

# WHEN BAD LUCK HAS

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ANOTHER—IF WE ARE  
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SPIRITUAL PROMPTINGS."

Elder Ronald A. Rasband



**T**he automotive stars were beginning to align. I had just returned from a camping trip that involved lots of driving through rural areas. All at once, my car stopped working. The engine shut down and I coasted to a stop . . . right in front of the metal shop where I worked. Weird timing.

Because I had conveniently stalled out across from the place where I worked, I was able to push the car into the driveway without paying for a tow truck. A coworker connected some charge cables, and a bit later I could drive to a mechanic. They replaced a bad alternator.

A couple of weeks later I took an even longer road trip, this time visiting my parents out of state. I had a grand time, once again enjoying a journey without car trouble. That is, until I got back into town and once more drove past where I worked. At that point, my engine shut down. Again. Just as before, I coasted to a stop in front of my workplace.

Double weird. With a side helping of almost eerie.

As Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

once said when something similar happened to him, "Obviously the most precise laws of automotive physics were at work."<sup>1</sup>

Another push up my employer's driveway, another battery charge, and a short drive to the mechanic revealed that they had unknowingly placed a faulty alternator in my car. They replaced it for free and I was soon back on the road.

For my vote, both cases of car trouble were a type of blessing we don't always recognize.

## A UNIQUE PERSPECTIVE

Sometimes "bad luck,"<sup>2</sup> as we call it, has excellent timing. Things would've been much worse if I'd broken down in the wilderness on my camping trip or along an empty highway while driving to visit my folks.

In the Book of Mormon, Ammon demonstrates this principle in rather dramatic fashion. Shortly after becoming King Lamoni's servant, he experiences a setback that should've caused him to tremble with fear. Robbers had scattered the king's flock that

# GOOD TIMING



Ammon and the other servants were protecting.

As it happens, the other servants *were* trembling: “And they began to weep exceedingly, saying: Behold, our flocks are scattered already” (Alma 17:28).

At first glance, the timing appeared to be awful. Ammon was trying to make a good impression and was only three days into the new job when disaster struck. Worse still, the king had a recent history of killing servants after sheep went missing.

Instead, Ammon viewed the I-can’t-believe-this-is-happening, first-week-on-the-job disaster as a chance to make it the best first week ever: “Now when Ammon saw this his heart was swollen within him with joy; for, said he, I will show forth my power unto these my fellow-servants, or the power which is in me, in restoring these flocks unto the king” (Alma 17:29).

You know the rest of the story. Through his faith, and with God’s strengthening power, Ammon turned a setback into a powerful missionary opportunity that ultimately helped convert many people throughout the kingdom.

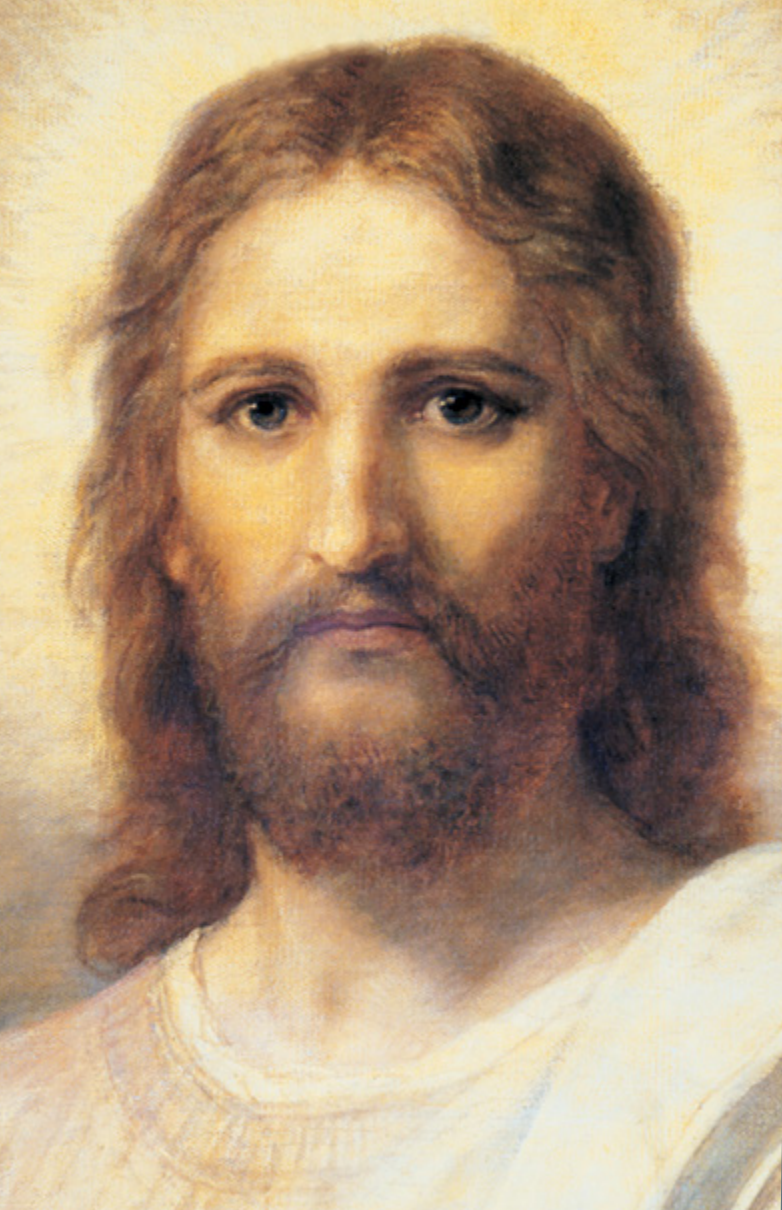
## A TIMELY SIGN

Another and even more dramatic example of this principle in the Book of Mormon took place many years later. An entire population of Christians in that area was about to be killed for their beliefs. Samuel the Lamanite had prophesied of the sign that would be given of the Savior’s birth—a night with no darkness.

Wickedness dominated the land. Things became so corrupt that “there was a day set apart by the unbelievers, that all those who believed in those traditions should be put to death except the sign should come to pass, which had been given by Samuel the prophet” (3 Nephi 1:9).

That’s right—the unbelievers thought they could put a deadline on a miracle. Yet in one of the best-timed “lucky coincidences” ever, the very day that the unbelievers set ended up being the day God had chosen to give the sign (see 3 Nephi 1:12–15).

Of course, such timing was anything but coincidence. As Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles once taught: “*Coincidence* is not an appropriate word



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to describe the workings of an omniscient God. He does not do things by ‘coincidence’ but . . . by ‘divine design.’”<sup>3</sup>

### GOD’S GUIDING HAND

In good times as well as bad, your life may be blessed by divine guidance more than you may realize.

“Our lives are like a chessboard,” Elder Ronald A. Rasband of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said, “and the Lord moves us from one place to another—if we are responsive to spiritual promptings. Looking back, we can see His hand in our lives.”<sup>4</sup>

In my own life, considering just the timing of various trials, car problems are a small piece to a much larger puzzle. I’ve lost track of how many times I’ve become sick right before a vacation instead of during one. Or came into extra money at the same time as an extra expense. Or met someone who helped me right when I needed it the most.

This life was designed to include trials that help us learn and grow. If we are keeping the commandments and following spiritual promptings, we’ll be blessed in spite of our trials. And during those trials, you can choose to look for God’s loving hand in the details. Did the timing of a trial soften its sting? Did Heavenly Father ease your burden in other ways? Did He provide you with extra strength to carry your burden?

If you look for that evidence of God’s love, you will surely find it. As President Thomas S. Monson (1927–2018) said: “God’s love is there for you whether or not you feel you deserve love. It is simply always there.”<sup>5</sup> **NE**

#### NOTES

1. See Jeffrey R. Holland, Oct. 1999 general conference (*Ensign*, Nov. 1999, 37).
2. Luck is defined as “the chance occurrence of situations or events either favourable or unfavourable to a person’s interests” (Oxford English Dictionary, “luck,” oed.com).
3. Neal A. Maxwell, “Brim with Joy” (Brigham Young University devotional, Jan. 23, 1996), 2, speeches.byu.edu.
4. Ronald A. Rasband, Oct. 2017 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2017, 55).
5. Thomas S. Monson, “We Never Walk Alone,” Oct. 2013 general conference (*Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2013, 124).