

## **BM#23 "More Than One Witness" Alma 8-12**

- I. Introduction
- II. Alma 8
- III. Alma 9
- IV. Alma 10
- V. Alma 11
- VI. Alma 12
- VII. Conclusions

### **I. Introduction**

Alma, the younger, as President and Prophet, had previously visited the Church in Zarahemla and in the valley of Gideon in an effort to dispel wickedness and to set the Church in order. He knew that nothing less than teaching the word of God and bearing his personal testimony would be sufficient to turn them from their widespread wickedness. He had experienced great success in Zarahemla and in Gideon in setting the membership on the path of righteousness. He now traveled to Melek and Ammonihah. Alma experienced great success in the land of Melek, but the wickedness of the people in Ammonihah presented a tremendous challenge to his efforts. He was assisted in his responsibility through the efforts of Amulek, whom the Lord called to be his companion. Together, they provided a powerful witness to the people of Ammonihah regarding their apostasy from the truth of the gospel.

Outline of Alma 8-12:

**"Alma 8-9: After preaching in Melek, Alma calls the people Ammonihah to repentance, but they reject him. He leaves but is commanded by an angel to return. Alma is received by Amulek, and both are commanded to preach in Ammonihah.**

**"Alma 10: Amulek preaches to the people of Ammonihah and describes his conversion. The people are astonished that there is another witness to Alma's teachings. Amulek contends with unrighteous lawyers and judges.**

**"Alma 11: Amulek contends with Zeezrom and testifies of the coming of Christ, the judgment of the wicked, and the plan of redemption.**

"Alma 12: **Alma further explains Amulek's words, warning against hardheartedness and wickedness and testifying of the Fall and the plan of redemption.**" (*Book of Mormon Gospel Doctrine Teacher's Manual*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1999, 102).

## II. Alma 8

Having completed his mission to the Church in Zarahemla and in the land of Gideon, Alma "returned to his own house at Zarahemla to rest himself from the labors which he had performed" (Alma 8:1).

Alma 8:3-4

**3 And it came to pass in the commencement of the tenth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi, that Alma departed from thence and took his journey over into the land of Melek, on the west of the river Sidon, on the west by the borders of the wilderness.**

**4 And he began to teach the people in the land of Melek according to the holy order of God, by which he had been called; and he began to teach the people throughout all the land of Melek.**

Monte S. Nyman states,

From the city of Zarahemla, "Alma's visit to the land of Gideon was on the east side of the river Sidon. After his rest in Zarahemla, which was on the west side of the river, Alma continued on the west side. Alma's work in the land of Melek is briefly mentioned." (*Book of Mormon Commentary The Record of Alma*, Vol. 3. Orem, Utah: Granite Publishing and Distribution, LLC, 2004, 97-98).

Alma 8:4-5

**4 And he began to teach the people in the land of Milek...**

**5 And it came to pass that the people came to him throughout all the borders of the land which was by the wilderness side. And they were baptized throughout all the land;**

We do not know how long Alma taught the people in the land of Melek. Given the success that he experienced, Sidney B. Sperry states, "We may surmise that the people in Melek were in general as righteous and diligent as Alma had found the people in the land of Gideon (8:2-5)." (*Book of Mormon Compendium*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968, 333). As in Zarahemla and the land of Gideon, the order of the Church was again established. The land of Mulek was the third area on his itinerary. From Mulek, Alma "travelled three days' journey on the north of the land of Mulek; and came to a city which was called Ammonihah" (Alma 8:6).

Unlike Alma's mission to the Churches in Zarahemla and Gideon, and Melek, Alma's journey to Ammonihah, is as a missionary to apostate Nephites, rather than current members of the Church.

George Reynolds states,

**"Ammonihah, City of.** A western city of the Nephites situated in the same region as the cities of *Melek*, *Noah*, and *Aaron*. It was inhabited almost exclusively by the followers of *Nehor* and was notorious for the wickedness of its inhabitants." (*A Dictionary of the Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1891, [1954], 50).

You will recall [BM#21], *Nehor*, taught that "every priest and teacher ought not to labor with their hands, but that they ought to be supported by the people" (Alma 1:3). He also taught "all mankind should be saved at the last day, [people need not fear or tremble but] "rejoice; for the Lord had created all men, and had also redeemed all men, and, in the end, all men should have eternal life" (Alma 1:4). Not only did he espouse "priestcraft" which if enforced "would prove their entire destruction" (Alma 1:12).

Bryan Richards states,

"In effect, it [doctrine of *Nehor*] says whatever sin you commit, whatever whoredoms you are guilty of do not matter. The sinner and the righteous can expect the same reward...The doctrine single-handedly negates the entire plan of salvation. It [also] negates the importance of faith in Christ, repentance, baptism and good works."  
([www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-1](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-1)).

One can imagine that the Nehor doctrine of no sin, no punishment, do as you want as all will be saved, doctrine, would be especially popular to those who had previously been members of the Church of God. Those members who had felt that no paid clergy, individual control over impulses, obedience to commandments, repentance of sin, and service to others was too demanding and controlling of their individual freedom would be especially venerable. In summation, the Nehor doctrine promised salvation while permitting everything and requiring little or nothing from its members.

Alma 8:8-9

**8 And it came to pass that when Alma had come to the city of Ammonihah, he began to preach the word of God unto them.**

**9 Now Satan had gotten great hold upon the hearts of the people of the city of Ammonihah; therefore they would not hearken unto the words of Alma.**

Given the permissiveness of the doctrine of Nehor to which the majority prescribed, it is not surprising that the response by the inhabitants was rejection of the words of Alma.

Alma 8:10

**10 Nevertheless Alma labored much in the spirit, wrestling with God in mighty prayer, that he would pour out his Spirit upon the people who were in the city; that he would also grant that he might baptize them unto repentance.**

Hugh Nibley states,

"Wrestling with God? Does God resist you? Do you have to resist him? No, you have to put yourself into position, in the right state of mind...Enos...told us what he meant when he was wrestling; he was wrestling with himself, his own inadequacies...it takes great mental effort to confront the Lord in all seriousness. We do it at various shallow levels, by routine. We have a prayer here because we feel we should. If we're going to make it really serious, we have to work on it harder...and very few people are willing to do it, but it really pays off because you know exactly

what you want and where you stand." (*Teachings of the Book of Mormon*. Semester 2, Lecture #47. Alma 5-10. Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Brigham Young University, 1993, 301-302).

Those who had once been members of the true Church of God, were important in the eyes of God and it was important that they be given again the opportunity to be taught the principles of the gospel, so that they might repent and avoid destruction. You will recall [BM#18] this was also the message of Abinadi to the people of King Noah upon his return visit to the people. (see Mosiah 12:8.)

The response of the people was "they hardened their hearts,...[stating] we are not of thy church, and we do not believe in such foolish traditions...we know that thou hast no power over us" (Alma 8:11-12).

George Reynolds and Janne M. Sjodahl state,

"They [Ammonihahites] expressed no desire to be saved in God's Kingdom as Alma exhorted them. Satan, that cunning one, had planted pride and worldly ambition in their hearts, and they wanted neither *promise of future reward* nor *spiritual restraints* to interfere with their search for the riches of the earth, or the plaudits of men. 'They loved vanity, and sought for falsehood.' (Psalm 4:2). (*Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 3*. Amplified and Arranged by Philip C. Reynolds and David Sjodahl King. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1977, 147).

Alma 8:13

**13 Now when the people had said this, and withstood all his words, and reviled him, and spit upon him, and caused that he should be cast out of their city, he departed thence and took his journey towards the city which was called Aaron.**

James E. Faust states,

"You must know that Lucifer will oppose you, and be prepared for his opposition. Do not be surprised. He wants you to fail...Have courage and go forward. Recognize that the gospel has been preached with some pain and sorrow from the very beginning of time. Do not expect that your experience

will be otherwise." (What I Want My Son to Know before He Leaves on His Mission," in *Ensign*, May, 1996, 42).

Alma 8:14

**14 And it came to pass that while he was journeying thither, being weighed down with sorrow, wading through much tribulation and anguish of soul, because of the wickedness of the people who were in the city of Ammonihah, it came to pass while Alma was thus weighed down with sorrow, behold an angel of the Lord appeared unto him,...**

The sorrow that Alma felt as he departed from the city of Ammonihah in response to having been rejected by the people, was not for himself. It was due to his awareness that as a result of the rejection by the people of his message from God that if they did not repent, they would be destroyed. His heart ached for those who at one time had embraced the very truth, and they now rejected it. It was saddening to Alma when he considered the blessings they would have received, if they had repented and embraced the teachings of the gospel. Now, as a result of their wickedness, the city will be destroyed and all its inhabitants.

The angel appeared to Alma and these are his words:

Alma 8:15-17

**15 Blessed art thou, Alma; therefore, lift up thy head and rejoice, for thou hast great cause to rejoice, for thou hast been faithful in keeping the commandments of God from the time which thou receivedst thy first message from him. Behold, I am he that delivered it unto you.**

**16 And behold, I am sent to command thee that thou return to the city of Ammonihah, and preach again unto the people of the city; yea, preach unto them, Yea, say unto them, except they repent the Lord God will destroy them.**

**17 For behold, they do study at this time that they may destroy the liberty of thy people, (for thus saith the Lord) which is contrary to the statutes, and judgments, and commandments which he has given unto his people.**

Byran Richards states,

"Just when Alma was at his lowest, being weighed down with sorrow...tribulation and anguish of soul, the Lord had sent him that angel [the one who initially appeared to him] who was able to offer consolation. The consolation was the most comforting message possible--that his sacrifice had been acceptable to the Lord."

([www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-8](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-8)).

Alma 8:18

**18 Now it came to pass that after Alma had received his message from the angel of the Lord he returned speedily to the land of Ammonihah. And he entered the city by another way,...**

Alma returned "speedily," without haste, joyfully and excited that the people were going to be given another opportunity to repent. He also entered the city by a different route, possibly hoping to avoid those who had previously cast him out, and even maybe that he might meet a more receptive audience. His desire is fulfilled on both counts.

Alma, who is hungered for he "had fasted many days" (Alma 8:26), says to a man, "will ye give to an humble servant of God something to eat?" (Alma 8:19).

Alma 8:20-21

**20 And the man said unto him: I am a Nephite, and I know that thou art a holy prophet of God, for thou art the man whom an angel said in a vision: Thou shalt receive. Therefore, go with me into my house and I will impart unto thee of my food; and I know that thou wilt be a blessing unto me and my house.  
21 And it came to pass that the man received him into his house: and the man was called Amulek;...**

It is easy to conclude that when a city is wicked, it means that all its inhabitants are wicked. This was not true for the city of Ammonihah, nor was it true for the wicked people of King Noah, to offer two recent examples. Amulek is the first in the city of Ammonihah who, upon hearing the voice of an angel, fed a prophet of God.

Alma after eating, "blessed Amulek and his house" (Alma 8:22). He then told them that he was the "high priest over the church of God throughout the land...[he had been called of God] "to preach the word of God among all this people, according to the spirit of revelation and prophecy" (Alma 8:24). He had tried to teach the people here, but they had rejected his message, and sent him away. He had then been commanded to return and "testify against them concerning their iniquities" (Alma 8:25).

Alma 8:27

**27 And Alma tarried many days with Amulek before he began to preach unto the people.**

Bryan Richards states,

"He [Alma] deliberately spends many days with Amulek. This wasn't because Alma was lazy or afraid of the people. It was important to teach Amulek and his family so that Amulek could accompany him on his mission. Again, Alma showed a great understanding of the things of the Spirit. Once he arrives in Ammonihah, he does not make the mistake of rushing out to preach without first spending an adequate amount of time with his first convert and next missionary companion.

Henry B. Eyring states,

"...by the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ, Amulek was transformed from someone who resisted the word of God [Alma 10:5-6] into a powerful preacher of righteousness. And it took only days, not months or years. The record says that Alma stayed in Amulek's house for 'many days' (Alma 8:27). During that time Alma taught Amulek. And an angel, perhaps the one who first commanded Amulek to receive Alma into his home, came to him to confirm what Alma taught. Amulek stated, 'And again, I know that the things whereof he [Alma] hath testified are true; for behold I say unto you, that as the Lord liveth, even so has he sent his angel to make these things manifest unto me; and this he has done while this Alma hath dwelt at my house' (Alma 10:10).

"By obeying Christ's authority through His servants, Amulek was blessed with the power to lead others to eternal life in ways he could not have seen in advance. He was given

immediately the gift to teach people to feel a compelling need to have all their sins washed away. As you listen to his voice in his first sermon, take hope that God could bless you and me with such a mighty change." ("Amulek: The Blessings of Obedience," in *Heroes From the Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995, [Seventh Printing, 1998], 107-108).

Alma 8:29-31

**29 And the word came to Alma, saying: Go; and also say unto my servant Amulek, go forth and prophesy unto this people, saying--Repent ye, for thus saith the Lord, except ye repent I will visit this people in mine anger; yea, and I will not turn my fierce anger away.**

**30 And Alma went forth, and also Amulek, among the people, to declare the words of God unto them; and they were filled with the Holy Ghost.**

**31 And they had power given unto them, insomuch that they could not be confined in dungeons; neither was it possible that any man could slay them; nevertheless they did not exercise their power until they were bound in bands and cast into prison. Now, this was done that the Lord might show forth his power in them.**

Alma and Amulek go forth to teach the people of the land of Ammonihah. They have been given their errand from the Lord. They are to call the people to repentance. Only as the people of Ammonihah bring forth the fruits of repentance, will they be protected from destruction.

Alma and Amulek have been filled with the Holy Ghost and given protection from confinement, and preservation of their lives, so that they will be able to deliver their message to the people. You will recall that Abinadi's life was also preserved until after he had delivered his message to King Noah and his priests. (see Mosiah 13:3.)

Alma Sonne states,

"The missionary method of the Church today is almost identical with that carried on by Jesus Christ and his apostles...these humble emissaries of the Lord were to go forth two by two. One was to be supportive of the other. They were to be witnesses before God of their respective testimonies. Together they could better face hostile

receptions and bitter opposition. Together they could preserve their faith and their enthusiasm and withstand temptation and wrongdoing. It was God's plan of proselyting, and it was very effective." (*Conference Report*, April 1962, 35).

### **III. Alma 9**

As noted previously, a superscription precedes Chapter 9. It says:

"The words of Alma, and also the words of Amulek, which were declared unto the people who were in the land of Ammonihah. And also they are cast into prison, and delivered by the miraculous power of God which was in them, according to the record of Alma. Comprising chapters 9 to 14 inclusive." As noted, the words referencing the content of the chapters was written by the hand of the abridger, Mormon. The words referencing the chapters were added after the Book of Mormon was divided into chapters. (see BM#22-Alma 7.)

As Alma and Amulek go forth to preach to the people of Ammonihah, they manifest their opposition to Alma's words by beginning "to contend with me," (Alma 9:1). Their opposition consisted of accusations and denial of his words. "Who art thou? Suppose ye that we shall believe the testimony of one man"; "We will not believe thy words, if thou shouldst prophesy that this great city should be destroyed in one day"; and, "Who is God, that sendeth no more authority than one man among this people, to declare unto them the truth of such great and marvelous things?" (Alma 9:2-6). Despite their efforts to silence Alma, by "laying their hands on me" (Alma 9:7), they were not successful due to the protection which he received from the Lord. He continued,

Alma 9:8-12

**8 Behold, O ye wicked and perverse generation, how have ye forgotten the traditions of your fathers; yea, how soon ye have forgotten the commandments of God.**  
**9 Do ye not remember that our father, Lehi, was brought out of Jerusalem by the hand of God? Do ye not remember that they were all led by him through the wilderness?**

10 And have ye forgotten so soon how many times he delivered our fathers out of the hands of their enemies, and preserved them from being destroyed, even by the hands of their own brethren?

11 Yea, and if it had not been for his matchless power, and his mercy, and his long-suffering towards us, we should unavoidably have been cut off from the face of the earth long before this period of time, and perhaps been consigned to a state of endless misery and woe.

12 Behold, now I say unto you that he commandeth you to repent; and except ye repent, ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God. But behold, this is not all—he has commanded you to repent, or he will utterly destroy you from off the face of the earth; yea, he will visit you in his anger, and in his fierce anger he will not turn away.

Alma is speaking to a group of individuals who had previously been taught the principles of the gospel, but had now exchanged eternal truths for the false philosophies of man undergirded with rampant permissiveness. They knew the truth, but had willfully chosen to reject it. The word of the Lord is clear. Repent or face destruction!

Alma continues. He reminds them of the promise of the Lord that "Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper in the land...Inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord." (Alma 9:13). The word of the Lord had been verified as they knew, regarding the Lamanites, who due to their breaking the commandments of God, had been cut off from his presence, "from the beginning of their transgressions in the land" (Alma 9:14).

Alma states, that it will be better for the Lamanites than for them "in the day of judgment,...if ye remain in your sins,...and even more tolerable for them in this life than for you, except ye repent" (Alma 9:15).

Bryan Richards states,

"Similarly, endowed members of the church today should understand that there is no going back. After having been given such great knowledge of the goodness and mysteries of God, they are responsible for keeping their covenants. The word of the Lord as given to the Missouri saints applies

equally well to them, 'beware from henceforth, and refrain from sin, lest sore judgments fall upon your heads.' (D&C 82:2)." ([www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-9](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-9)).

The Lord understands that part of the wickedness of the Lamanites is the result of the false traditions "of their fathers that caused them to remain in their state of ignorance; therefore, the Lord will be merciful unto them and prolong their existence in the land" (Alma 9:16).

Alma 9:17

**17 And at some period of time they will be brought to believe in his word, and to know of the incorrectness of the traditions of their fathers; and many of them will be saved, for the Lord will be merciful unto all who call on his name.**

Bryan Richards lists the following promises to the Lamanites,

- "A. God will not suffer the Gentiles to utterly destroy them (1 Ne. 13:30; 2 Ne. 4:7).
- "B. The cursing would be taken from their heads and placed upon their parents (2 Ne. 4:6).
- "C. The Lord will be merciful to them (2 Ne. 4:7).
- "D. The Book of Mormon and other books will be brought to them (1 Ne. 13:39, Enos 1:13).
- "E. They will receive the fullness of the gospel (1 Ne. 15:13).
- "F. They will know of their forefathers and that they are of the house of Israel (1 Ne. 15:14).
- "G. As a branch of Israel, they will be grafted into the true olive tree (1 Ne. 15:16; 2 Ne. 21:11-12).
- "H. As part of the house of Israel, in their seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed (1 Ne. 15:18). Indeed, all the blessings given to the house of Israel apply to them.
- "I. They shall blossom as the rose (D&C 49:24)."

[www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-9](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-9)).

The rebellion of the people of Ammonihah is willful meaning that they know the truth, but choose not to live its concepts. This is the promise of the Lord to them.

Alma 9:18-19

**18 But behold, I say unto you that if ye persist in your wickedness that your days shall not be prolonged in the land, for the Lamanites shall be sent upon you; and if ye repent not they shall come in a time when you know not, and ye shall be visited with utter destruction; and it shall be according to the fierce anger of the Lord.**

**19 For he will not suffer you that ye shall live in your iniquities, to destroy his people. I say unto you, Nay; he would rather suffer that the Lamanites might destroy all his people who are called the people of Nephi, if it were possible that they could fall into sins and transgressions, after having had so much light and so much knowledge given unto them of the Lord their God;**

Hugh Nibley states,

"The Book of Mormon goes to great lengths to describe just what a wicked society looks like and how it operates, with enough examples to type it beyond question; and with clinical precision it describes the hysteria that leads to its end. It also tells us how to recognize a righteous society, usually presenting the two types to us in close proximity. With these two images firmly in mind we are told why this presentation is being given, for whose benefit, and why it is so singularly important. The authors do not ask us to make comparisons and see ourselves in the picture, because that would be futile: the wickeder the people are the more they balk at facing their real image and the more skillful they become in evading, altering, faking, and justifying. So the book does not tell us to make the comparison--it does it for us, frankly and brutally." (*The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, Vol. 8. Edited by John W. Welch. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., and Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1989, 508).

Alma states the ways the people of Nephi, including the people of Ammonihah, had been blessed of the Lord.

Alma 9:20-22

**20 Yea, after having been such a highly favored people of the Lord; yea, after having been favored above every other nation, kindred, tongue, or people; after having had all things made known unto them, according to their desires, and their faith, and prayers, of that which has been, and which is, and which is to come;**

**21 Having been visited by the Spirit of God; having conversed with angels, and having been spoken unto by the voice of the Lord; and having the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and also many gifts, the gift of speaking with tongues, and the gift of preaching and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the gift of translation;**

**22 Yea, and after having been delivered of God out of the land of Jerusalem, by the hand of the Lord; having been saved from famine, and from sickness, and all manner of diseases of every kind; and they having waxed strong in battle, that they might not be destroyed; having been brought our of bondage time after time, and having been kept and preserved unti now; and they have been prospered until they are rich in all manner of things---**

These include: (1) There having been a highly favored people of the Lord; (2) Having had all things made known to them; (3) Been visited by the Spirit of God, and given many gifts of the spirit; (4) Having been delivered of God...and saved from famine, and sickness, and all manner of diseases; (5) Having been made strong in battle against their enemies; (6) Having repeatedly been freed from bondage, and restored; and, (7) Blessed with the riches of the land. (see Alma 9:10-22). How is it that after the Lord had blessed them so abundantly in a variety of ways, they would turn from Him?

Alma 9:24

**24 For behold, the promises of the Lord are extended to the Lamanites, but they are not unto you if ye transgress; for has not the Lord expressly promised and firmly decreed, that if ye will rebel against him**

**that ye shall utterly be destroyed from off the face of the earth?**

The only condition upon which the Lord's promises of destruction would not come upon the people of Ammonihah is they would repent. The words that Alma had taught the people are those of an angel. (see Alma 9:25, 29).

Alma teaches the people of the coming of the Savior who will give answers to the prayers of his people.

Alma 9:26-27

**26 And not many days hence the Son of God shall come in his glory; and his glory shall be the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace, equity, and truth, full of patience, mercy, and longsuffering, quick to hear the cries of his people and to answer their prayers.**

**27 And behold, he cometh to redeem those who will be baptized unto repentance, through faith on his name.**

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

"Jesus Christ enjoyed the glory and power of the Eternal Father while in mortality because he was the Only Begotten Son of the Father in the flesh, because he inherited the powers of the Father from that exalted Sire...Our Lord possesses all the godly attributes and virtues in their perfection. There is no knowledge which he does not possess, no tenderness, no charity, no patience, no mercy and long-suffering that are not naturally a part of his perfect being. (see *Lectures of Faith*)." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 3*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991, [3<sup>rd</sup> Printing, 1993], 65-66).

How blessed we are to have the Son of God as our Redeemer. The powers and attributes He possessed meant that He would not fail us in his responsibility as our Savior. He was also imminently qualified to assist us as we turned to him in prayer for guidance, direction, and comfort.

The reward was dependent upon [our] obedience for the "righteous...shall reap the salvation of the souls, according to the power and deliverance of Jesus Christ...[or] if...evil they shall reap the damnation [end of progress] of their souls, according to the power and captivation of the devil"

(Alma 9:28). Our final reward will depend upon the choices we make regarding good and evil during our lifetime.

Alma admonished the people to "bring forth works which are meet for repentance [as a result of their] hearts have been grossly hardened against the word of God and seeing that [unless they repent] ye are a lost and a fallen people" (Alma 9:30). The response of the people to his words of counsel and call to repentance was to become angry with him and to seek to cast he and his companion into prison. (see Alma 9:32-33). They were prevented from taking any action at this time against Alma or Amulek.

#### **IV. Alma 10**

Amulek speaks to the people of Ammonihah.

Alma 10:2

**2 I am Amulek; I am the son of Giddonah, who was the son of Ishmael, who was a descendant of Aminadi; and it was that same Aminadi who interpreted the writing which was upon the wall of the temple, which was written by the finger of God.**

Daniel H. Ludlow states,

"This is the only time Aminadi is mentioned, and our present Book of Mormon gives no further details concerning the writing written by the finger of God upon the wall of the temple. Evidently an account of this incident was recorded on the large plates of Nephi, but Mormon did not include it in his abridgment." (*A Companion To Your Study Of The Book Of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976, 198).

It appears that Amulek referenced this event so that his listeners may be reminded that God had previously given a message to the people which his descendant had translated. In the Book of Daniel, King Belshazzar is given a message written by a man's finger from God that Daniel translated. (see Daniel 5:5, 24-28.) God has another message to give them which he and his companion Alma had been sent to deliver. Amulek will now trace his heritage through Aminadi to Joseph of the House of Israel.

Alma 10:3-4

**3 And Aminadi was a descendant of Nephi, who was the son of Lehi, who came out of the land of Jerusalem, who was a descendant of Manasseh, who was the son of Joseph who was sold into Egypt by the hands of his brethren.**

**4 And behold, I am also a man of no small reputation among all those who know me; yea, and behold, I have many kindreds and friends, and I have also acquired much riches by the hand of my industry.**

D. Kelly Ogden and Andrew C. Skinner state,

"He [Amulek] first established his family ties as a direct descendant of Lehi and was the first to specify the tribe from which Lehi descended. From 1 Nephi 5:14 we have already learned that Lehi was from the tribe of Joseph, but here, and only here, we learn that Lehi was descended from Joseph's son Manasseh. According to apostle Erastus Snow, this truth was contained in the lost 116 pages of the book of Lehi [Journal of Discourses, 23:184]. Amulek further described himself as a self-made, independently wealthy man." (*Verse By Verse The Book of Mormon, Vol. 1*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2011, 406-407).

Amulek now shares his conversion experience. He states, "I never have known much of the ways of the Lord, and his mysteries and marvelous powers." He then corrects himself and says, "I have seen much of his mysteries and his marvelous power;...Nevertheless, I did harden my heart, for I was called many times and I would not hear; therefore I knew concerning these things, yet I would not know;" (Alma 10:5-6). With these words, Amulek hopes to form a connection with his people who perhaps have also had similar experiences.

Alma 10:7

**7 As I was journeying to see a very near kindred, behold an angel of the Lord appeared unto me and said: Amulek, return to thine own house, for thou shalt feed a prophet of the Lord; yea, a holy man, who is a chosen man of God; for he has fasted many days because of the sins of this people...**

The angel further directs him to take the holy man into his house and feed him and he shall bless your house. "And behold, it was this same man who has been speaking unto you concerning the things of God" (Alma 10:8).

Alma 10:10, 12

**10 And again, I know that the things whereof he hath testified are true; for behold I say unto you, that as the Lord liveth, even so has he sent his angel to make these things manifest unto me; and this he has done while this Alma hath dwelt at my house.**

**12 And now, when Amulek had spoken these words the people began to be astonished, seeing there was more than one witness who testified of the things whereof they were accused, and also of the things which were to come, according to the spirit of prophecy which was in them.**

Amulek added his testimony to the truthfulness of the words Alma had spoken. They now had two witnesses as to their guilt and the things that were going to come if they did not repent. Amulek's witness by oath, "as the Lord liveth" is "the most serious and sacred expressions available at that time" (see *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 1, 39-40).

Confronted by a second witness, "some...thought to question them, that by their cunning devices they might catch them in their words, that they might find witness against them...[and] deliver them to their judges...that they might be slain or cast into prison..." (Alma 10:13).

These men were lawyers who being "learned in all the arts and cunning of the people...began to question Amulek, that thereby they might make him cross his words, or contradict the words which he should speak" (Alma 10:15-16).

Alma 10:17-18

**17 Now they knew not that Amulek could know of their designs. But it came to pass as they began to question him, he perceived their thoughts, and he said unto them: O ye wicked and perverse generation, ye lawyers and hypocrites, for ye are laying the foundations of**

**the devil; for ye are laying traps and snares to catch the holy ones of God.**

**18 Ye are laying plans to pervert the ways of the righteous, and to bring down the wrath of God upon your heads, even to the utter destruction of this people.**

Amulek quotes the words of King Benjamin who had warned the people, "if the time should come that the voice of the people should choose iniquity, that is, if the time should come that this people should fall into transgression, they would be ripe for destruction" (Alma 10:19; see also Mosiah 29:27.) Through their deceitful actions against the servants of the Lord, the lawyers played an integral part in bringing about the destruction of the people. (see Alma 10:27.)

Alma 10:22-23

**22 Yea, and I say unto you that if it were not for the prayers of the righteous, who are now in the land, that ye would even now be visited with utter destruction; yet it would not be by flood, as were the people in the days of Noah, but it would be by famine, and by pestilence and the sword.**

**23 But it is by the prayers of the righteous that ye are spared; now therefore, if ye will cast out the righteous from among you then will not the Lord stay his hand; but in his fierce anger he will come out against you; then ye shall be smitten by famine, and by pestilence, and by the sword; and the time is soon at hand except ye repent.**

The wicked, unfamiliar with the law in heaven, often seek to kill or remove the righteous from the land, only to find that once they have been removed, the land is then ready for destruction. It is the righteous in the land that extend the time for the wicked to bring forth fruits for repentance. The response of the wicked in Ammonihah regarding Amulek's remarks is to cry against him. They state, "This man doth revile against our laws which are just, and our wise lawyers whom we have selected" (Alma 10:24).

Alma 10:25-27

**25 But Amulek stretched forth his hand, and cried the mightier unto them, saying: O ye wicked and perverse generation, why hath Satan got such great hold upon your hearts? Why will ye yield yourselves unto him that he may have power over you, to blind your eyes, that ye will not understand the words which are spoken, according to their truth?**

**26 For behold, have I testified against your law? Ye do not understand; ye say that I have spoken against your law; but I have not, but I have spoken in favor of your law, to your condemnation.**

**27 And now behold, I say unto you, that the foundation of the destruction of this people is beginning to be laid by the unrighteousness of your lawyers and your judges.**

D. Kelly Ogden and Andrew C. Skinner state,

"These verses contain interesting and important comments about the potentially destructive roles of lawyers and judges in stirring up civil disturbances, contentious lawsuits, and so on for their own pecuniary benefit...Righteous lawyers can be a great blessing: unrighteous ones can wreck great havoc. This is a significant point to make for our time, considering the litigious nature of modern society." (*Verse by Verse The Book of Mormon, Vol. 1*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2011, 407).

Alma 10:31

**31 And there was one among them whose name was Zeezrom. Now he was the foremost to accuse Amulek and Alma, he being one of the most expert among them, having much business to do among the people.**

Alma, Chapter 10, ends with identifying Zeezrom as one of the foremost lawyers in Ammonihah. He is identified as leading the people against the teachings of Alma and Amulek by using the cunning tactics of his profession. It is his desire to entrap them by using their own words against them.

Dennis L. Largey states,

**"Zeezrom.** [He was a] legal official in the city of Ammonihah who argued against Alma and Amulek, asserting that the divinity of Christ was not logically possible (ca. 82 B.C.) but who later converted to Christ." (*Book of Mormon Reference Companion*. Dennis L. Largey, General Editor. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2003, 800).

## V. Alma 11

This chapter begins by setting forth, the manner in which the judges were to receive payment, according to the law established by King Mosiah II.

Alma 11:1-3

1 Now it was in the law of Mosiah that every man who was a judge of the law, or those who were appointed to be judges, should receive wages according to the time which they labored to judge those who were brought before them to be judged.

2 Now if a man owed another, and he would not pay that which he did owe, he was complained of to the judge; and the judge executed authority, and sent forth officers that the man should be brought before him; and he judged the man according to the law and the evidences which were brought against him, and thus the man was compelled to pay that which he owed, or be stripped, or be cast out from among the people as a thief and a robber.

3 And the judge received for his wages, according to his time--...

**Chart 1: Nephite Monetary System** [Alma 11:3-19]

GOLD COINS	SILVER COINS
Senien=judges daily wage v.3)	Seium=judges daily wage (v.3)
Seon=2 senines	Amnor=2 senums
Shum=4 senines	Ezrom=4 senums
Limnah=4 senines	Onti=7 senums

Reference: Bryan Richards. [www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-11](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-11)).

Bryan Richards states,

"The only apparent reason for us to know their monetary system is to give us a frame of reference for how large the bribe is that Zeezrom offers to Amulek (v. 22). A brief explanation will put this amount (six onties) into perspective. The gold coins were based on the senine, and the silver coins were based on the senum. ([www.gosepldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-11](http://www.gosepldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-11)).

Hugh Nibley states,

"This was the system established by King Mosiah...They had a system which ran in sevens instead of fives and tens; or sixes and twelves, as the English [system] does; or the decimal system as we use it. It ran in sevens, and Richard Smith pointed out it was the best possible system that could be devised. It used the least coins for any necessary transaction. If you want figure out a system that will use a minimum amount of coins and save you a lot of trouble, this is the system." (*Teachings of the Book of Mormon*. Semester 2, Lecture #48. Alma 10-12. Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Brigham Young University, 1993, 316).

Bryan Richards continues,

"These lawyers had one thing on their minds--money. They had perfected the art of instigating legal disputes that would support themselves. For them, it didn't matter if there were too many lawyers to go around. They would simply create enough conflict that their services would be needed. Imagine lawyers making more work that only lawyers could perform!

"So why would these lawyers enter this primarily religious debate? There seems to be no offended part that is likely to bring a suit, yet all the lawyers are interested in confronting these two prophets. The reason is to further their reputations and engender some conflict that will end in requiring their services, that they might have more employ. This is a public debate with large crowds in attendance. If Zeezrom can humiliate Alma and Amulek with his wit and reason, he can further his reputation as a great lawyer and increase his clientele. So his battle cry is 'conflict for the sake of conflict,' which translates

into more money for him.  
([www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-11](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-11)).

Dean L. Larson states,

"The account of the dialogue between Zeezrom and Alma and Amulek in the eleventh chapter of the book of Alma provides additional insight into Zeezrom's wordly self-assurance. He has an audience to play to, and he intends, with his practiced sophistry and cunning, to make a game of his denigration of the two missionaries. After all, the audience is completely prejudiced in his favor, and he relishes the opportunity to add to his reputation among his peers. His questions to Alma and Amulek reflect his courtroom skills. They are designed for entrapment."  
("Zeezrom," in *Heroes From the Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995, [Seventh Printing, 1998], 113-114).

An important message of the Book of Mormon is for each of us to understand who Zeezrom is and who he becomes. For those not familiar with the Book of Mormon or those who are, the experience of Zeezrom is a powerful lesson for each of us.

Alma 11:21

**21 And this Zeezrom began to question Amulek, saying: Will ye answer me a few questions which I shall ask you? Now Zeezrom who was expert in the devices of the devil, that he might destroy that which was good; therefore, he said unto Amulek: Will you answer the questions which I shall put unto you?**

On the surface, Zeezrom, seems to be interested in learning about Amulek's teachings. It is important that we are careful in giving our answers. Some individuals are truly interested, others, like Zeezrom, are not. It is important that you, like Amulek, set your own criteria for your responses.

Alma 11:22

**22 And Amulek said unto him: Yea, if it be according to the Spirit of the Lord, which is in me; for I shall say nothing which is contrary to the Spirit of the Lord. And Zeezrom said unto him: Behold, here are six onties of silver, and all these will I give thee if thou wilt deny the existence of a Supreme Being.**

Never forget that as a member of the Church of Jesus Christ, you are entitled to have the spirit of the Lord with you to guide and direct your words. Don't try to do it on your own. Zeezrom quickly betrays that his intention is not to learn but to confirm his own views, even by bribery.

Alma 11:23-25

**23 Now Amulek said: O thou child of hell, why tempt ye me? Knowest thou that the righteous yieldeth to no such temptations?**

**24 Belivest thou that there is no God? [Amulek replied] I say unto you, Nay, thou knowest that there is a God, but thou lovest that lucre more than him.**

**25 And now thou hast lied before God unto me. Thou saidst unto me--Behold these six onties, which are of great worth, I will give unto thee--when thou hadst it in thy heart to retain them from me; and it was only thy desire that I should deny the true and living God, that thou mightiest have cause to destroy me. And now behold, for this great evil thou shalt have thy reward.**

Bryan Richards states,

"Amulek knows the heart of Zeezrom. He knows that his attacker has been taught the doctrine of the kingdom but will not repent because of his love of filthy lucre. The very questions that Zeezrom asks reveals that he knows there is a God and much more. As a key element in his devious trap, he only asks, [like a trained lawyer], questions to which he already knows the answers. The subsequent verses reveal that Zeezrom knew that there is a God, that this is only one God, that the Son of God will come to redeem the people *from* their sins, and the Son of God, who becomes the Redeemer, is the same as the very Eternal Father.

"Thus Zeezrom's wickedness is symbolic of all in Ammonihah. They know better, they have been taught the doctrine of the kingdom, and they have received of the Lord's blessings and mercy. But they rejected the Lord so that they could lay up treasures upon earth (3 Nephi 13:19).

[www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-11](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-11)).

Zeezrom is determined to discredit Amulek and the doctrine he is teaching the people.

Alma 11:26-40

Zeezrom: "Thou sayest there is a true and living God?"  
[vs.26]

Amulek: "Yea, there is a true and living God." [vs.27]

Zeezrom: "Is there more than one God?" [vs.28]

Amulek: "No." [vs.29]

Zeezrom: "How knowest thou these things?" [vs.30]

Amulek: "An angel hath made them known unto me." [vs.31]

Zeezrom: "Who is he that shall come? Is it the Son of God?"  
[vs.32]

Amulek: "Yea." [vs.33]

Zeezrom: "Shall he save his people in their sins? [vs.34]

Amulek: "I say unto you he shall not, for it is impossible  
for him to deny his word." [vs.34]

Zeezrom, directing remarks to the people: "See that ye  
remember these things; for he said there is but one  
God; yet he saith that the Son of God shall come,  
but he shall not save his people--as though he had  
authority to command God." [vs.35]

Amulek: "Behold thou hast lied, for thou sayest that I  
spake as though I had authority to command God  
because I said he shall not save his people in  
their sins. And I say unto you again that he  
cannot save them in their sins; for I cannot deny  
his word, and he hath said that no unclean thing  
can inherit the kingdom of heaven; therefore, how  
can ye be saved, except ye inherit the kingdom of  
heaven? Therefore, ye cannot be saved in your  
sins." [vs.36-37]

Zeezrom: "Is the Son of God the very Eternal Father?" [vs.38]

Amulek: "Yea, he is the very Eternal Father of heaven and  
of earth, and all things which in them are; he is  
the beginning and the end, the first and the last;

**And he shall come into the world to redeem his people; and he shall take upon him the transgressions of those who believe on his name; and these are they that shall have eternal life, and salvation cometh to none else. [vs.39-40]**

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet clarify,

"This is an important principle [He will not redeem the wicked from spiritual death if they will not believe in his name] which must be viewed properly in order to avoid confusion. There are persons who teach that Christ suffered only for those who repent. This is false. It is incorrect. The Lord suffered for every soul, 'yea, the pains of every living creature, both men, women and children, who belong to the family of Adam' (2 Nephi 9:21); see also D&C 18:11; 19:16). His suffering and atonement are efficacious [effective], however, only for those who repent and come unto him. Thus to refuse to repent is to mock his pain and shun his sufferings. It is, in the words of Paul, to do 'despite unto the spirit of grace' (Hebrews 10:29)." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 3*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991, [3<sup>rd</sup> Printing, 1993], 77).

Alma 11:41-46

**Amulek: Therefore the wicked remain as though there had been no redemption made, except it be the loosing of the bands of death; for behold, the day cometh that all shall rise from the dead and stand before God and be judged according to their works. Now, there is a death which is called a temporal [physical] death; and the death of Christ shall loose the bands of this temporal [physical] death, that all shall be raised from this temporal [physical] death. The spirit and the body shall be reunited again [after death] in its perfect form [resurrection]; both limb and joint shall be restored to its proper frame, even as we now are at this time; and we shall be brought to stand before God, knowing even as we know now, and have a bright recollection of all our guilt. Now this restoration [resurrection] shall come to all, both old and young, both bond and free, both male and female, both the wicked and the righteous; and even there shall not so much as a hair of their heads be lost; but every thing shall be restored to its perfect frame, as it is now, or**

**in the body, and shall be brought and be arraigned before the bar of Christ the Son and God the Father, and the Holy Spirit, which is one Eternal God, to be judged according to their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil. Now, behold, I have spoken unto you concerning the death of the mortal body, and also concerning the resurrection of the mortal body. I say unto you that this mortal body is raised to an immortal body, that is from death, even from the first death unto life, that they can die no more; their spirits uniting with their bodies, never to be divided; thus the whole becoming spiritual and immortal, that they can no more see corruption.**

In these verses, Amulek has taught Zeezrom and those gathered, the purpose for Jesus Christ coming to earth to be our Savior. He will take upon himself the sins of all mankind and thereby meet the demands of justice. He will overcome the physical or temporal death which is the separation of our spirit from our body. This penalty came about by Adam and Eve's transgression. The uniting of our renewed and perfected body with our immortal spirit will occur for each individual as the result of Christ's suffering. He also overcame the spiritual death which is man's separation from God based upon their own individual sins. Our reconciliation with God, however, is conditional upon our own repentance and acceptance of Jesus Christ as our Mediator with the Father. As we entered into a covenant with Jesus Christ at our baptism, we promised to keep his commandments. Though our daily application of the teachings of Jesus, and repentance is necessary, as imperfect individuals we become more and more like Our Savior. The gap that remains at our death, after a lifetime of obedience, between our imperfect lives and our entrance into the kingdom of God, is filled by the grace of Jesus Christ, after everything we can do.

It appears that Amulek did not differentiate between God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. This may be due to the fact that while they are separate beings, their thoughts, words, and actions are one.

Alma 11:46

**46 Now, when Amulek had finished these words the people began again to be astonished, and also Zeezrom**

**began to tremble. And thus ended the words of Amulek, or this is all that I have written.**

We might ask, why did Zeezrom begin to tremble? What had the spirit of the Holy Ghost testified to Zeezrom, through Amulek's inspired words, that had touched him to the point that he had been affected by Amulek's words?

## **V. Alma 12**

Alma 12:1-2

**1 Now Alma, seeing that the words of Amulek had silenced Zeezrom, for he beheld that Amulek had caught him in his lying and deceiving to destroy him, and seeing that he began to tremble under a consciousness of his guilt, he opened his mouth and began to speak unto him, and to establish [witness] the words of Amulek, and to explain things beyond, or to unfold the scriptures beyond that which Amulek had done.**  
**2 Now the words that Alma spake unto Zeezrom were heard by the people round about; for the multitude was great, and he spake on this wise:**

Alma, who had observed the reaction of Zeezrom to the words of Amulek, adds both his witness to the words of his companion and seeks to teach Zeezrom further regarding the truths revealed from heaven as recorded in the scriptures. While Alma, and Amulek before him, are speaking directly to Zeezrom, those gathered also hear their witness. Zeezrom is about to learn an important truth regarding his thoughts.

Bryan Richards states,

"When God shares his power of omniscience with his servants, they are able to wield a great weapon in the cause of truth. Zeezrom, the greatest of lawyers, is reduced to rubble by the power Amulek and Alma demonstrate [as servants of the Lord]. Zeezrom's private world of subtlety and wickedness seemed to be laid bare for all in Ammonihah to examine. How humiliating! And how humiliating it would be for us, at times, if our personal thoughts and wicked intentions were made public (See also Jacob 2:5; Alma 18:16)." ([www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-12](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-12)).

Alma 12:3-6

3 Now Zeezrom, seeing that thou hast been taken in thy lying and craftiness, for thou hast not only lied unto men only but thou hast lied unto God; for behold, he knows all thy thoughts, and thou seest that thy thoughts are made known unto us by his Spirit;

4 And thou seest that we know that thy plan was a very subtle plan, as to the subtlety of the devil, for to lie and to deceive this people that thou mightiest set them against us, to revile us and to cast us out-

5 Now this was a plan of thine adversary, and he hath exercised his power in thee. Now I would that ye should remember that what I say unto thee I say unto all.

6 And behold I say unto you all that this was a snare of the adversary, which he has laid to catch this people, 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.

Zeezrom learns two important truths. First, according to his will, God gives power to his servants to know the thoughts of man. Secondly, he has been a servant of the devil to mislead the people and to revile against and cast out the Lord's servants. The devil's purpose is that the people continued in their wickedness.

The response of Zeezrom to Alma's words, is "to tremble more exceedingly, for he was convinced more and more of the power of God...[and] that Alma and Amulek...knew the thoughts and intents of his heart;..." (Alma 12:7). As a result of this awareness, "Zeezrom began to inquire of them diligently, that he might know more concerning the kingdom of God" (Alma 12:8).

Dean L. Larsen states,

"It is at this point that a remarkable change begins to take place in the demeanor of Zeezrom. He becomes the earnest inquirer-the learner. The change is the more remarkable because it occurs in the presence and full view of the people to whom he has been appealing with his inquisition." ("Zeezrom," in *Heroes From the Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1995, [Seventh Printing, 1998], 115).

Having felt the Spirit of the Holy Ghost, Zeezrom seeks to understand those truths of the gospel that he previously had rejected. His inquiry of Alma, leads Alma to teach Zeezrom and the people of Ammonihah further regarding the resurrection and the final judgment.

Zeezrom asks, "What does this mean which Amulek hath spoken concerning the resurrection of the dead, that all shall rise from the dead, both the just and the unjust, and are brought to stand before God to be judged according to their works?" (Alma 12:8).

Alma responds to Zeezrom:

Alma 12:9

**9 ...It is given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him.**

Stephen E. Robinson states,

"...many of the faithful may receive revelations from God-- even revelations regarding the mysteries. But they are commanded at the same time to keep their mouths shut! They can share with others what God has already revealed to the Church in the scriptures and through his prophets, but the rest is private, and keeping it private is a sacred obligation. In effect the Lord tells those who are blessed with additional insights, 'If I wanted everyone to know, I would instruct the prophet to teach it to the Church. But this is for you alone, so keep it to yourself.' Therefore, anyone in the Church (or out of it, for that matter) who shares a private revelation out of the stewardship does so in violation of God's 'strict command.'" (*Following Christ*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1995, 101).

Alma 12:10

**10 And therefore, he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word; and he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto**

**him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full.**

An important qualification to our being able to receive and to understand the mysteries of God is based upon the condition of our hearts or the heed that we give to the words or inspiration we receive from the Lord.

Dallin H. Oaks states

"Learning the mysteries of God and attaining to what the apostle Paul called, 'the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ' (Eph. 4:13) requires far more than learning a specified body of facts. It requires us *to learn* certain facts, *to practice* what we have learned, and, as a result, *to become* what we, as children of God, are destined to become." (*The Lord's Way*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1991, 42).

Alma 12:11

**11 And they that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning the mysteries; and then they are taken captive by the devil, and led by his will down to destruction. Now this is what is meant by the chains of hell.**

Those who fail to give heed to the word of the Lord, will not receive further direction and eventually will lose what they have received. They will then be taken captive by the devil. They will now be in his power as if they were bound in chains.

B. H. Roberts states,

"For my part I can think of nothing that could be a greater offense against the majesty of God than for a man with his limited power presuming to pass judgment upon and rejecting the things of God, because forsooth, these things do not conform to his opinion of what the things of God should be like; or because the way in which they are revealed does not conform to the manner in which he thinks God should impart his truths. Such pride always has and always will separate men from receiving knowledge by divine communication.' As Alma taught, 'he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lessor portion of the word'

(Alma 12:10." (Quoted by Dallin H. Oaks. *Pure in Heart*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988, [5<sup>th</sup> Printing, 1989], 93-94).

Alma 12:12-14

**12 And Amulek hath spoken plainly concerning death, and being raised from this mortality to a state of immortality, and being brought before the bar of God, to be judged according to our works.**

**13 Then if our hearts have been hardened, yea, if we have hardened our hearts against the word, insomuch that it has not been found in us, then will our state be awful, for then we shall be condemned.**

**14 For our words will condemn us, yea, all our works will condemn us; we shall not be found spotless; and our thoughts will also condemn us; and in this awful state we shall not dare to look up to our God; and we would fain be glad if we could command the rocks and the mountains to fall upon us to hide us from his presence.**

As we are brought before God as the time of our judgment, we will be judged by our words, works, and our thoughts. We will have a bright recollection of our guilt. To be in the presence of One who is holy when we are impure, will cause us to want to hide from his presence so that he will not see our filthiness.

Boyd K. Packer states,

"While virtue, by choice, *will not* endure the presence of filth, that which is debased and unclean *cannot* endure the light. Virtue *will not* associate with filth, while evil *cannot* tolerate the presence of good.

"...One final declaration: No good thought is ever lost. No turn of the mind, however brief or transitory or illusive, if it is good, is ever wasted...The frequency with which they are experienced is the measure of you. The more constant they become, the more you are worth, or, in scriptural terms, the more you are worthy. Every clean thought *becomes* you." (*That All May Be Edified*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982, [8<sup>th</sup> Printing, 1996], 39).

Alma 12: 15-18

15 But this cannot be; we must come forth and stand before him in his glory, and in his power, and in his might, majesty, and dominion, and acknowledge to our everlasting shame that all his judgments are just; that he is just in all his works, and that he is merciful unto the children of men, and that he has all power to save very man that believeth on his name and bringeth forth fruit meet for repentance.

16 And now behold, I say unto you then cometh a death, even a second death, which is a spiritual death; then is a time that whosoever dieth in his sins, as to a temporal death, shall also die a spiritual death; yea, he shall die as to things pertaining unto righteousness.

17 Then is the time when their torments shall be as a lake of fire and brimstone, whose flames ascendeth up forever and ever; and then is the time that they shall be chained down to an everlasting destruction, according to the power and captivity of Satan, he having subjected them according to his will.

18 Then, I say unto you, they shall be as though there had been no redemption made; for they cannot be redeemed according to God's justice; and they cannot die, seeing there is no more corruption.

For the most part, following a period to time of punishment, even the wicked will receive a portion of glory. This will not, however, be the case, we understand, for a proportional small number of individuals.

Bryan Richards states,

"The second death, or spiritual death, is defined as being cut off from the presence of God. This means you cannot see the face of God, you cannot withstand the presence of God, you will not enjoy the visitation of the Son, and you are not worthy of the smallest portion of the spirit of the Holy Ghost. It is a total and complete separation from God. As described in the scriptures, this state happens to those who suffer in hell. It also describes the state of the Sons of Perdition who are cast out after the last soul is resurrected. Therefore, the second death has power upon all those who suffer in hell until the resurrection of the wicked. At that point the second death applies only to the Sons of Perdition. There are they who shall go away in to

the lake of fire and brimstone, with the devil and his angels--And the only ones on whom the second death shall have any power (D&C 76:36-37)."

([www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-12](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-12)).

Alma 12:19

**19 Now it came to pass that when Alma had made an end of speaking these words, the people began to be more astonished;**

Bryan Richards observes,

"It seems that the Book of Mormon prophets are discussing [the severest penalties of the] doctrine [in an effort] to warn the wicked and exhort them to repentance."

([www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-12](http://www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Alma-12)).

The spirit of the Holy Ghost has spoken to the hearts of those who are receptive and they are affected by his words. Others, who are hardhearted, remain unchanged. They have little room in their hearts for the witness of the spirit whom they have rejected.

Antionah, a chief ruler, asks Alma the following questions: (1) "What is this that thou hast said, that man should rise from the dead and be changed from this mortal to an immortal state, that the soul can never die?; and, (2) What does the scripture mean, which saith that God placed cherubim and a flaming sword on the east of the garden of Eden, lest our first parents should enter and partake of the fruit of the tree of life, and live forever? And thus we see that there was no possible chance that they should live forever" (Alma 12:20-21).

Alma responds:

Alma 12:22-23

**22 ...Now we see that Adam did fall by partaking of the forbidden fruit, according to the word of God, and thus we see that by his fall,...all mankind became a lost and fallen people.**

**23 ...if it had been possible for Adam to have partaken of the fruit of the tree of life at that time, there would have been no death, and the word of God would have been void, making God a liar, for he said: If thou**

**eat [of the fruit of the tree of good and evil] thou shalt surely die.**

John Taylor states,

"When Adam was driven from the garden, an angel was placed with a flaming sword to guard the way of the tree of life lest man should eat of it and become immortal in his degenerate state, and thus be incapable of obtaining that exaltation which he would be capable of enjoying through the redemption of Jesus Christ, and the power of the resurrection, with his renewed and glorified body." (*Gospel Kingdom*. Edited by G. Homer Durham. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1943, 218).

Alma 12:24

**24 We see that death comes upon mankind, yea, the death which has been spoken of by Amulek, which is the temporal death [separation of our spirits from our body]; nevertheless there was a space granted unto man in which he might repent; therefore this life became a probationary state; a time to prepare to meet God; a time to prepare for that endless state which has been spoken of by us, which is after the resurrection of the dead.**

Hugh Nibley states,

"We are being tested every minute of the day by the choices we make, by the reactions we have, by the things we say, by the things we think about. It's like the ancient Christian doctrine of the two ways, the way to the right and the way to the left, whichever they are. You must make the choice, and you may have made the wrong choice every day of your life up until now, but as long as you are here it is still not too late. You can still make the right choice--every minute you can make the right choice. It's never too late to make the right one...We have a time to repent; 'therefore this life became a probationary state.' Well, it can't be anything else; it's time to prepare to meet God. That's why we need the gospel here." (*Teachings of the Book of Mormon*. Semester 2, Lecture #48. Alma 10-12. Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Brigham Young University, 1993, 327).

25 Now, if it had not been for the plan of redemption, which was laid from the foundation of the world, there could have been no resurrection of the dead; but there was a plan of redemption laid, which shall bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, of which has been spoken.

26 And now behold, if it were possible that our first parents could have gone forth and partaken of the tree of life they would have been forever miserable, having no preparatory state; and thus the plan of redemption would have been frustrated, and the word of God would have been void, taking none effect.

27 ...it was appointed unto men that they must die; and after death they must come to judgment, even that same judgment of which we have spoken, which is the end.

28 And after God had appointed that these things should come unto man, behold, then he saw that it was expedient that man should know concerning the things whereof he had appointed unto them;

29 Therefore he sent angels to converse with them, who caused men to behold of his glory.

30 And they began from that time forth to call on his name; therefore God conversed with men, and made known unto them the plan of redemption, which had been prepared from the foundation of the world; and this he made known unto them according to their faith and repentance and their holy works.

31 Wherefore, he gave commandments unto men, they having first transgressed the first commandments as to things which were temporal, and becoming as gods, knowing good from evil, placing themselves in a state to act, or being placed in a state to act according to their wills and pleasures, whether to do evil or to do good--

32 Therefore God gave unto them commandments, after having made known unto them the plan of redemption, that they should not do evil, the penalty thereof being a second death, which was an everlasting death as to things pertaining unto righteousness; for on such the plan of redemption could have no power, for the works of justice could not be destroyed, according to the supreme goodness of God.

33 But God did call on men, in the name of his Son, (this being the plan of redemption which was laid) saying: If ye will repent, and harden not your hearts,

then will I have mercy upon you, through mine Only Begotten Son;

34 Therefore, whosoever repenteth, and hardeneth not his heart, he shall have claim on mercy through mine Only Begotten Son, unto a remission of his sins; and these shall enter into my rest.

35 And whosoever will harden his heart and will do iniquity, behold, I swear in my wrath that he shall not enter into my rest.

36 And now my brethren, behold I say unto you, that if ye will harden your hearts ye shall not enter into the rest of the Lord; therefore your iniquity provoketh him that he sendeth down his wrath upon you as in the first provocation, yea, according to his word in the last provocation as well as the first, to the everlasting destruction of your souls; therefore, according to his word, unto the last death, as well as the first.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

**"The first provocation.** This is a reference to the refusal of the ancient Israelites, under Moses, to receive the further light and knowledge which the Lawgiver sought to give them, including the fullness of blessings of the priesthood and thus the privilege of coming into the divine presence...'therefore, the Lord in his wrath, for his anger was kindled against them, swore that they should not enter into his rest while in the wilderness, which rest is the fullness of his glory' (D&C 84:24)." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 3. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991, [3<sup>rd</sup> Printing, 1993], 91-92).

In the preceding verses, Alma addressed the plan of redemption or salvation that had been presented by the Father to his spirit children prior to the creation of the world. His plan allowed for his spirit children to come to earth. They would be free to make choices with consequences. After Adam and Eve partook of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they became subject to temporal death or physical death. If they had then partaken of the fruit of the tree of life, they would become forever miserable with no opportunity for their repentance. The plan of God would have become null and void. According to the plan, they were granted a time of probation. At the conclusion of their mortal life they would experience death. They would then be judged for the

choices they had made during their lives. They had been given commandments. If they obeyed the commandments and repented, they would then have claim upon the mercy of his Son. Those who instead hardened their hearts and chose to do iniquity, they would suffer another death. The second death had been Adam and Eve's separation from God that was passed to their children. Those who were obedient to the commandments and repented from their sins, would obtain mercy and return to live with God. Those who were not obedient and did not repent experienced another spiritual death at the judgment. The result would then be an everlasting destruction of their souls.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

"For all except the sons of perdition this suffering is eternal only in the sense that it is God's suffering and he is eternal (see D&C 19:4-12). It will come to an end at the time of the second resurrection (at the end of the Millennium). The sons of perdition, those who have known the power and goodness of God and who will then deny and defy that power, shall indeed suffer in outer darkness forever. For those who reject the gospel and sneer at its saving powers, it is as though there had been no redemption made, as though Christ had never come into the world, as though there had been a Fall but no hope for deliverance from it." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 3*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991, [3<sup>rd</sup> Printing, 1993], 86-87).

Alma 12:37

**37 And now, my brethren, seeing we know these things, and they are true, let us repent, and harden not our hearts, that we provoke not the Lord our God to pull down his wrath upon us in these his second commandments which he has given unto us; but let us enter into the rest of God, which is prepared according to his word.**

This concludes Alma, Chapter 12, but it does not conclude the words of Alma to those who are gathered in Ammonihah. They will be continued in Alma, Chapter 13. At that time [BM#24], we will learn the response of the people to the discourses given them by Amulek and Alma.

## **VII. Conclusions**

We have been spiritually fed by the words of Alma and Amulek as they taught the principles of the gospel to the people of Ammonihah. Their focus has been upon the Father's Plan of salvation that presented in the councils prior to our coming to earth. The Fall and the Final Judgment have been a major focus of their teachings. Key to our obtaining salvation is our willingness to accept Jesus Christ and his atonement and to make and keep sacred covenants. The atonement has effect only when we are willing to repent from our sins.

Alma, Chapter 8, begins with Alma's success in Mulek and his journey to Ammonihah. Following his initial rejection, he departed for the city of Aaron. He is stopped by the same angel that had called him to repentance and instructs him to return to the city of Ammonihah and to tell them that if they do not repent, they will be destroyed. (see Alma 8:16.) After having fasted and prayed many days, Alma upon his return to the city, meets Amulek. He takes him to his home and feeds him. After a period of instruction, Alma and Amulek go forth to preach to the citizens.

In Alma, Chapter 9, the people contend with Alma. He warns them that if they do not repent, they will face destruction. (see Alma 9:12.) He preceeds to remind them regarding the blessings they have received from the Lord. They seek to put Alma and Amulek in prison, but they are protected by the Lord. (see Alma 9:32-33.)

In Alma, Chapter 10, Amulek teaches the people and shares with them his conversion. Amulek as a resident of Ammonihah is able to speak first-hand of the wickedness of the people. To the astonishment of the people, Amulek serves as a second witness to the truth of Alma's words. Amulek is able to discern the thoughts of the people and their efforts "to pervert the ways of rightness" (Alma 10:18). He tells them "were it not for the prayers of the righteous who were now in the land, [they would] even now be visited with utter destruction" (Alma 10:22).

In Alma, Chapter 11, Amulek is confronted by one of the expert lawyers, Zeezrom. He offers Amulek a bribe that he would "deny the existence of a Supreme Being" (Alma 11:22). Zeezrom makes his living by lies and deceit and expects that Amulek would accept his bribe. Amulek gives him a strong warning based upon his clear knowledge that

Zeezrom's desire is to destroy him in front of the people. (see Alma 11:25.) Zeezrom continues in his effort to discredit Amulek and the doctrine he is teaching the people. Following Amukek's teaching regarding the Fall, the Atonement, and the Judgment, Zeezrom begins to tremble under his guilt.

Alma, Chapter 12, Alma speaks and tells Zeezrom that he has "not only lied unto men only, but...unto God" (Alma 12:3). As Zeezrom is confronted not only by Alma and Amulek knowing his thoughts, but also he also had been a servant to the devil, as part of his efforts to bring the people into his captivity, Zeezrom trembles even more. He then changes from being the challenger to the inquisitor as he seeks to understand the truths of the gospel. His desire leads Alma to teach Zeezrom and the people of Ammonihah further regarding the resurrection and the final judgment. Alma will also teach Antionah, a chief ruler, as he seeks answers regarding the state of man after death and the tree of life. Alma will conclude his remarks with a discussion regarding the plan of redemption or salvation prepared by the Father for purpose of enabling his children to return to his presence, all determined upon their willingness to repent and partake of the atonement.

Our next lesson, [BM#24], will address Alma's concluding remarks to the people of Ammonihah and the effect of the words of Alma and Amulek upon the people of Ammonihah.