

## **CONVERSION OF ALMA THE YOUNGER**

(Mosiah 11:177-184)

### **V177-180**

After the angel departs they again collapse to the ground out of astonishment at the evidence just presented them (v. 177-178). Alma's amazement is so great he is utterly overpowered, and cannot talk or move afterwards. The sons of Mosiah have to carry him back to his family (v. 179-180).

This is similar to Saul/Paul in the physical incapacity that resulted from the visitation (see Acts 9:8). Just as with Saul, the only one so physically debilitated is Saul and Alma. The companions are fully functional and able to take them to assistance.

In Alma's case the debilitation was even greater than Saul's, for Saul was only blind. Alma was dumb, and so physically weak that he needed to be "carried helpless." That he was laid before his father indicates that he was, at that time, too weak to even sit.

This physical weakness apparently came as a result of an internal spiritual struggle, which will be recounted later. Perhaps he was so preoccupied with the internal that his body was unable to cope with the external. Whatever the cause or explanation, it was a situation that was clearly related to his experience with the angel.

### **V181-184**

They then tell his father what happened, and his father rejoices because he knows the younger Alma has been overcome by the power of the Lord (v. 181). The elder Alma has people come and see firsthand what has happened to the younger Alma (v. 182). He then summons his fellow priests to fast and pray for the younger Alma that he might recover from his present physical shock (v. 183-184).

Alma recognized in this experience, the hand of God, and he rejoiced. This ultimate rejoicing, however, was probably preceded by ultimate anguish as seeing his son being carried helpless into his presence. He had to have taken that appearance for its worst possible meaning prior to receiving the explanation. A great deal of his joy must have come not simply from the recognition of the hand of the Lord, but from the tremendous relief that would have come when he understood that his son was not near death – but, in a very real sense, very near true life.

Alma the Younger has been fighting against the church, and particularly against the coming atoning Messiah. The prophecies of that Messiah are that he will die and be resurrected. In a very dramatic fashion, Alma the Younger becomes the visual symbol of that coming atoning Messiah. Alma the Younger, symbolically dead, will be resurrected to life.

In keeping with the resurrection/new birth theme, Alma declares that when he arises from his affliction that he is "born of the Spirit." Alma tells the people that while he has been "gone" that he has both repented of his sins and been redeemed from them. This redemption is the critical piece of teaching information in this experience.