

Hearing Mercy

Thou art merciful, O God,
For thou hast heard my prayer,
even when I was in the wilderness.
Yea, thou wast merciful
when I prayed concerning those who were mine enemies,
and thou didst turn them to me.

Yea, O God, and thou wast merciful unto me
when I did cry unto thee in my field;
when I did cry unto thee in my prayer,
and thou didst hear me.

And again, O God, when I did turn to my house
thou didst hear me in my prayer.
And when I did turn unto my closet, O Lord,
and prayed unto thee, thou didst hear me.

Yea, thou art merciful unto thy children
when they cry unto thee,
to be heard of thee and not of men,
and thou wilt hear them.

Yea, O God, thou has been merciful unto me,
and heard my cries in the midst of thy congregations.
Yea, and thou hast also heard me when I have been cast out
and have been despised by mine enemies.

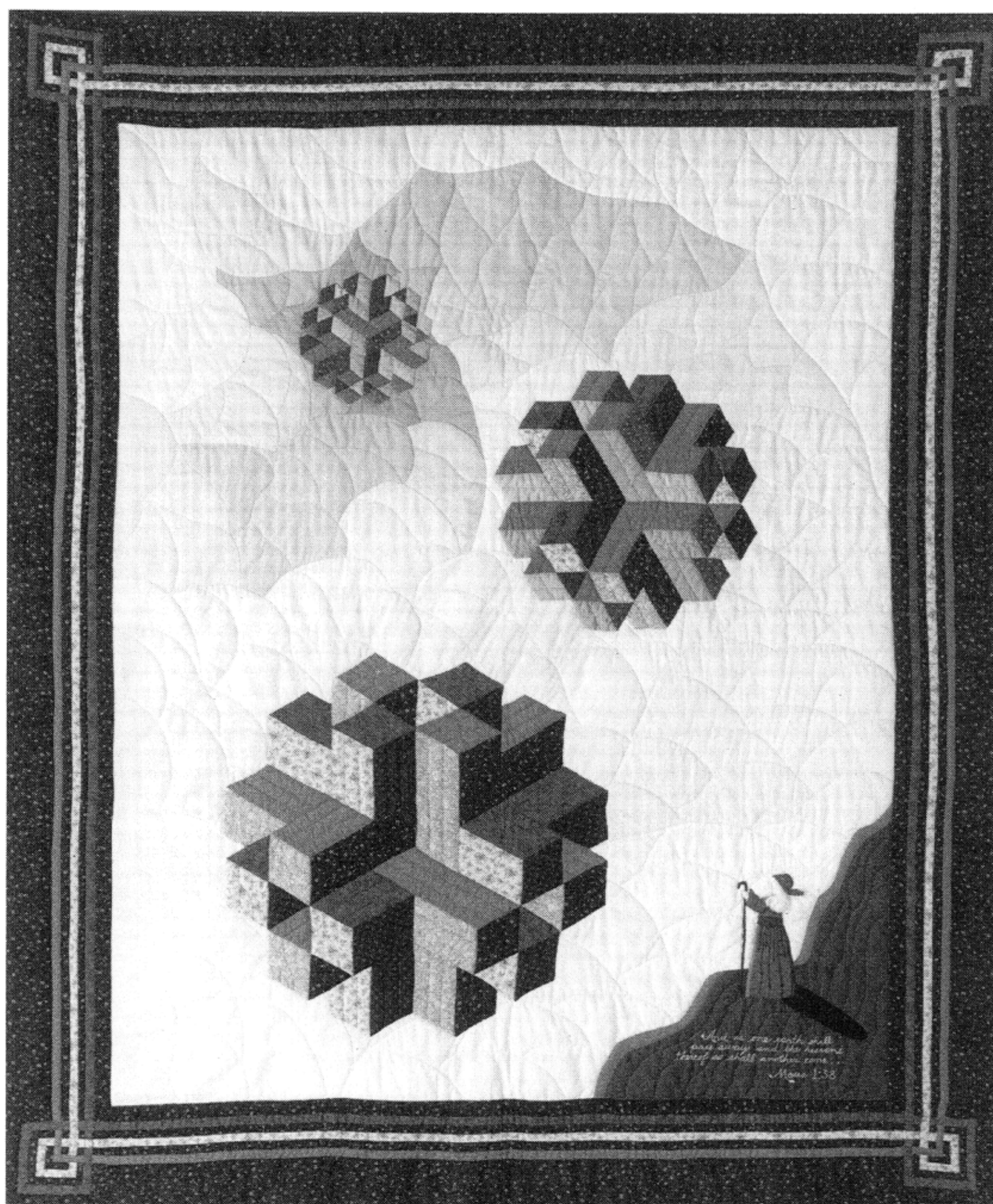
Yea, thou didst hear my cries,
and wast angry with mine enemies,
and thou didst visit them in thine anger
with speedy destruction.

And thou didst hear me
because of mine afflictions and my sincerity;
And it is because of thy Son
that thou hast been thus merciful unto me.

Therefore I will cry unto thee in all mine afflictions,
for in thee is my joy;
for thou has turned thy judgments away from me,
because of thy Son.

—Zenos

Editor's note: Written before 600 B.C., Alma 33:4–11 features several qualities of parallelism and repetition. The incessant refrain of words such as *cry*, *cries*, *prayer*, *prayed*, *hear*, *heard*, *afflictions*, or *merciful* gives these lines a plaintive voice bespeaking the sincerity of the pleading prayers repeatedly offered by the prophet Zenos. His thought flows progressively from the most remote wilderness, through his field and house, into his most intimate closet; it then moves, in reverse, from the personal image of children, to the public assembly, and back out to the condition of the outcast in the wilderness, affirming that no circumstance is beyond the hearing of mercy.



Worlds without End, Terry Young (1944-), Myton, Utah, 1983. This quilt depicts Moses when he was taken up on a high mountain and shown a vision of the worlds created by the Lord: “And as one earth shall pass away, and the heavens thereof, even so shall another come; and there is no end to my works neither to my words” (Moses 1:38).

Most religious quilts in America are quite abstract. Thus many people unfamiliar with quilting tradition do not recognize those quilts’ inherently religious themes. In contrast, Terry Young has used a narrative style and even embroidered the scriptural reference. This quilt was one of the first made by the artist, who has become one of the top quilters in Utah. She currently lives in Provo. Reproduced courtesy of Carolyn Taylor.