

# CHAPTER 17

## *Enos—Words of Mormon*

### Introduction

As you study the books of Enos, Jarom, Omni, and Words of Mormon, look for ways you can receive guidance from the Lord as Enos did. The story of Enos demonstrates God’s willingness to bless and direct us in response to personal prayer. The account of the Nephites who fled the land of Lehi-Nephi illustrates that God also directs His people through prophetic warnings and counsel. Through personal prayer and by following the prophet, we gain a testimony of the Lord’s infinite love and care for us.



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### Commentary

#### Enos 1:1. “Nurture and Admonition of the Lord”

- President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) counseled fathers to follow the pattern of teaching modeled by righteous fathers in the Book of Mormon:

“What did the righteous fathers of the Book of Mormon teach their sons? They taught them many things, but the overarching message was ‘the great plan of the Eternal God’—the Fall, rebirth, Atonement, Resurrection, Judgment, eternal life. (See Alma 34:9.) Enos said he knew his father was a just man, ‘for he taught me in his language, and also in the nurture and admonition of the Lord—and blessed be the name of my God for it’ (Enos 1:1).

“Those in the Book of Mormon who were taught nothing concerning the Lord but only concerning worldly knowledge became a cunning and wicked people. (See Mosiah 24:5, 7.)

“All truths are not of the same value. The saving truths of salvation are of greatest worth. These truths the fathers taught plainly, frequently, and fervently. Are we fathers doing likewise?” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1985, 47; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 36).

#### Enos 1:2. A Wrestle before God

- Enos did not wrestle *with* God. The record states that Enos wrestled *before* God in prayer. Such wrestling is the struggle to find and express one’s real desires under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Praying in this manner requires that a person eliminate vain, trite, or insincere repetitions and to pour the deepest desires of his or her heart into words. Each phrase becomes an expression of yearning and desire to do God’s will. Such prayers are assisted and guided by the Holy Spirit, “for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Romans 8:26).



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#### **ENOS 1:3–4**

*What words or phrases demonstrate Enos’s sincerity and faith as he called upon God?*

#### Enos 1:3–15. Preparing to Receive an Answer to Prayer

- Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke of the process Enos went through that increased his faith and prepared him to receive the answer to his prayer:

“First, Enos heard the gospel truths from his father, just as you are hearing them in your families and in this conference.

“Second, he let his father’s teachings about ‘eternal life, and the joy of the saints’ [Enos 1:3] sink deep into his heart.

“Third, he was filled with a desire to know for himself whether these teachings were true and where he himself stood before his Maker. To use Enos’s words, ‘My soul hungered’ [Enos 1:4]. By this intense spiritual appetite, Enos qualified himself to receive the Savior’s promise: ‘Blessed are all they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled with the Holy Ghost’ [2 Nephi 12:6].

“Fourth, Enos obeyed the commandments of God, which enabled him to be receptive to the Spirit of the Holy Ghost.

“Fifth, Enos records, ‘I kneeled down before my Maker, and I cried unto him in mighty prayer and supplication for mine own soul; and all the day long did I cry unto him; yea, and when the night came I did still raise my voice high that it reached the heavens’ [Enos 1:4]. It wasn’t easy. Faith did not come quickly. In fact, Enos characterized his experience in prayer as a ‘wrestle which [he] had before God’ [Enos 1:2]. But faith did come. By the power of the Holy Ghost, he did receive a witness for himself.

“We cannot find Enos-like faith without our own wrestle before God in prayer. I testify that the reward is worth the effort. . . . I promise that if you do these things sincerely and unceasingly, the words Christ spoke to His disciples will be fulfilled in your life: ‘Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.’ [Matthew 7:7]” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2004, 73–74; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2004, 72).

- Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles compared receiving answers to prayers to the opening of a combination lock. It is a step-by-step process: “Petitioning in prayer has taught me, again and again, that the vault of heaven with all its blessings is to be opened only by a combination lock. One tumbler falls when there is faith, a second when there is personal righteousness; the third and final tumbler falls only when what is sought is, in God’s judgment—not ours—right for us. Sometimes we pound on the vault door for something we want very much

and wonder why the door does not open. We would be very spoiled children if that vault door opened any more easily than it does. I can tell, looking back, that God truly loves me by inventorying the petitions He has refused to grant me. Our rejected petitions tell us much about ourselves but also much about our flawless Father” (“Insights,” *New Era*, Apr. 1978, 6).

### Enos 1:5–8. “Enos, Thy Sins Are Forgiven Thee”

- Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught how full repentance can cleanse an individual through the Atonement of Jesus Christ: “The Redeemer can settle your individual account with justice



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and grant forgiveness through the merciful path of repentance [see Alma 42:15]. Full repentance is absolutely essential for the Atonement to work its complete miracle in your life. By understanding the Atonement, you will see that God is not a jealous being who delights in persecuting those who misstep. He is an absolutely

perfect, compassionate, understanding, patient, and forgiving Father” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 101; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 75).

### Enos 1:9–14. A Desire for the Welfare of Others

- After feeling the blessings of the Atonement for himself, Enos prayed for the welfare of his own people, the Nephites, and then for the spiritual welfare of his enemies, the Lamanites. Elder Robert D. Hales spoke about the concern those who have been converted feel for others: “The scriptures confirm that the truly converted do more than just forsake the enticements of the world. They love God and their fellowmen. Their minds and hearts are centered on the Savior’s atoning sacrifice. From the moment of their respective conversions, Enos, Alma the Younger, Paul, and others turned wholeheartedly to the task of bringing themselves and their fellowmen to God” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2000, 6; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 8). (See also commentary for Mosiah 28:3 on p. 168.)

**ENOS 1:13–16**

*What did Enos desire of the Lord in case the Nephites were destroyed? How does this demonstrate his love for his fellowman?*

**Enos 1:10. “The Voice of the Lord Came into My Mind”**

- Revelation or inspiration comes in several ways, including thoughts, impressions, and feelings (see D&C 6:15; 8:2–3). President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, discussed how we can recognize the voice of the Lord:

“Answers to prayers come in a quiet way. The scriptures describe that voice of inspiration as a still, small voice. . . .

“I have come to know that inspiration comes more as a feeling than as a sound. . . .

“Put difficult questions in the back of your minds and go about your lives. Ponder and pray quietly and persistently about them.

“The answer may not come as a lightning bolt. It may come as a little inspiration here and a little there, ‘line upon line, precept upon precept’ (D&C 98:12).

“Some answers will come from reading the scriptures, some from hearing speakers. And, occasionally, when it is important, some will come by very direct and powerful inspiration. The promptings will be clear and unmistakable” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1979, 28, 30; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1979, 19–21).

- The Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44) shared this explanation of how the Lord communicates with us: “A person may profit by noticing the first intimation of the spirit of revelation; for instance, when you feel pure intelligence flowing into you, it may give you sudden strokes of ideas, so that by noticing it, you may find it fulfilled the same day or soon; (i.e.) those things that were presented unto your minds by the Spirit of God, will come to pass; and thus by learning the Spirit of God and understanding it, you may grow into the

principle of revelation, until you become perfect in Christ Jesus” (*History of the Church*, 3:381).

**Enos 1:23; Words of Mormon 1:17. Speaking with Sharpness**

- Church leaders must speak out at times with directness and sharpness in warning members of the Church of anything that may jeopardize their salvation. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) referred to this obligation as he spoke to young adults: “I am sure that Peter and James and Paul found it unpleasant business to constantly be calling people to repentance and warning them of dangers, but they continued unflinchingly. So we, your leaders, must be everlastingly at it; if young people do not understand, then the fault may be partly ours. But, if we make the true way clear to you, then we are blameless” (*Love versus Lust*, Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year [Jan. 5, 1965], 6).

**Enos 1:27. “The Place of My Rest”**

- Concerning eternal rest, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught: “God has in reserve a time, or period appointed . . . when He will bring all His subjects, who have obeyed His voice and kept His commandments, into His celestial rest. This rest is of such perfection and glory, that man has need of a preparation before he can, according to the laws of that kingdom, enter it and enjoy its blessings. . . . God has given certain laws to the human family, which, if observed, are sufficient to prepare them to inherit this rest” (*History of the Church*, 2:12).

**Jarom 1:5. “They Profaned Not; Neither Did They Blaspheme”**

- President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) affirmed the need to keep our words pure:

“I say this to the boys. I say it also to any of you older men who have a similar problem. I do so with love. I know that the Lord is pleased when we use clean and virtuous language, for He has set an example for us. His revelations are couched in words that are affirmative, that are uplifting, that encourage us to do what is right and to go forward in truth and goodness.

“Don’t swear. Don’t profane. Avoid so-called dirty jokes. Stay away from conversation that is sprinkled with foul and filthy words. You will be happier if you do so, and your example will give strength to others” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 59; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 48).

### Jarom 1:11. “Believe in Him to Come as Though He Already Was”

• True prophets, such as Jarom, who lived before Jesus Christ’s birth, wrote about His Coming and His Atonement as though it had already happened. King Benjamin said, “The Lord God hath sent his holy prophets among all the children of men, to declare these things to every kindred, nation, and tongue, that thereby whosoever should believe that Christ should come, the same might receive remission of their sins, and rejoice with exceedingly great joy, *even as though he had already come among them*” (Mosiah 3:13; italics added). Abinadi said, “If Christ had not come into the world, *speaking of things to come as though they had already come*, there could have been no redemption” (Mosiah 16:6; italics added).



### Omni 1:12–17. Three Separate Civilizations in the Record

• In this short account, we learn of three groups of people whom the Lord brought to the land of promise in the Western Hemisphere. The first group mentioned was Lehi’s colony. The majority of the Book of Mormon relates their story and that of their descendants.

The Book of Mormon also identifies a second group, referred to as the people of Zarahemla, who were descendants of Mulek and who joined the Nephites (see Mosiah 25:2). Mulek, a son of King Zedekiah, left Jerusalem and traveled to the Americas after Babylon destroyed Jerusalem around 587 B.C. (see Omni 1:15). Without a scriptural record, the people of Zarahemla were a living witness of what the Spirit said to Nephi that a whole nation would dwindle

in unbelief (see 1 Nephi 4:13). The Mulekites then joined with the Nephites under the rule of King Mosiah (see Omni 1:19).

The third group was the Jaredites, who came to the land of promise following the time of the “great tower” mentioned in Genesis 11. The original Jaredite colony grew into a great race. Eventually, however, they annihilated themselves in a great civil war sometime between 600 and 300 B.C., leaving only Coriantumr, their last king, and Ether, a prophet of the Lord (see Ether 15:29–34). Ether finished the record, and Coriantumr apparently wandered until he found the people of Zarahemla, where he lived “for the space of nine moons” (Omni 1:21) before dying. Little is known of the Jaredites other than what is recorded by Moroni in the book of Ether.

### Omni 1:23–25. King Benjamin Received the Small Plates

• From 1 Nephi through Omni the prophets kept the small plates and the king kept the large plates (see Jarom 1:14). A major shift happened at this point. Amaleki gave the small plates to King Benjamin; the small plates were full at this point (see Omni 1:30). From King Benjamin’s time forward, the religious and the historical information were kept on the large plates. The small plates were not added until after 130 B.C. Mosiah through 4 Nephi is Mormon’s abridgement of the large plates.

#### OMNI 1:26

*What did Amaleki counsel us to do to be saved?*

### Omni 1:26. “Offer Your Whole Souls as an Offering unto Him”

• Elder Neal A. Maxwell taught the meaning of offering ourselves to the Lord: “Real, personal sacrifice never was placing an animal on the altar. Instead, it is a willingness to put the animal in us upon the altar and letting it be consumed!” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1995, 91; or *Ensign*, May 1995, 68).

On the same topic, Elder Maxwell later taught: “As you submit your wills to God, you are giving Him the *only* thing you *can* actually give Him that is really yours to give” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2004, 48; or *Ensign*, May 2004, 46).

### Words of Mormon. A Bridge between the Small and Large Plates of Nephi

- Among the records the Nephites kept were the small and large plates of Nephi (see 1 Nephi 9:2). The large plates primarily contained the secular history of the people, while the small plates included the sacred history (see 1 Nephi 9:2–4). The books of 1 Nephi through Omni were recorded on the small plates of Nephi. The books of Mosiah through 4 Nephi are Mormon’s abridgement taken from the large plates (see commentary for 1 Nephi 9:1–5 on p. 23).



### Words of Mormon 1:7. “The Lord Knoweth All Things Which Are to Come”

- Nephi did not make the small plates until 30 years after Lehi’s colony left Jerusalem (see 2 Nephi 5:28–31). He did not understand why he was commanded to make a second set of records, but he had faith that it was “for a wise purpose” in the Lord (1 Nephi 9:5). Nearly 1,000 years later the prophet Mormon echoed similar words to Nephi’s when he testified that in addition to his abridgment of the large plates of Nephi he was including the small plates of Nephi “for a wise purpose” (Words of Mormon 1:7).

Joseph Smith started the translation of the Book of Mormon with Mormon’s abridgment of the large plates of Nephi. He had completed 116 manuscript pages when Martin Harris pleaded with Joseph to let him take the manuscript and show it to family members. Joseph asked God three different times if Martin could take the manuscript, and permission was finally given. The manuscript fell into the hands of wicked men (see

D&C 10:8) and became known as the lost manuscript, or the lost 116 pages.

The loss of the manuscript clearly demonstrates why the Lord commanded Nephi to write the small plates and why Mormon was inspired to include them. Joseph Smith was told not to retranslate the portion he had already completed, but to replace it by translating the small plates of Nephi (see D&C 10:30, 38–45). The translation of the 116 pages covered 600–130 B.C.—from the time of Lehi to the time of King Benjamin. The small plates also covered 600–130 B.C.—from Lehi to King Benjamin. The Lord in His omniscience had the second record, the small plates, cover the exact time period that was covered in the stolen 116 pages. This also allowed the Lord to keep His covenant with Enos that “he would preserve the records” (Enos 1:16).

- Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles affirmed that the portion of the Book of Mormon that comes from the small plates provides more information than was lost on the 116 pages:

“At least six times in the Book of Mormon the phrase ‘for a wise purpose’ is used in reference to the making, writing, and preserving of the small plates of Nephi (see 1 Nephi 9:5; Words of Mormon 1:7; Alma 37:2, 12, 14, 18). You and I know *the* wise purpose—the most obvious one—was to compensate for the loss of the earlier mentioned 116 pages of manuscript.

“But it strikes me that there is a wiser purpose than that. . . . The key to such a suggestion of a wiser purpose is in verse 45 of Doctrine and Covenants section 10. As the Lord instructs Joseph . . . he says, ‘Behold, there are many things engraven upon the [small] plates of Nephi which do throw *greater views* upon my gospel’ (emphasis added).

“So, clearly, this was not . . . tit for tat, this for that—you give me 116 pages of manuscript and I’ll give you 142 pages of printed text. Not so. We got back more than we lost. And it was known from the beginning that it would be so. It *was* for a wiser purpose. We do not know exactly what we missed in the 116 pages, but we do know that what we received on the small plates was the personal declarations of three great witnesses [Nephi, Jacob, and Isaiah], three of the great doctrinal

voices of the Book of Mormon, testifying that Jesus is the Christ. . . .

“In fact, I think you could make a pretty obvious case that the *sole* purpose of the small plates was to give a platform for these three witnesses” (“A Standard unto My People” [Church Educational System symposium on the Book of Mormon, Aug. 9, 1994], 9–10; see LDS.org under gospel library/additional addresses/CES addresses).

- Elder Neal A. Maxwell testified of the foreknowledge of God and how it builds our faith in Him:

“Few doctrines, save those pertaining to the reality of the existence of God, are more basic than the truth that God is omniscient. . . .

“. . . God is perfect in the attributes of divinity, and one of these is knowledge: ‘. . . seeing that without the knowledge of all things, God would not be able to save any portion of his creatures; for it is by reason of the knowledge which he has of all things, from the beginning to the end, that enables him to give that understanding to his creatures by which they are made partakers of eternal life; and if it were not for the idea existing in the minds of men that God had all knowledge it would be impossible for them to exercise faith in him.’ (Lecture 4, paragraph 11.) . . .

“God, who knows the beginning from the end, knows, therefore, all that is in between” (*All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience* [1979], 6–7).

### Words of Mormon 1:10–11. Amaleki Delivered the Plates to King Benjamin

- The plates that Amaleki gave to King Benjamin were the small plates. The large plates were continually

added to and handed down from record keeper to record keeper until A.D. 385, when Mormon received the large plates and abridged them. His abridgement was written on the gold plates or the plates of Mormon.

- To help you gain perspective of the number of pages of the Book of Mormon that are devoted to various time periods, see the chart “Nephite Record Keepers” in the appendix (p. 408).

### Points to Ponder

- How is prayer necessary for you to enjoy the blessings of the Atonement?
- The language of the people of Zarahemla had become corrupted because they had no records. How do records and language help us grow spiritually?
- What examples have you seen of the foreknowledge of God demonstrated in the events of your life? (see commentary for Words of Mormon 1:7 on p. 134).

### Suggested Assignments

- Briefly write about some of the “wrestling” you have had before God that led to spiritual growth (see commentary for Enos 1:2 on p. 130). Refer to these recorded spiritual events from time to time to refresh your memory of how the Lord has guided you.
- Study and discuss with a friend what “sharp” counsel we have received from modern prophets to warn us of spiritual danger (see commentary for Enos 1:23; Words of Mormon 1:17 on p. 132).
- Using the story of the 116 lost pages as an example, prepare a short lesson that teaches about the omniscience of God and His ability to bring about His purposes.