

[Lesson 27](#): “All Things Denote There Is a God” (Alma 31 – 32) [L27 Study Guide](#)

Purpose: To help us learn how to recognize and refute false teachings and stay true to our testimonies of Jesus Christ.

1. Korihor leads away the hearts of many in Zarahemla. ([Alma 30:1-18](#))

• Alma 30:6, 12 “And this Anti-Christ, ... Korihor, began to preach unto the people that there should be no Christ.”

†1. Elder Gerald N. Lund †2. Elder Bruce R. McConkie

Some of the False Teachings of Korihor: (See Alma 30:12-18)

- a. There will be “no Christ... Ye cannot know of things which ye do not see; therefore ye cannot know that there shall be a Christ” (Alma 30:12-15)
- b. “No man can know of anything which is to come” (Alma 30:13).
- c. Belief in the Atonement “is the effect of a frenzied mind” (Alma 30:16).
- d. “Every man prosper[s] according to his genius, and ... every man conquer[s] according to his strength” (Alma 30:17).
- e. “Whatsoever a man [does is] no crime” (Alma 30:17).
- f. “When a man [is] dead, that [is] the end thereof” (Alma 30:18). †3. Elder Bruce R. McConkie

• Alma 30:18 “And thus he did preach unto them, leading away the hearts of many”.

Why do you think these teachings would lead people to sin?

How are our daily choices influenced by our testimony of Jesus Christ, the Atonement, and life after death?

†4. Elder Boyd K. Packer

2. Korihor is taken before Alma, who testifies of Christ’s coming. ([Alma 17-19](#))

Following Alma’s Example With Korihors: †5. Joseph Smith

• Alma 30:19-21 The people of Ammon, “more wise” for they did not listen and took him to Ammon. (*Be wise.*)

• Alma 30:23-24, 27-28, 31 Korihor made false accusations against Church leaders. †6. Ezra Taft Benson

How does obeying our Church leaders make us free, rather than bring us into bondage?

• Alma 30:32-35 Alma confronts Korihor’s false accusations with the truth. (*Know the truth.*)

• Alma 30:39 “I know there is a God, and also that Christ shall come.” (*Bear personal testimony.*)

• Alma 30:42 “Thou believest, but ... ye have put off the Spirit of God”. (*Seek the guidance of the Holy Ghost.*)

• Alma 30:45 “Ye have the testimony of ... all the holy prophets”. (*Teach from the prophets and the scriptures.*)

• Alma 30:49-50 “It is better that thy soul should be lost than ... many souls ... therefore if thou shalt deny again”.

• Alma 30:47 Korihor said, “the devil hath deceived me ... in the form of an angel.

What reason did Korihor give for teaching and believing his false doctrine?

• Alma 30:54-56, 58-59 What finally happened to Korihor?

Why do you think Mormon included the account of Korihor in his abridgment of the plates?

• Alma 30:60 What does this story teach us about the fate of those who pervert the ways of the Lord?

3. Alma leads a mission to reclaim the apostate Zoramites. ([Alma 20-22](#))

• Alma 31:1-6 “The preaching of the word had a great tendency to lead the people to do that which was just”. (v5)

How have you seen the word of God bring about change in people’s lives?

• Alma 31:8-11 “They had fallen into great errors, for they would not observe to keep the commandments of God”.

What can we do to guard against individual apostasy?

• Alma 31:12-23 “They returned to their homes, never speaking of their God again”. †7. Hugh Nibley

†8. Two Different Prayers How was Alma’s prayer different from the Zoramites’ prayer?

• Alma 31:24-29 “He saw that their hearts were set upon gold, and upon silver, and upon all manner of fine goods.”

• Alma 31:38 “The Lord ... gave them strength” [and] their afflictions were “swallowed up in the joy of Christ.”

†9. Neal A. Maxwell †10. C. S. Lewis

([Book of Mormon Manual – LDS Institute](#) (Religion 121-122). (You can download a free PDF manual.)

Next Week: Lesson 28: “The Word Is in Christ unto Salvation”; Alma 32 – 35 † •

†1. **Elder Gerald N. Lund:** “Today, the world is permeated with philosophies similar to those taught by Korihor. We read them in books, see them championed in the movies and on television, and hear them taught in classrooms and sometimes in the churches of our time....” (“[Countering Korihor’s Philosophy](#),” *Ensign*, July 1992, 20).

†2. **Elder Bruce R. McConkie:** “An *antichrist* is an opponent of Christ; he is one who is in opposition to the true gospel, the true Church, and the true plan of salvation. (1 John 2:19; 4:4-6.) He is one who offers salvation to men on some other terms than those laid down by Christ. Sherem (Jac. 7:1-23), Nehor (Alma 1:2-16), and Korihor (Alma 30:6-60) were antichrists who spread their delusions among the Nephites” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [1966], 39-40).

†3. **Elder Bruce R. McConkie:** “Here we find an interesting definition of an anti-Christ: one who defies and denies the prophecies concerning the coming of Christ. This definition would, of course, pertain primarily to those who lived before the meridian of time. In our day we would speak of an anti-Christ as one who denies the divine birth of Jesus; who downplays the significance of his teachings; who claims that Jesus’ sufferings, death, and resurrection have no significance for mankind. Many in this dispensation have been seduced into the damnable heresy that Jesus was merely a good man, a brilliant speaker, and a loving and tender example of mercy and forgiveness—these things alone. The restored gospel—especially as made known through the Book of Mormon—testifies that Jesus Christ was and is divine, that he is God.” (McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 3, p. 201)

†4. **Elder Boyd K. Packer:** “True doctrine, understood changes attitudes and behavior.

“The study of the doctrines of the gospel will improve behavior quicker than a study of behavior will improve behavior... That is why we stress so forcefully the study of the doctrines of the gospel.” (“[Little Children](#),” *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 20)

†5. **Joseph Smith:** “Let the Elders be exceedingly careful... Remember that your business is to preach the Gospel in all humility and meekness, and warn sinners to repent and come to Christ. Avoid contentions and vain disputes with men of corrupt minds, who do not desire to know the truth. Remember that ‘it is a day of warning, and not a day of many words.’ If they receive not your testimony in one place, flee to another, remembering to cast no reflections, nor throw out any bitter sayings. If you do your duty, it will be just as well with you, as though all men embraced the Gospel.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 43, italics added)

†6. **Ezra Taft Benson:** “One of Satan’s frequently used deceptions is the notion that the commandments of God are meant to restrict freedom and limit happiness. Young people especially sometimes feel that the standards of the Lord are like fences and chains, blocking them from those activities that seem most enjoyable in life. But exactly the opposite is true. The gospel plan is the plan by which men are brought to a fullness of joy. The gospel principles are the steps and

guidelines which will help us find true happiness and joy.” (*Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, p. 357 cited in *Latter-day Commentary on the Book of Mormon* compiled by K. Douglas Bassett, p. 297)

†7. **Hugh Nibley:** “Next to covetousness it was self-righteousness against which Joseph and Brigham most urgently warned the Saints. ‘Let not any man publish his own righteousness,’ said the Prophet Joseph (not even, one might, add, in testimony meeting). ‘Don’t be limited in your views with regard to your neighbor’s virtue, but beware of self-righteousness, and be limited in the estimate of your own virtues. . . We are full of selfishness; the devil flatters us that we are very righteous, when we are feeding on the faults of others.’” (*Brother Brigham Challenges the Saints*, pp. 225-6)

†8. Two Different Prayers:

Zoramites’ Prayer

God was, is, and always will be a spirit (Alma 31:15).

“We do not believe in the tradition of our brethren” (31:16)

“There shall be no Christ” (Alma 31:16).

“We shall be saved,” but everyone else will be “cast ... to hell” (Alma 31:17).

Others are bound by “foolish traditions” (Alma 31:17).

“We are a chosen and a holy people” (Alma 31:18).

Alma’s Prayer

“Give me strength, that I may bear with mine infirmities” (Alma 31:30).

“Wilt thou comfort my soul in Christ” (Alma 31:31).

“Give unto me success, and also my fellow laborers” (Alma 31:32).

“Wilt thou comfort [my fellow laborers]” (Alma 31:32).

Help us bring the Zoramites “unto thee” (Alma 31:34-35).

“[The Zoramites’] souls are precious” (Alma 31:35).

“Give unto us ... power and wisdom” (Alma 31:35).

†9. **Neal A. Maxwell:** Why is non-endurance a denial of the Lord? Because giving up is a denial of the Lord’s loving capacity to see us through “all these things”! ... Whether the afflictions are self-induced, as most of them are, or whether they are of the divine-tutorial type, it matters not. Either way, the Lord can help us so that our afflictions, said Alma, can be “swallowed up in the joy of Christ” (Alma 31:38). Thus, afflictions are endured and are overcome by joy... This is how we overcome most of the time – not the elimination of affliction, but the placing of these in that larger context. (BYU Fireside, 2 Dec 1984)

†10. **C. S. Lewis:** “If you look for truth, you may find comfort in the end: If you look for comfort you will not get either comfort or truth—only soft soap and wishful thinking to begin with and, in the end, despair” (*Mere Christianity*, p. 39).

Recommended Reading:

“[Countering Korihor’s Philosophy](#),” *Ensign*, July 1992, 16

[Nancy Jensen](#): LDS Gospel Doctrine Plus, Lesson #27

[Joel’s Monastery](#): L27

[Monte F. Shelley](#): Alma 30-31

([Book of Mormon Manual – LDS Institute](#) (*Religion 121-122*)). (You can download a free PDF manual.)

Visit www.stephenmbird.com/library/gospel-doctrine †

Further Enrichment Resources:

Elder Bruce R. McConkie: “We did not borrow the Book of Mormon from the ancients; they wrote it to us. We are the audience Mormon and Moroni addressed as they chose what was to be included in this scriptural record. They told us the story of Korihor because they knew that we would have our Korihors. The Korihor of the Book of Mormon story is but the prototype of our modern anti-Christ. As the modern man of faith is in the image and likeness of his ancient counterpart, believing and testifying of those truths of which the ancients believed and testified, so the modern anti-Christ but echoes the arguments and sophistry used to beguile the souls of men anciently. Invariably, Korihors are articulate and carry with them an air of sophistication. They thrive on controversy, debate, and contention, yet inevitably their popularity rests in their appeal to the carnal nature of man.” (Millet & McConkie, *Sustaining and Defending the Faith*, p. 96)

President Ezra Taft Benson: “The Book of Mormon brings men to Christ through two basic means. First, it tells in a plain manner of Christ and his gospel. . . .

“Second, the Book of Mormon exposes the enemies of Christ. It confounds false doctrines and lays down contention. (See 2 Ne. 3:12.) It fortifies the humble followers of Christ against the evil designs, strategies, and doctrines of the devil in our day. The type of apostates in the Book of Mormon are similar to the type we have today. God, with his infinite foreknowledge, so molded the Book of Mormon that we might see the error and know how to combat false educational, political, religious, and philosophical concepts of our time” (“[The Book of Mormon Is the Word of God](#),” *Ensign*, May 1975, 64).

Jerald N. Lund: “So how do we deal with these false philosophies? Fortunately, Mormon not only gave us Korihor’s doctrines, he also gave us an inspired answer to them. This is the real value of the Korihor account.

“The first thing to note is that Alma does not get into philosophical debate with Korihor. He doesn’t allow himself to be pulled onto the ground that Korihor tries to define as the area of debate. There is a great lesson in that. We combat false philosophies with revelation and true doctrine, not academic debate.

... “Korihor will consider only evidence that can be gathered through the senses. In such a system, it is much easier to prove there is a God than to prove there is not a God. To prove there is a God, all it takes is for one person to see, hear, or otherwise have an experience with God, and thereafter the existence of God cannot be disproved. But here is what it would take to prove there is no God: Since God is not confined to this earth, we would have to search throughout the universe for him. We assume God is able to move about, so it would not be enough to start at point A in the universe and search through to point Z. What if after we leave point A, God moves there and stays there for the rest of the search?

“In other words, for Korihor to say that there is no God, based on the very criteria he himself has established, he would have to perceive every cubic meter of the universe

simultaneously. This creates a paradox: In order for Korihor to prove there is no God, he would have to be a god himself! Therefore, in declaring there is no God, he is acting on “faith,” the very thing for which he so sharply derides the religious leaders!” (“[Countering Korihor’s Philosophy](#),” *Ensign*, July 1992, 16)

Boyd K. Packer: “Letters come from those who have made tragic mistakes. They ask, ‘Can I ever be forgiven?’

“The answer is yes!

“The gospel teaches us that relief from torment and guilt can be earned through repentance. Save for those few who defect to perdition after having known a fulness, there is no habit, no addiction, no rebellion, no transgression, no offense exempted from the promise of complete forgiveness.

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.’ That is, Isaiah continued, ‘if ye be willing and obedient.’” (“[The Brilliant Morning of Forgiveness](#),” *Ensign*, Nov. 1995, 18.)

Lenet H. Read

[Scriptural Insights: Lenet H. Read:](#)

“All Things Denote There Is a God”

...

A. The witness of Whittaker Chambers.

Whittaker Chambers was raised in a time when his own family and the world were in chaos. His parents suffered grave marital strife. His grandmother became mentally ill. His brother committed suicide. His educational experiences stressed intellect, not faith. He lived when the world had just undergone the ravishes of one great war and was heading for another one. He had little hope the old social structures could solve the world’s problems. He became a strong atheist and a communist. However, after years of denying God, something happened which changed his life. He had a daughter. And her birth awakened awe.

“I was sitting in our apartment ... in Baltimore...My daughter was in her high chair. I was watching her eat. She was the most miraculous thing that had ever happened in my life. I liked to watch her even when she smeared porridge on her face or dropped it meditatively on the floor. My eyes came to rest on the delicate convolutions of her ear --- those intricate, perfect ears. The thought passed through my mind: ‘No, those ears were not created by any chance coming together of atoms in nature. They could have been created only by immense design.’ The thought was involuntary and unwanted. I crowded it out of my mind. But I never wholly forgot it or the occasion.”

(Whittaker Chambers, *Witness*, p. 16.) This first impact of the witnesses in God’s creations had opened a hole in the dike. He later came to know for himself there is a God.