

## KEY POINTS

We flee the wickedness of the world by

- Heeding the prophets, which brings safety.
- Keeping the commandments, which strengthens us.
- Gathering together in our wards and stakes, which builds unity.
- Trusting in the Lord, which builds faith and hope.

Around 148 B.C., the Lord sent the Book of Mormon prophet Abinadi to call the wicked King Noah and his people to repentance. The king and his priests rejected Abinadi's message, imprisoned him, and then put him to death. However, one of King Noah's priests, a young man named Alma, hearkened to the words of the prophet. Alma carefully recorded Abinadi's teachings about the coming of Christ and then quietly began sharing them with all who would listen. As a result, hundreds were baptized at the Waters of Mormon.

Soon their faith and acceptance of the gospel brought a strong negative response from King Noah,



who feared “that Alma was stirring up the people to rebellion against him” (Mosiah 18:33). King Noah sent an army to destroy Alma and his followers. In order to escape, these faithful Nephites had to take “their tents and their families and [depart] into the wilderness” (Mosiah 18:34).

Alma and his people soon learned what many other followers of Christ have learned: the wicked will threaten and sometimes even attack the faithful. Many ancient prophets, including Lehi, Nephi, Abraham, and Moses, suffered in this way. Each of these was forced to leave his home and seek safety elsewhere.

Similarly, during the early days of the restored Church,

Latter-day Saints were uprooted from their homes in Kirtland, Independence, Far West, and finally, Nauvoo, in order to avoid those who would do them harm. Like the prophets of old, they professed beliefs that stirred up opposition from those around them.

In 1831, the Lord warned Joseph Smith that this pattern would occur in his day:

“Prepare yourselves for the great day of the Lord. Watch, therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour. Let them, therefore, who are among the Gentiles flee unto Zion. . . . Go ye out from among the nations, even from Babylon, from the midst of wickedness, which is spiritual Babylon” (D&C 133:10–12, 14).

By Kevin Hinckley

# Take Your Tents and Flee

*The Lord has called us to flee the wicked things of the world and find safety in the gospel.*



In other words, the Saints of our day have to flee the wicked, as did the Saints of past ages. The Lord's warning has as much to do with spiritually fleeing as it does with physically fleeing. We need to spiritually flee the wickedness of the world around us. The Lord refers to this evil as spiritual Babylon. Spiritual escape occurs whenever the honest in heart accept the invitation to be baptized and "come into the fold of God, and to be called his people" (Mosiah 18:8), and live according to the teachings of the Savior Jesus Christ.

As society's morals continue to decay, we find ourselves in the midst of spiritual Babylon, which grows more clever and sophisticated in its messages.

Lehi also faced increasing wickedness. The Lord directed him to take refuge by fleeing Jerusalem with his tents into the wilderness. For us, safety from the incessant attacks of the adversary today can be found only under the protection of our spiritual tents: living the gospel and finding strength among fellow Saints—those who have taken upon them the name of Jesus Christ and left the world behind.

After escaping Egypt, Moses was directed by the Lord to construct a tabernacle—a temporary temple—thus providing the children of Israel with a place to worship as



well as a refuge in the wilderness. The stakes of this tent-like structure were driven deep in the ground, giving the tabernacle a steadfast anchor in the middle of the hostile desert. We reference this idea in our use of the word *stake* to describe our large ecclesiastical units. (See Isaiah 54:2; D&C 82:14.)

As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we find safety and ultimate security in our spiritual journey as we gather and participate in our stakes. By doing so, we gain strength within the gospel tent.

Finding protection under the gospel tent does not guarantee an absence of trials and hardships. When Alma and his people fled King Noah's army, they found a remote location where they established a new settlement. Soon came another trial: Lamanites discovered them, placed them into bondage, and allowed apostate Nephites to rule harshly over them.

Nevertheless, through this trial they came to know that the Lord "do[es] visit [his] people in their afflictions," for "the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease, and they did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord" (Mosiah 24:14–15).

Ultimately, Alma and his people were delivered when the Lord caused a deep sleep to come upon their tormentors. Quietly they escaped, making their way to Zarahemla and safety (see Mosiah 24). Deliverance happened on the Lord's timetable and in His own way, but it did come, as did many blessings both during and after their tribulations.

Like Alma, we too have been called out of Babylon to find shelter by gathering with the Saints of God. In order to do so, we may need to leave what is comfortable and familiar to dwell under the gospel's tent. No matter how enticing the world might appear, it was never intended to be our home.

Nor does it provide the true happiness available to those faithful to the Lord (see Mosiah 2:41). We, like Alma's people, can trust that the Lord will enable us to bear our burdens with ease.

Thankfully, the Lord has provided us with wards and branches, stakes and districts to gather to and a broad gospel tent for spiritual shelter from the storm. Beneath this tent we can find the refuge we seek from the storms of life. ■

