

# Alma 2–3

## Whom We Choose to Obey

Throughout the scriptures, prophets have continually warned us that we will face the consequences of our actions, based upon whom we choose to follow. For example, after a conflict between the Nephites and Amlicites, the prophet Mormon taught that those who died would “reap eternal happiness or eternal misery, according to the spirit which they listed to obey, whether it be a good spirit or a bad one” (Alma 3:26). This lesson can help you better understand the consequences of whom you choose to follow during this life.

**Prepare with the Objective in mind.** Take time to consider what students will experience in class that will help them to “deepen their conversion to Jesus Christ and His restored gospel” (“The Objective of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion” [2022], ChurchofJesusChrist.org). President Russell M. Nelson encouraged teachers to “remember that purpose every day before you teach your students” (“Teaching Youth in the Day of the Wave” [Seminaries and Institutes of Religion satellite broadcast], August 6, 2013).

**Student preparation:** Invite students to read or listen to Alma 2–3 before coming to class. Have them think about what they can learn from the account in these chapters.

# Possible Learning Activities

## What is the moral of the story?

Consider inviting students to think of stories or fables that teach lessons and invite them to share with the class. If needed, you could use the following example. If students are familiar with the example, consider inviting them to tell the story in their own words and identify the moral or lesson. This will help students identify principles Mormon intended for us to learn from his writings.

A classic fable attributed to an ancient Greek storyteller named Aesop is “The Boy Who Cried Wolf.” The story tells of a young shepherd boy who twice tricked his neighbors into believing that a wolf was attacking the village’s flock of sheep. To the boy’s great amusement, several villagers rushed to offer help, only to realize there was no wolf. At last, a real wolf attacked the flock. But when the boy cried for help a third time, no one came to his aid.

- What is a moral or lesson we can learn from this story?

Look for opportunities throughout your study of the Book of Mormon to help students recognize and identify principles and lessons highlighted by the prophet Mormon.

Just as stories or fables often have morals, the scriptures also teach lessons and illustrate principles. A helpful scripture study skill when you study the Book of Mormon is to notice when Mormon clearly states his purpose for including certain accounts in the record. He often uses phrases such as “And thus we can plainly discern,” “thus we see,” “verily, verily,” or “behold,” to let us know he is sharing principles and lessons with us (see Alma 24:30; 30:60; 48:17; 62:41; Helaman 3:27–28). Identifying the lessons and truths that Mormon highlighted can help you find personal relevance. It can also increase the effectiveness of your scripture study.

Read Alma 3:26–27, looking for a truth Mormon wanted us to learn from the account in Alma 2–3. Consider marking what you find.

- What did you discover?

Consider sharing the following information if students need help understanding the truths taught in Alma 3:26–27.

To help you better understand this passage, note that the phrase “every man receiveth wages of him whom he listeth to obey” invites us to imagine that we are employees whose choices determine whether our employer is Heavenly Father or Satan (see Alma 3:27). In this context, the word *list* refers to leaning or tilting to one side or another. Therefore, those who tilt or lean toward Satan soon find themselves employed by him and receive “eternal misery” (Alma 3:26). Eventually our life choices will reveal whom we have chosen as our eternal employer.

It may be helpful to write the following truth on the board so students can refer to it throughout the lesson.

One possible truth from Alma 3:26–27 is **whom we choose to obey in this life determines our eternal happiness or misery.**

Think about your life and whom you are choosing to obey. Are you striving to follow Jesus Christ? Or are you following someone else? Ponder these questions as you continue your study today.

## Amlici seeks to be king

During the early years of the reign of the judges, Alma and his people faced a difficult test to their faith and happiness.

Read Alma 2:1–12, looking for the test the Nephites faced.

Consider including the suggestion about religious freedom in the “Supplemental Learning Activities” section at this point in the lesson.

- What did Amlici intend to do if he became king? (See verse 4.)

- How did the Nephites respond?
- How did the Nephites show their desire to follow the Savior?

## Choices and consequences

Help students search for and share different consequences of following God or the devil. One way to do this is to copy the following chart on the board and have students fill it out. Another option is to prepare several small pieces of paper before class to represent currency or “wages” (Alma 3:27). Then bring two paper sacks or boxes, and label one “Following God” and the other “Following the devil or his servants.” Give each student at least one piece of paper and have half the class read each of the scripture blocks listed below. As students discover different wages from each account, invite them to write these on their pieces of paper and place their wage in the appropriate container. When students finish, read several of the wages aloud. Consider inviting students to share additional wages from following God they have noticed in their own lives or the lives of others.

### “The wages of him whom he listeth to obey” (Alma 3:27)

Following God	Following the devil or his servants

Alma 2:16–18, 26–31 (Alma and the Nephites)

Alma 3:4, 13–14, 18–19 (the Amlicites)

- What did you notice in these two accounts?

*Note:* The curse that both the Amlicites and Lamanites experienced was a separation from God because of their rebellion and disobedience (see 2 Nephi 5:20–21). The mark, which at that time distinguished the Lamanites from the Nephites, was that “the skins of the Lamanites were dark” (Alma 3:6). It is important to remember that the nature and appearance of this mark are not fully understood. Book of Mormon prophets and modern prophets have taught it is wrong to revile or look down upon people because of the color of their skin (see Jacob 3:9).

Depending on your students' abilities, rather than providing the next three verse groupings, you could invite students to find other scriptures that describe the "wages" of following God or someone else. You might encourage them to use doctrinal mastery passages.

Read the following scripture passages and add what you find to your chart.

2 Nephi 2:27

Alma 30:60

Matthew 11:28–30

When students have finished filling out their charts, invite them to share what they found. Ask students follow-up questions like the following example as they share that help them relate what they found in the scriptures to their personal lives.

## Personal application

- What have you observed or experienced in life that has shown you the truthfulness of the principle illustrated in Alma 3:26–27?

Think about choices you are currently making that help you follow Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. How will they lead to eternal happiness? Are you making any choices that could lead you away from the Savior? Decide what you may need to do to change. Consider how Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ can bless and strengthen you as you strive to make right choices that will lead you back to Them.

## Commentary and Background Information

### Alma 2:4. What was the danger of Amlici becoming king?

Before Mosiah died, he established laws that granted his people liberty and rights, including religious freedom (see Mosiah 29:32; Alma 1:1, 17). Amlici planned to “deprive [the people] of their rights and privileges of the church” (Alma 2:4), or in other words, destroy the religious freedom Mosiah had established through law.

Elder Robert D. Hales (1932–2017) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained who was behind these wicked plans:

As we walk the path of spiritual liberty in these last days, we must understand that the faithful use of our agency depends upon our having religious freedom. We already know that Satan does not want this freedom to be ours. He attempted to destroy moral agency in heaven, and now on earth he is fiercely undermining, opposing, and spreading confusion about religious freedom—what it is and why it is essential to our spiritual life and our very salvation. ...

Brothers and sisters, we are responsible to safeguard these sacred freedoms and rights for ourselves and our posterity. (Robert D. Hales, “Preserving Agency, Protecting Religious Freedom” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 111–12, 113)

### How should I respond to persecution?

Consider watching the video “What Is Religious Freedom?” (4:06).

For more information about religious freedom, visit [ReligiousFreedom.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://ReligiousFreedom.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

Consider reading the article titled “Elder Rasband Says ‘Choice Depends upon Religious Freedom’” (*Ensign*, April 2020, New Zealand Local Pages, [ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://ChurchofJesusChrist.org)).

### Alma 3:26–27. What blessings are available now for choosing to obey God?

Elder Paul V. Johnson of the Seventy taught:

When we obey Satan, we give him power. When we obey God, He gives us power. This is not the message we get from the world, but it is the truth. Real power, the power to become like the Savior, is found only in obedience. Real freedom is found only in obedience—in subjecting ourselves to God’s will rather than to the will of the flesh or the will of the devil. Obedience brings freedom, power, joy, peace, and hope. ... Obedience protects us from spiritual bondage and the misery associated with sin. (Paul V. Johnson, “Free to Choose,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2019, 69)

## Supplemental Learning Activities

### Alma 2:4. Religious freedom

Students may benefit from learning more about religious freedom and how it blesses their lives. After students read Alma 2:1–12, ask class members why they feel it is important to have the privilege of worshipping how they choose and why every person should be given that same privilege. Consider also using some of the resources in the “Commentary and Background Information” section.

### Alma 3:4. “They had marked themselves”

It might be helpful for students to analyze and discuss the Amlicites’ choice to mark and separate themselves from the Nephites. You could use questions such as the following: What message did the Amlicites want to communicate when they “set [a] mark upon themselves”? (see Alma 3:4, 13). What messages might we send—intentionally or unintentionally—with our appearance? This might also be a good time to review the invitations on page 24 in *For the Strength of Youth: A Guide for Making Choices* (booklet, 2022). You might also point out that like the Amlicites, we can bring curses upon ourselves as a result of unwise actions (see Alma 3:19).