



Alma 7.⁷— Meditation

For behold, I say unto you there be many things to come; and behold, there is one thing which is of more importance than they all—for behold, the time is not far distant that the Redeemer liveth and cometh among his people.

Many billions of individuals and an unimaginable number of historical events—many of them world-shaping and world-changing—have come and gone since Alma offered his estimation of what was for him future human history. Given all that has transpired in the past two thousand years, Alma’s assessment is truly extraordinary. Each of us must pass our own judgement about the accuracy of his estimation that Jesus and his earthly ministry possess more significance for humankind than any other individual or event. But it is hard to argue that Jesus has shaped human history more than anyone.

So, that’s Alma’s evaluation of human history at the macro-level. But there is a micro-level of human history, which is history at the individual level. It could be argued that how the individual responds to Jesus is more important than their response to any other thing or person. Alma’s evaluation shaped my own responses.

When I was eighteen years old, I had earned several thousand dollars. The plan was for this money to be used to finance an LDS mission. Each day as I rode my bike back and forth to work, I passed a car dealership. There was a beautiful red Pontiac Firebird sitting on the lot. Over the course of several days, I stopped to look at the car and imagine what it would be like to own it. As I checked the sticker price, I found that I had enough money to purchase the car. With each look of the car, my desire for the it grew.

One evening my inclination to buy the car had reached its height. It just so happened that on that very night, I was reading in Alma when I came to this verse. As I read, I sensed the truth of Alma’s witness. Jesus, I sensed, would be the most important influence in my life. He would shape me and who I would be far more than the car. To serve him would be the ultimate privilege. Though I passed that same car dealership with that same car a couple more evenings, it never had the same appeal that it had previously. For two years, I served him the best I knew how. The experiences of those two years completely reshaped my life and set me on a path that I had never and could never have imagined.

“There is,” indeed, “one thing which is of more importance than” anything else in history—at both its macro and micro level. That is the coming of the Redeemer into the world and the entrance of the redeemer into the life of the individual. We must each decide for ourselves who and what is most important to us, who and what holds the greatest potential to make us the very best we can be, and who and what will make us of the most benefit to the people and the world around us. We demonstrate our decision every second of our lives by how we utilize each precious second and resource we are given, and by how diligently, how carefully, how ponderously, and how solemnly we seek the influence and presence of Jesus, the Redeemer, in our lives.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus!

(edition: October 24, 2024)