

Come Follow Me Podcast
Elo Viz Production
Week 23
Mosiah 29 - Alma 4

There are several contradictions in the stories we will be studying this week. Such as the difference it makes to have a King as opposed to Judges and how that affects the people. The one that I am most fascinated by is the story that begins in Alma chapter one of an evil man by the name of Nehor. There is not a ton written about him, but we do know that his influence sticks in the history books for many years after his death. His argument was so convincing that people would just leave everything they believed and indulge in his wicked logic leading to much sin and priestcraft among those that followed him. In verse 16 it tells us that Nehors death: “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, and they went forth preaching **false doctrines**; and this they did for the sake of **riches** and honor.” (Alma 1:16)

Sounds like our day today, doesn't it? What's crazy; is listen to this description in verses 24 and 25: “For the hearts of many were hardened, and their names were **blotted out**, that they were remembered no more among the people of God. And also many **withdrew** themselves from among them.

25 Now this was a great trial to those that did stand fast in the faith; nevertheless, they were **steadfast** and immovable in keeping the commandments of God, and they bore with **patience** the persecution which was heaped upon them.”

This time period is about 91 B.C. just under 100 years before the birth of Christ. Isn't it interesting that just before some major event, some illuminating manifestation of God we see a wave of darkness, an increase in evil just before. The contrast that I see in this same chapter is the massive difference between those that were persecuting the church and those that remained through those hardships and held fast to their faith. If we didnt know the back story we would think they are describing heaven, starting in verse 26:

“**26** And when the priests left their **labor** to impart the word of God unto the people, the people also left their labors to hear the word of God. And when the priest had imparted unto them the word of God they all returned again diligently unto their labors; and the priest, not esteeming himself above his hearers, for the preacher was no better than the hearer, neither was the teacher any better than the learner; and thus they were all equal, and they did all labor, every man **according** to his strength.

27 And they did **impart** of their substance, every man according to that which he had, to the **poor**, and the needy, and the sick, and the afflicted; and they did not wear costly **apparel**, yet they were neat and comely.

28 And thus they did establish the affairs of the church; and thus they began to have continual peace again, notwithstanding all their persecutions.

29 And now, because of the steadiness of the church they began to be exceedingly **rich**, having abundance of all things whatsoever they stood in need—an abundance of flocks and herds, and fatlings of every kind, and also abundance of grain, and of gold, and of silver, and of precious things, and abundance of **silk** and fine-twined linen, and all manner of good homely **cloth**.

30 And thus, in their **prosperous** circumstances, they did not send away any who were **naked**, or that were hungry, or that were athirst, or that were sick, or that had not been nourished; and they did not set their hearts upon **riches**; therefore they were **liberal** to all, both old and young, both bond and free, both male and female, whether out of the church or in the church, having no **respect** to persons as to those who stood in need.

31 And thus they did **prosper** and become far more wealthy than those who did not belong to their church.” (Alma 1:26-31)

Sounds amazing, doesn't it? It sounds heavenly to me. It's easy to forget about all the evil that is going on around them when you read something like this. It reminds me of the city of Enoch just before they were taken up to be with God.

Listen to the similarities between these 2 cities. This is in Moses 7 verses 15-18

15 And the **giants** of the land, also, stood afar off; and there went forth a **curse** upon all people that fought against God;

16 And from that time forth there were wars and bloodshed among them; but the Lord came and **dwelt** with his people, and they dwelt in righteousness.

17 The **fear** of the Lord was upon all nations, so great was the **glory** of the Lord, which was upon his people. And the Lord blessed the **land**, and they were blessed upon the mountains, and upon the high places, and did flourish.

18 And the Lord called his people **ZION**, because they were of **one** heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them.”

When we picture these two great groups of people that were living this way we have some questions that we need to ask ourselves. At least in my mind I tend to think about what else was happening. How were they actually living? Like, do you think that there was a drug problem in the city? Or any type of substance abuse? Was anyone having an affair or was pornography an issue? My mind even goes to: where did they get their food, how did they buy and sell their homes? Or here is one that may cause some deep contemplation: What was church like? Because: If I have to sit through one more boring elders quorum lesson, I'm out!

Amidst all of these questions that we probably won't get answers to until we live in a city like this there is one thing for certain: If we want to be a part of something great like this then we need to do something about it now. If we wait until Christ comes again then I think we will find that it is too late to make those necessary changes.

So, how do we do it? How do we build a Zion type society where there is peace, love and protection amidst all the chaos in the world? My answer may come as a surprise to you... you can't! Though many have tried, and all have failed. You can not build the city of Zion, only God can do that. All you can do, and all that God asks you to do, is to make yourself into a person that can be invited to live in the city He is building.

At times I think we have become numb to His instruction, but it is repeated over and over and over again in the scriptures. His command to all of us is to: "impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants." (Mosiah 4:21-26)

Sister Sharon Eubank in the October 2021 General conference said it this way:

"The Church of Jesus Christ is under divine mandate to care for the poor. It is one of the pillars of the work of salvation and exaltation.

We have all seen recent images in the news: thousands of evacuees being flown from Afghanistan. Many arrived at air bases or other temporary locations in Qatar, the United States, Germany, and Spain before continuing to their final destinations. Their needs were immediate, and the Church responded with supplies and volunteers. At Ramstein Air Base in Germany, the Church provided large donations of diapers, baby formula, food, and shoes.

Some of the Relief Society sisters noticed that many Afghan women were using their husbands' shirts to cover their heads because their traditional head coverings had been ripped off in the frenzy at the Kabul airport. In an act of friendship that crossed any religious or cultural boundaries, the sisters of the Ramstein First Ward gathered to sew traditional Muslim clothing for Afghan women. Sister Bethani Halls said, "We heard that women were in need of prayer garments, and we are sewing so that they can be [comfortable] for prayer.""

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2021/10/32eubank?lang=eng>

I believe that one of the things that is getting in the way of us being the people we need to be is our culture of labeling and categorizing people. We think that if someone is from another country or class that somehow they are less of a child of God than we are. These deeply rooted adversarial traditions need to be ripped from our natural man and we must see others for who

they really are. Including and especially the poor. I have fallen into the same trap more times than I would like to count. When I see a panhandler, I find myself asking. Are they really poor and needy or are they just taking advantage of the system? I am not saying that we should support this profession and perpetuate the stigma of begging on a street corner. What I am saying is that if we want to live in a Zions society we need to be willing to do more than we are currently doing.

In 1996 President Holland told this story:

“Amidst the terrible hostilities in Missouri that would put the Prophet in Liberty Jail and see thousands of Latter-day Saints driven from their homes, Sister Drusilla Hendricks and her invalid husband, James, who had been shot by enemies of the Church in the Battle of Crooked River, arrived with their children at a hastily shaped dugout in Quincy, Illinois, to live out the spring of that harrowing year.

Within two weeks the Hendrickses were on the verge of starvation, having only one spoonful of sugar and a saucerful of cornmeal remaining in their possession. In the great tradition of LDS women, Drusilla made mush out of it for James and the children, thus stretching its contents as far as she could make it go. When that small offering was consumed by her famished family, she washed everything, cleaned their little dugout as thoroughly as she could, and quietly waited to die.

Not long thereafter the sound of a wagon brought Drusilla to her feet. It was their neighbor Reuben Allred. He said he had a feeling they were out of food, so on his way into town he'd had a sack of grain ground into meal for them.

Shortly thereafter Alexander Williams arrived with two bushels of meal on his shoulder. He told Drusilla that he'd been extremely busy but the Spirit had whispered to him that “Brother Hendricks’ family is suffering, so I dropped everything and came [running].”

May God, who has blessed all of us so mercifully and many of us so abundantly, bless us with one thing more. May he bless us to hear the often silent cries of the sorrowing and the afflicted, the downtrodden, the disadvantaged, the poor. Indeed may he bless us to hear the whispering of the Holy Spirit when any neighbor anywhere “is suffering,” and to “drop everything and come running.”

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1996/04/a-handful-of-meal-and-a-little-oil?lang=eng>

It is often those that are not asking for help that need it the most. There are many many stories of heroes and heroines that have come to the aid of the poor and the needy. There are even more stories of those that have assisted without any recognition or sought for any accolades outside the realms of heaven. It was Jesus that taught us to do these acts of kindness not to be seen of the world. And this is where the road starts. The Road that leads to a truly divine Zion like society.

I pray that we can learn to hear and heed the quiet whisperings of the Spirit that will guide you to those that God has prepared. He is the Master that answers every prayer. Hears every quiet pleading of the soul. He is the one that cares for all of His children. Might we have the privilege of being His hands when one of His children is in need, is my prayer.

In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.