an attempt to correct the harm they had wrought (Mosiah 27:32-37). Next the sons of Mosiah felt compassion and concern for the Lamanites, and they volunteered to “impart the word of God” to them also (Mosiah 28:1-9). In spite of the fact that the Lamanites were the “enemy,” the sons of Mosiah “could not bear that any human soul should perish” (Mosiah 28:3). Alma, meanwhile, remained among the Nephites to serve as their chief judge and high priest. In fact, Alma would remain a public servant for the rest of his life, later relinquishing the office of chief judge to serve full-time in the ministry.

Share the word. Alma and the sons of Mosiah are among the greatest missionaries recorded in all of scripture. They “began from this time forward to teach the people” (Mosiah 27:32), in spite of persecution and tribulation, and “were instruments in the hands of God in bringing many to the knowledge of the truth, yea, to the knowledge of their Redeemer” (Mosiah 27:36).

Endure to the end. That Alma endured to the end is witnessed by the account of his disappearance from among the people: “Behold, this we know, that he was a righteous man; and

the saying went abroad in the church that he was taken up by the Spirit . . . therefore, for this cause we know nothing concerning his death and burial” (Alma 45:19).

These two examples show that the story of Enos is not unique, rather it includes many of the basic principles common to the doctrine of conversion seen elsewhere in the Book of Mormon. All of the doctrines and examples of conversion in the Book of Mormon, taken together, teach us that while the circumstances and details often vary, the process and result of true conversion are always very much the same. The Book of Mormon thus presents us with the words concerning eternal life as an invitation to “come unto Christ” (Moroni 10:32), and then gives us specific historical examples of how we should do this.

*The Mission of the Book of Mormon:
To Deliver the Words Concerning Eternal Life*

As stated on its title page, the mission of the Book of Mormon is to convert men to Christ. The ancient authors and editors of the Book of Mormon were concerned that their message have the impact that it should. Impassioned statements directed to the modern reader about the power of their words to convert men to Christ are found throughout their narratives. Following our five-point typology of conversion derived from the story of Enos, let us examine a few of the things the first and last of the ancient authors of the Book of Mormon said about its mission to convert men and women to Christ.

Receive the word with the Holy Ghost. Both Nephi and Moroni recognized the importance of their words and the need for the Holy Ghost to affirm the truth of them to their readers. Nephi says, “Neither am I mighty in writing, like unto speaking; for when a man speaketh by the power of the Holy Ghost the power of the Holy Ghost carrieth it unto the hearts of the children of men” (2 Nephi 33:1). Despite their self-perceived weakness in writing, they give us the key to receiving the words concerning eternal life through the Spirit—prayer. Nephi urges us to “feast

upon the words of Christ” and “hearken unto the Spirit which teacheth a man to pray” (2 Nephi 32:3, 8). It may surprise us that they both thought they were better speakers than they were writers. But Moroni says, “Thou hast not made us mighty in writing; for thou hast made all this people that they could speak much, because of the Holy Ghost which thou hast given them; And thou hast made us that we could write but little, because of the awkwardness of our hands” (Ether 12:23-24). He also counsels us saying, “I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, . . . that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been . . . and ponder it in your hearts. . . . [A]nd if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things” (Moroni 10:3-5).

Repentance. Knowing the truth must lead to repentance and baptism. Nephi included an entire chapter (2 Nephi 31) on the importance of repentance and baptism for the remission of sins. He said, “The gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water; and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost” (v 17). Moroni also spoke of the importance of repentance as part of the process of attaining perfection: “And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God . . . unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot” (Moroni 10:33).

Charity. Nephi urged us to “press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men” (2 Nephi 31:20). At the end of his section of the record he spoke of the gift of charity which he had gained from his conversion to Christ: “I have charity for my people, . . . I have charity for the Jew[,] . . . I also have charity for the Gentiles” (2 Nephi 33:7-9). Moroni expressed the same sentiment when he said, “And except ye have charity ye can in nowise be saved in the kingdom of God” (Moroni 10:21).

Share the word. Nephi and Moroni both demonstrated their dedication to teaching the gospel to their contemporaries as well as recording their teachings for those in the distant future. Their laborious work in writing on the plates is a great witness to their concern for the remnants of their people, the Lamanites, as well as for the Jews and the Gentiles.

Endure to the end. Nephi and Moroni also testified that to attain eternal life it is necessary to endure to the end. Nephi said that he knows the Lord God will hear his prayers in behalf of his people and he will make strong his words that “speaketh of Jesus, and persuadeth them to believe in him, and to endure to the end, which is life eternal” (2 Nephi 33:4). As evidence of their faithfulness to the end, they both promised that they will be present at the judgment bar of God as witnesses that the words they wrote are true (2 Nephi 33:11; Moroni 10:34). Then and there we will give an accounting of our performance to the very source of these words, for Nephi promises us: “Christ will show unto you, with power and great glory, that they are his words, at the last day; and you and I shall stand face to face before his bar” (2 Nephi 33:11).

Conclusion

The Book of Mormon teaches the word of God in two distinct but related ways, and words are an important part of each. First, it records the actual words concerning eternal life, the words of God, as transmitted to God’s servants in various ways and then delivered to the people of their day as well as ours. Second, the Book of Mormon uses biography and history to illustrate the consequences of accepting or rejecting these words.

The process of conversion is succinctly illustrated in the story of Enos and further illuminated in great detail throughout the Book of Mormon. It is a message to all of us, illustrated by the examples of men who accepted the word and received it by the Holy Ghost, repented, had true charity, shared the word, and

endured to the end. This is the message and living example of men like Nephi, Jacob, Enos, king Benjamin, Alma, the sons of Mosiah, Mormon, Moroni, and many others. On the other hand we have the vivid examples of those who rejected the words concerning eternal life, men like Laman and Lemuel, Sherem, king Noah, Nehor, Korihor, and countless others. The choice is well defined and placed before us in unsurpassed plainness in the Book of Mormon. There the natural results of conversion to Christ are put forth doctrinally and illustrated by real historical circumstances, serving us as standards in our own spiritual quests to come unto Christ.

As Enos of old, may we respond to the words concerning eternal life as they come to us from our parents and other mortals, from the scriptures, and directly from the Lord. May they sink deep into our hearts through the power of the Holy Ghost which bears witness of them, and may they cause us to seek the Lord for a remission of our sins, to receive the gift of charity, to share the words with others, and to endure to the end. And may we, like Enos, rejoice to think of the day when we shall go to the place of our rest, which is with our Redeemer, when our mortal shall put on immortality and we shall stand before him and he will speak the “words concerning eternal life and the joy of the saints” (Enos 1:3) to us: “Come unto me, ye blessed, there is a place prepared for you in the mansions of my Father” (Enos 1:27).