

# SIN: THE NEMESIS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

## **VIEWING SIN CORRECTLY IN YOURSELF AND IN YOUR NEIGHBOR**

### **WHAT IS SIN? INIQUITY?**

SIN IS AN OFFENCE COMMITTED AGAINST GOD.

INIQUITY - From H5753; perversity, that is, (moral) evil: - fault, iniquity, mischief, punishment (of iniquity), sin.

GK - *illegality, that is, violation of law or (generally) wickedness: - iniquity, X transgress (-ion of) the law, unrighteousness.*

### **GOD'S LAW DEFINES SIN**

SIN IS BASED ON RIGHT AND WRONG AS DEFINED IN THE LAW OF GOD

ROMANS 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

### **UNDERSTANDING = ACCOUNTABILITY**

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR SIN IS BASED ON PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF THE LAW OF GOD.

JAMES 4:17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

### **THE NATURE OF SIN**

SIN STARTS SMALL BUT IS LIKE AN INFECTION AND WILL CONTINUE TO GROW.

### **SATAN THE AUTHOR OF SIN**

Helaman 2:155 Yea, it is that same being who put it into the heart of Gadianton, to still carry on the work of darkness, and of secret murder; and he hath brought it forth from the beginning of man, even down to this time.156 And behold, it is he which is the author of all sin. And behold, he doth carry on his works of darkness and secret murder, and doth hand down their plots, and their oaths, and their covenants, and their plans of awful wickedness from generation to generation, according as he can get hold upon the hearts of the children of men.157 And now behold, he had got great hold upon the hearts of the Nephites; yea, insomuch that they had become exceeding wicked;158 Yea, the more part of them had turned out of the way of righteousness, and did trample under their feet the commandments of God, and did turn unto their own ways, and did build up unto themselves idols of their gold and their silver.

### **SIN LIKE AN INFECTION GETS WORSE**

SIN = WITHDRAW OF SPIRIT

Helaman 2:159 ¶And it came to pass that all these iniquities did come unto them, in the space of not many years, insomuch that a more part of it had come unto them in the sixty and seventh year of the reign of the Judges over the people of Nephi.161 And thus we see that the Nephites did begin to dwindle in unbelief, and grow in wickedness and abominations, while the Lamanites began to grow exceedingly in the knowledge of their God; yea, they did begin to keep his statutes and commandments, and to walk in truth and uprightness before him.162 And thus we see that the Spirit of the Lord began to withdraw from the Nephites, because of the wickedness and the hardness of their hearts.

### **WITHDRAW OF SPIRIT = GOOD THINGS TAKEN**

Jeremiah 5:23 But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone.24 Neither say they in their heart, Let us now fear the LORD our God, that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season: he reserveth unto us the appointed weeks of the harvest.25 Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you.

### **WHAT GOOD THINGS CAN BE TAKEN AWAY?**

1 Corinthians 11:27 Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.28 But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.29 For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.30 For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

### **SIN PREVENTS MIRACLES**

3 Nephi 4:1 ¶And now it came to pass that according to our record, and we know our record to be true, for behold, it was a just man which did keep the record; for he truly did many miracles in the name of Jesus;2 And there was not any man which could do a miracle in the name of Jesus, save he were cleansed every whit from his iniquity.

### **SIN HAS AN ILLUSION TO HAPPINESS**

Hebrews 11:24 By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

### **SIN NEVER LEADS TO TRUE HAPPINESS**

Alma 19:74 Behold, I say unto you, Wickedness never was happiness.75 And now, my son, all men that are in a state of nature, or I would say, in a carnal state, are in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity; they are without God in the world, and they have gone contrary to the nature of God; therefore they are in a state contrary to the nature of happiness.

### **SIN AFFECTS OTHERS**

Exodus 20:5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

### **SIN SPREADS TO OTHERS**

1 Corinthians 5:6 Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?

### **SIN = DEATH**

James 1:13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

### **SIN = SPIRITUAL DEATH**

Helaman 5:73 But whosoever repenteth not, is hewn down and cast into the fire, and there cometh upon them again a spiritual death, yea, a second death, for they are cut off again as to things pertaining to righteousness;

### **HOW DOES GOD SEE SIN?**

Genesis 3:13 And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

### **HE HAS WEPT FOR MEN**

Luke 19:41 And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,42 Saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

### **GOD SENDS THE CURE**

2 Nephi 13:6 Wherefore, I would that ye should remember that I have spoken unto you, concerning that prophet which the Lord shewed unto me, that should baptize the Lamb of God, which should take away the sin of the world.

### **GOD'S LOVE - CHRIST TO DELIVER US FROM THE CURSE OF SIN**

John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

### **JESUS ATE WITH SINNERS**

Matthew 9:10 And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?12 But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.13 But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

### **THE PLAN OF REDEMPTION BROUGHT HOPE FOR MEN**

Matthew 4:14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

### **GOD WANTS US SIN FREE**

Alma 21:17 And he said, Thus saith the Lord God: Cursed shall be the land, yea, this land, unto every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, unto destruction, which do wickedly, when they are fully ripe;18 And as I have said, so shall it be: for this is the cursing and the blessing of God upon the land, for the Lord can not look upon sin with the least degree of allowance.

### **GOD IS PATIENT WITH US**

Psalms 103:8 The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.9 He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.10 He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.11 For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.12 As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.13 Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.

### **GOD DOES JUDGE SIN**

Jeremiah 26:12 Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard.13 Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.

### **CHRIST RESCUES HIS OWN**

Luke 15:4 What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?5 And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.6 And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.7 I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

### **GOD IS NOT AN ACCUSER**

John 8:7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst.10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

### **GOD IS A REPROVER!**

John 16:7 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:9 Of sin, because they believe not on me;10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

### **WHOSE JOB IS IT TO DEAL WITH SIN?**

Romans 6:11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.14 For sin shall not have dominion over you:

### **HOW SHOULD WE LOOK AT SIN IN THE BODY OF CHRIST?**

It STARTS WITH OURSELVES, WORK ON YOUR SINS FIRST!

Alma 16:237 And now my beloved brethren, I desire that ye should remember these things, and that ye should work out your salvation with fear before God, and that ye should no more deny the coming of Christ; that ye contend no more against the Holy Ghost, but that ye receive it, and take upon you the name of Christ; that ye humble yourselves even to the dust, and worship God in whatsoever place ye may be in, in spirit and in truth;

### **ASK OTHERS FOR HELP**

James 5:16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

### **ALLOW GODS'WORD AND PEOPLE TO HELP YOU**

Mosiah 11:148 And now all these things did Alma and his fellow laborers do, which were over the church; walking in all diligence; teaching the word of God in all things, suffering all manner of afflictions; being persecuted by all those who did not belong to the church of God.<sup>149</sup> And they did admonish their brethren; and they were also admonished, every one, by the word of God, according to his sins, or to the sins which he had committed; being commanded of God to pray without ceasing, and to give thanks in all things.

### **WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU IGNOR YOUR SINS?**

Galatians 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.<sup>2</sup> Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.<sup>3</sup> For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself.

### **REMEMBER YOURSELF**

Romans 3:23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;

### **THE FOCUS OF THE BODY**

Matthew 7:1 Judge not, that ye be not judged.<sup>2</sup> For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.<sup>3</sup> And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?<sup>4</sup> Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?<sup>5</sup> Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

### **THE NEED TO ADMONISH**

Mosiah 11:110 And now in the reign of Mosiah, they were not half so numerous as the people of God; but because of the dissensions among the brethren, they became more numerous.<sup>111</sup> For it came to pass that they did deceive many with their flattering words, which were in the church, and did cause them to commit many sins;<sup>112</sup> Therefore it became expedient that those who committed sin that were in the church, should be admonished by the church.

### **REMEMBER THE GOAL**

2 Timothy 2:24 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,<sup>25</sup> In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth;<sup>26</sup> And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

## **NEED FOR GRACE**

Ephesians 4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.30 And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.

## **DUTY OF THE CHURCH**

Moroni 6:7 And they were strict to observe that there should be no iniquity among them; and whoso was found to commit iniquity, and three witnesses of the church did condemn them before the elders;8 And if they repented not, and confessed not, their names were blotted out, and they were not numbered among the people of Christ; but as oft as they repented, and sought forgiveness, with real intent, they were forgiven.

## **FORGIVENESS IS ALWAYS IN ORDER**

Jeremiah 26:12 Then spake Jeremiah unto all the princes and to all the people, saying, The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and against this city all the words that ye have heard.13 Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent him of the evil that he hath pronounced against you.

# SIN: THE NEMESIS OF GOD'S PEOPLE II

## BREAKING THE POWER AND EFFECT OF SIN IN OUR LIVES

**NEMESIS** – The inescapable agent of someone's downfall. 2. A longstanding rival; an archenemy 3. A downfall caused by an inescapable agent.

### WHAT IS SIN?

An offense committed against God

### WHAT AFFECT DOES SIN HAVE IN OUR LIVES?

Helaman 2:159 ¶And it came to pass that all these iniquities did come unto them, in the space of not many years, insomuch that a more part of it had come unto them in the sixty and seventh year of the reign of the Judges over the people of Nephi. 161 And thus we see that the Nephites did begin to dwindle in unbelief, and grow in wickedness and abominations, while the Lamanites began to grow exceedingly in the knowledge of their God; yea, they did begin to keep his statutes and commandments, and to walk in truth and uprightness before him.162 And thus we see that the Spirit of the Lord began to withdraw from the Nephites, because of the wickedness and the hardness of their hearts.

### THE EFFECTS OF SIN

Alma 9:8 And behold, I say unto you all, that this was a snare of the adversary, which he hath laid to catch this people, 9 That he might bring you into subjection unto him, that he might encircle you about with his chains, that he might chain you down to everlasting destruction, according to the power of his captivity.

Romans 6:19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

### THE SIN SPIRAL

Moroni 10:16 Neither can ye be saved in the kingdom of God, if ye have not faith; neither can ye if ye have no hope; and if ye have no hope, ye must needs be in despair; and despair cometh because of iniquity.

### SIN DESTROYS LOVE

1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.



Matthew 24:12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

### **SINS ULTIMATE END**

2 Nephi 1:27 O that ye would awake; awake from a deep sleep, yea, even from the sleep of hell, and shake off the awful chains by which ye are bound, which are the chains which bind the children of men, that they are carried away captive down to the eternal gulf of misery and woe!

### **THE EFFECTS OF SIN:**

- a. Faith dwindles – what does this mean?
- b. Spirit begins to withdraw
- c. Sin brings bondage
- d. Sin brings shame
- e. Sin brings despair
- f. Sin destroys the power of love and brings fear and torment.
- g. Sin binds you to serve it, until it chains you forever

### **BREAKING THE BONDAGE OF SIN**

Mosiah 11:186 For, said he, I have repented of my sins, and have been redeemed of the Lord; behold, I am born of the Spirit.<sup>187</sup> And the Lord said unto me, Marvel not that all mankind, yea, men, and women, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people, must be born again;<sup>188</sup> Yea, born of God, changed from their carnal and fallen state, to a state of righteousness, being redeemed of God, becoming his sons and daughters; and thus they become new creatures; and unless they do this, they can in no wise inherit the kingdom of God.

### **REPENTENCE**

metanoēō - From G3326 and G3539; to *think differently or afterwards, that is, reconsider (morally to feel compunction)*: - repent.

### **BORN AGAIN**

John 1:11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: 13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

### **PROMISE OF A NEW LIFE**

Romans 6:12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.<sup>13</sup> Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.<sup>14</sup> For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

## **STRUGGLING WITH OUR NATURE**

Romans 7:14 For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.15 For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.

## **STEPS TO VICTORY**

Romans 7: 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. 22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: 23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? 25 I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then **with the mind** I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

## **IT STARTS IN OUR MIND**

The mind and heart influence all that we do.

When we are touched by the Spirit of God our mind is enlightened and given knowledge by God.

How we use this knowledge determines our course. God has given us all things that pertain to life through His word, so that He might enable us to serve Him.

## **CALLED BY GOD TO HAVE FAITH**

Helaman 2:25 Thus we may see that the Lord is merciful unto all who will in the sincerity of their hearts, call upon his holy name; yea, thus we see that the gate of heaven is open unto all, even to those who will believe on the name of Jesus Christ, which is the Son of God; 26 Yea, we see that whosoever will lay hold upon the word of God which is quick and powerful, which shall divide asunder all the cunning, and the snares, and the wiles of the devil, and lead the man of Christ in a straight and narrow course across that everlasting gulf of misery which is prepared to engulf the wicked, and land their souls, yea, their immortal souls, at the right hand of God, in the kingdom of heaven, to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and with Jacob, and with all our holy fathers, to go no more out.

## **FAITH AND THE WORD ENCOURAGE**

We have been given something with our mind that is above what was given to the animals.

We have been given the ability to learn and reason, and determine actions that are needed that go against our natural inclinations.

We must use our mind or we will be led like dumb sheep.

Faith and knowledge arm us with ability

Be determined to learn

John 8:31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; 32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

### **HOW DOES GOD TEACH US?**

- 2 Nephi 12:35 ¶¶Wo be unto him that shall say, We have received the word of God, and we need no more of the word of God, for we have enough. 36 For behold, thus saith the Lord God: I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little: 37 And blessed are they that hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; 38 For unto him that receiveth, I will give more: and them that shall say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have.

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### **BE PATIENT AND LEARN**

James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; 3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. 4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. 5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

### **THE TEST OF TEMPTATION**

James 1:12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. 13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: 14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. 15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

### **THE POWER OF LOVE**

1 John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.

John 3:16

Hebrews 5:7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; 8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; 9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

### **THE POWER OF LOVE CONTINUED**

Matthew 16:24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

John 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

## **LOVE HAS THE ABILITY TO CHANGE US**

John 21:17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. 18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. 19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

## **LOVE FOR GOD GIVES US COURAGE**

James 5:16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

## **CONFESSION EXPOSES SIN**

Light allows others to join the fight against the sin that dominates. It encourages others to strengthen you by admonition and prayer.

Don't choose to go it alone

## **THE PRINCE AND THE DRAGON**

This parable was taken from the Book titled Pure Desire, pages 33-36, written by Ted Roberts.

There was once a great and noble King whose land was terrorized by a crafty dragon. Like a massive bird of prey, the scaly beast delighted in ravaging villages with his fiery breath. Hapless victims ran from their burning homes, only to be snatched into the dragon's jaws or talons. Those devoured instantly were deemed more fortunate than those carried back to the dragon's lair to be devoured at his leisure. The King led his sons and knights in many valiant battles against the serpent.

Riding alone in the forest, one of the King's sons heard his name purred low and soft. In the shadows of the ferns and trees, curled among the boulders, lay the dragon. The creature's heavy-lidded eyes fastened on the prince, and the reptilian mouth stretched into a friendly smile.

"Don't be alarmed," said the dragon, as gray wisps of smoke rose lazily from his nostrils. "I am not what your father thinks."

"What are you then?" asked the prince, warily drawing his sword as he pulled in the reins to keep his fearful horse from bolting.

"I am pleasure," said the dragon. "Ride on my back and you will experience more than you ever imagined. Come now. I have no harmful intentions. I seek a friend, someone to share flights with me. Have you never dreamed of flying? Never longed to soar in the clouds?"

Visions of soaring high above the forested hills drew the prince hesitantly from his horse. The dragon unfurled one great webbed wing to serve as a ramp to his ridged back. Between the spiny

projections, the prince found a secure seat. Then the creature snapped his powerful wings twice and launched them into the sky. The prince's apprehension melted into awe and exhilaration.

From then on, he met the dragon often, but secretly, for how could he tell his father, brothers or the knights that he had befriended the enemy? The prince felt separate from them all. Their concerns were no longer his concerns. Even when he wasn't with the dragon, he spent less time with those he loved and more time alone.

The skin on the prince's legs became calloused from gripping the ridged back of the dragon, and his hands grew rough and hardened. He began wearing gloves to hide the malady. After many nights riding, he discovered scales growing on the backs of his hands as well. With dread he realized his fate were he to continue, so he resolved to return no more to the dragon.

But, after a fortnight, he again sought out the dragon, having been tortured with desire. And so it transpired many times over. No matter what his determination, the prince eventually found himself pulled back, as if by the cords of an invisible web. Silently, patiently, the dragon always waited.

One cold, moonless night their excursion became a foray against a sleeping village. Torching the thatched roofs with fiery blasts from his nostrils, the dragon roared with delight when the terrified victims fled from their burning homes. Swooping in, the serpent belched again and flames engulfed a cluster of screaming villagers. The prince closed his eyes tightly in an attempt to shut out the carnage.

In the predawn hours, when the prince crept back from his dragon trysts, the road outside his father's castle usually remained empty. But not tonight. Terrified refugees streamed into the protective walls of the castle. The prince attempted to slip through the crowd to close himself in his chambers, but some of the survivors stared and pointed toward him.

"He was there," one woman cried out, "I saw him on the back of the dragon." Others nodded their heads in angry agreement. Horrified, the prince saw that his father, the King, was in the courtyard holding a bleeding child in his arms. The King's face mirrored the agony of his people as his eyes found the prince's. The son fled, hoping to escape into the night, but the guards apprehended him as if he were a common thief. They brought him to the great hall where his father sat solemnly on the throne. The people on every side railed against the prince.

"Banish him!" he heard one of his own brothers angrily cry out.

"Burn him alive!" other voices shouted.

As the King rose from his throne, bloodstains from the wounded shone darkly on his royal robes. The crowd fell silent in expectation of his decree. The prince, who could not bear to look into his father's face, stared at the flagstones of the floor.

"Take off your gloves and your tunic," the King commanded. The prince obeyed slowly, dreading to have his metamorphosis uncovered before the kingdom. Was his shame not already great enough? He had hoped for a quick death without further humiliation. Sounds of revulsion rippled through the crowd at the sight of the prince's thick, scaled skin and the ridge growing along his spine.

The King strode toward his son, and the prince steeled himself, fully expecting a back-handed blow even though he had never been struck so by his father.

Instead, his father embraced him and wept as he held him tightly. In shocked disbelief, the prince buried his face against his father's shoulder.

"Do you wish to be freed from the dragon, my son?"

The prince answered in despair, "I wished it many times, but there is no hope for me."

"Not alone," said the King. "You cannot win against the serpent alone."

"Father I am no longer your son. I am half beast," sobbed the prince.

But the father replied, "My blood runs in your veins. My nobility has always been stamped deep within your soul."

With his face still hidden tearfully in his father's embrace, the prince heard the King instruct the crowd, "The dragon is crafty. Some fall victim to his wiles and some to his violence. There will be mercy for all who wish to be freed. Who else among you has ridden the dragon?"

The prince lifted his head to see someone emerge from the crowd. To his amazement, he recognized an older brother, one who has been lauded throughout the kingdom for his onslaughts against the dragon in battle and for his many good deeds. Others came, some weeping, others hanging their heads in shame.

The King embraced them all.

"This is our most powerful weapon against the dragon," he announced. "Truth. No more hidden flights. Alone we cannot resist him."

### **BE ANCHORED IN CHRIST**

Helaman 2:72 And remember also, the words which Amulek spake unto Zeezrom, in the city of Ammonihah; for he said unto him, that the Lord surely should come to redeem his people; but that he should not come to redeem them in their sins, but to redeem them from their sins. 73 And he hath power given unto him from the Father, to redeem them from their sins, because of repentance; therefore he hath sent his angels to declare the tidings of the conditions of repentance, which bringeth unto the power of the Redeemer, unto the salvation of their souls. 74 And now my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, which is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation, that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds; yea, his shafts in the whirlwind; 75 Yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you, to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build, they can not fall.