

Engaging Gospel Doctrine: 196

BoM Lesson 23: "More Than One Witness"

Link to Online Lesson: ["More Than One Witness"](#)

Class Member Reading: Alma 8-12

Alma 8

1 And now it came to pass that Alma returned from the land of Gideon, after having taught the people of Gideon many things which cannot be written, having **established the order of the church**, according as he had before done in the land of Zarahemla, yea, he returned to his own house at Zarahemla to **rest himself** from the labors which he had performed. *So Zarahemla was a challenge and Gideon was relatively easy... now Ammonihah will be the hardest, tragic, and life changing. I am glad Alma models balance of hard work and rest and restoration.*

2 And thus ended the ninth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi.

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.

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;

6 So that when he had finished his work at **Melek** he departed thence, and traveled three days' journey on the north of the land of Melek; and he came to a city which was called Ammonihah. *Success at Melek, but not worth mentioning details?*

7 Now it was the custom of the people of Nephi to call their lands, and their cities, and their villages, yea, even all their small villages, after the name of him who first possessed them; and thus it was with the land of Ammonihah. *This is why I think Helam was Alma's father...*

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. *Rather, they would not hearken to Alma, so Mormon concludes Satan got hold of their hearts... it is an important distinction.*

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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. I really appreciate this wording: “wrestling with God in mighty prayer”, which indicates how effortful and engaging prayer can be.

11 Nevertheless, they hardened their hearts, saying unto him: Behold, we know that thou art Alma; and we know that thou art high priest over the church which thou hast established in many parts of the land, according to your tradition; and we are not of thy church, and we do not believe in such foolish traditions.

12 And now we know that because we are not of thy church we know that **thou hast no power over us**; and thou hast delivered up the judgment-seat unto Nephiah; therefore thou art not the chief judge over us. **They only respect political power, not religious authority or rhetorical power.**

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.

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, saying: We share this vividly described moment with Alma. He is torn up and in anguish about the state of those in Ammoniah. He feels rejected. But note his concern is mostly for the other people.

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. **This is one of my favorite details in the Book of Mormon! The angel who encourages Alma in this low moment is the same one who appeared to him and triggered his conversion! He encourages him that he has made the right choices and done his part.**

Of course, the story gets poignant, even dark, when you realize that this command results in torture of Alma and Amulek and the death of numerous women and children.

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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. [What does this mean exactly?](#)

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**, yea, by the way which is on the south of the city of Ammonihah. [Alma’s dedication is impressive. He was treated very poorly by the people of Ammonihah, kicked out, probably with very severe threats, and yet he returns “speedily” when the angel commands him too. He has to enter “by another way” to avoid being kicked out again or worse.](#)

19 And as he entered the city he was an **hungered**, and he said to a man: Will ye give to an humble servant of God something to eat? [Speaking up for our needs is so powerful, and meeting each other in those moments of need, caring for each other, is a sacred experience.](#)

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. [“House” means “household”, family servants, etc. Note how everyone did their part: Alma was vulnerable and asked for what he needed, Amulek responded with graciousness, and God gave Amulek the experience he needed in order to welcome Alma. Of course, knowing what is going to happen gives a dark irony to this exchange... because he welcomed Alma, his family is going to die. This story does not give easy answers.](#)

21 And it came to pass that the man received him into his house; and the man was called Amulek; and he brought forth bread and meat and set before Alma.

22 And it came to pass that Alma ate bread and was filled; and he **blessed** Amulek and his house, and he **gave thanks** unto God.

23 And after he had eaten and was filled he said unto Amulek: I am Alma, and am the high priest over the church of God throughout the land. [Interesting that Alma doesn’t introduce himself until after the meal! Perhaps this is an indication of how much danger he was in.](#)

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24 And behold, I have been called to preach the word of God among all this people, according to the spirit of revelation and prophecy; and I was in this land and they would not receive me, but they cast me out and I was about to set my back towards this land forever.

25 But behold, I have been commanded that I should turn again and prophesy unto this people, yea, and to testify against them concerning their iniquities.

26 And now, Amulek, because thou hast fed me and taken me in, thou art blessed; for I was an hungered, for I had fasted many days.

27 And Alma **tarried many days** with Amulek before he began to preach unto the people. *Why is this? Did Alma need to recover from a hardship? Did Amulek need preparation? The latter is likely true.*

28 And it came to pass that the people did wax more gross in their iniquities.

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. *This is a summary statement anticipating the conclusion of Alma and Amulek’s ministry to the Ammonihahites. There is much damningly unsaid... Mormon does not mention the women and children who were slain in a terrible manner. Mormon seems to be trying to tie things in a bow and make them sound better.*

32 And it came to pass that they went forth and began to preach and to prophesy unto the people, according to the spirit and power which the Lord had given them.

Alma 9

Now we are back to Alma’s record.

1 And again, I, Alma, having been commanded of God that I should take Amulek and go forth and preach again unto this people, or the people who were in the city of

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Ammonihah, it came to pass as I began to preach unto them, they began to **contend** with me, saying:

2 Who art thou? Suppose ye that we shall believe the testimony of one man, although he should preach unto us that the earth should pass away?

3 Now they understood not the words which they spake; for they knew not that the earth should pass away.

4 And they said also: We will not believe thy words if thou shouldst prophesy that this great city should be destroyed in one day. [Both of these verses are intended to be ironic.](#)

5 Now they knew not that God could do such marvelous works, for they were a hard-hearted and a stiffnecked people.

6 And they said: 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?

7 And they stood forth to lay their hands on me; but behold, they did not. [\(More to the story? What stopped them?\)](#) And I stood with boldness to declare unto them, yea, I did boldly testify unto them, saying:

8 Behold, O ye wicked and perverse generation, how have ye forgotten the tradition of your fathers; yea, how soon ye have forgotten the commandments of God. [He’s not trying diplomacy.](#)

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.

13 Behold, do ye not remember the words which he spake unto Lehi, saying that: Inasmuch as ye shall keep my commandments, ye shall prosper in the land? And

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again it is said that: Inasmuch as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall be cut off from the presence of the Lord.

14 Now I would that ye should remember, that inasmuch as the Lamanites have not kept the commandments of God, they have been cut off from the presence of the Lord. Now we see that the word of the Lord has been verified in this thing, and the Lamanites have been cut off from his presence, from the beginning of their transgressions in the land.

15 Nevertheless I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for them in the day of judgment than for you, if ye remain in your sins, yea, and even more tolerable for them in this life than for you, except ye repent.

16 For there are **many promises which are extended to the Lamanites**; for it is because of the 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.

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.

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; *Alma is preaching a very vengeful God.*

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; *Is Alma talking about the people of Ammonihah specifically, or the people of Nephi generally? It seems to be the latter.*

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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 out of bondage time after time, and having been kept and preserved until now; and they have been prospered until they are rich in all manner of things—

23 And now behold I say unto you, that if this people, who have received so many blessings from the hand of the Lord, should transgress contrary to the light and knowledge which they do have, I say unto you that if this be the case, that if they should fall into transgression, it would be far more tolerable for the Lamanites than for them.

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?

25 And now for this cause, that ye may not be destroyed, the Lord has sent his angel to visit many of his people, declaring unto them that they must go forth and cry mightily unto this people, saying: Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is nigh at hand;

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 long-suffering, 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.

28 Therefore, prepare ye the way of the Lord, for the time is at hand that all men shall reap a reward of their works, according to that which they have been—if they have been righteous they shall reap the salvation of their souls, according to the power and deliverance of Jesus Christ; and if they have been evil they shall reap the damnation of their souls, according to the power and captivation of the devil.

29 Now behold, this is the voice of the angel, crying unto the people.

30 And now, my beloved brethren, for ye are my brethren, and ye ought to be beloved, and ye ought to bring forth works which are meet for repentance, seeing that your hearts have been grossly hardened against the word of God, and seeing that ye are a lost and a fallen people. [This seems like a very general sermon that doesn't demonstrate awareness of the Ammoniahites particular circumstances.](#)

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31 Now it came to pass that when I, Alma, had spoken these words, behold, the people were wroth with me because I said unto them that they were a hard-hearted and a stiffnecked people.

32 And also because I said unto them that they were a lost and a fallen people they were angry with me, and sought to lay their hands upon me, that they might cast me into prison. Does it occur to Alma that there might have been another way to get through to them?

33 But it came to pass that the **Lord did not suffer them** that they should take me **at that time and cast me into prison**. What were the details on this? It must have hurt to have been delivered sometimes but not others, and then have the women and children die tragically.

34 And it came to pass that Amulek went and stood forth, and began to preach unto them also. And now the words of Amulek are not all written, nevertheless a part of his words are written in this book.

Alma 10

1 Now these are the words which Amulek preached unto the people who were in the land of Ammonihah, saying:

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. This account sounds much like the one in the book of Daniel... Amulek establishes his status as an established and well-known member of the community

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. The Nephites seem to have been very genealogy and status oriented, keeping track of who belonged to which families.

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. This is essential: The fact there was “more than one witness” actually isn’t a big deal at all. The essential point is the *identity* of the witness. Amulek is an insider... we respond differently to insiders than outsiders. And not only is he an insider, but a high status, well-connected insider. THIS is why they listened to Amulek, not just because he was a second person who agreed with Alma.

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5 Nevertheless, after all this, I never have known much of the ways of the Lord, and his mysteries and marvelous power. I said I never had known much of these things; but behold, I mistake, for I have seen much of his mysteries and his marvelous power; yea, even in the preservation of the lives of this people.

6 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; therefore I went on rebelling against God, in the wickedness of my heart, even until the fourth day of this seventh month, which is in the tenth year of the reign of the judges. [Amulek rethought and reframed his narrative.](#)

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, and he is an hungered, and thou shalt receive him into thy house and feed him, and he shall **bless thee and thy house**; and the blessing of the Lord shall rest upon thee and thy house. [“very near kindred”](#). [Interesting wording. Note the angel uses status words, speaks Amulek’s language.](#)

8 And it came to pass that I obeyed the voice of the angel, and returned towards my house. And as I was going thither I found the man whom the angel said unto me: Thou shalt receive into thy house—and behold it was this same man who has been speaking unto you concerning the things of God.

9 And the angel said unto me he is a **holy man**; wherefore I know he is a holy man because it was said by an angel of God.

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.

11 For behold, he hath blessed mine house, he hath blessed me, and my **women**, and my **children**, and my father and my kinsfolk; yea, even all my kindred hath he blessed, and the blessing of the Lord hath rested upon us according to the words which he spake. [This is a very significant verse, especially in contrast to 15:16, where it says Amulek had been “rejected by...his father and his kindred” ... painful absence of women mentioned.](#)

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.

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13 Nevertheless, there were some among them who thought to question them, that by their **cunning devices** they might **catch them in their words**, that they might find witness against them, that they might deliver them to their judges that they might be judged according to the law, and that they might be slain or cast into prison, according to the **crime which they could make appear or witness against them**. Concerned with appearance, not reality, outcome, not truth.

14 Now it was those men who sought to destroy them, who were **lawyers**, who were hired or appointed by the people to administer the law at their times of trials, or at the trials of the crimes of the people before the judges.

15 Now these lawyers were learned in all the arts and cunning of the people; and this was to enable them that they might be skilful in their profession.

16 And it came to pass that they began to question Amulek, that thereby they might make him cross his words, or **contradict the words** which he should speak.

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.

19 Yea, well did Mosiah say, who was our last king, when he was about to deliver up the kingdom, having no one to confer it upon, causing that this people should be governed by their own voices—yea, well did he say that if the time should come that the voice of this people should choose iniquity, that is, if the time should come that this people should fall into transgression, they would be ripe for destruction.

20 And now I say unto you that well doth the Lord judge of your iniquities; well doth he cry unto this people, by the voice of his angels: Repent ye, repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

21 Yea, well doth he cry, by the voice of his angels that: I will come down among my people, with equity and justice in my hands.

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.

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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. **More heavy handed messages... Perhaps this was the best chance to wake them up? Or part of the strategy? I wouldn't be surprised if this comment would have motivated them to cast out the righteous from them...**

24 And now it came to pass that the people were more angry with Amulek, and they cried out, saying: This man doth revile against our laws which are just, and our wise lawyers whom we have selected.

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.

28 And now it came to pass that when Amulek had spoken these words the people cried out against him, saying: Now we know that this man is a **child of the devil**, for he hath lied unto us; for he hath spoken against our law. And now he says that he has not spoken against it. **These people are damned because they are unable to be corrected. Everything they say is to justify themselves as they are. Completely resistant to change.**

29 And again, he has reviled against our lawyers, and our judges.

30 And it came to pass that the lawyers put it into their hearts that they should remember these things against him.

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.

32 Now the object of these lawyers was to get gain; and they got gain according to their employ.

Alma 11

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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—a senine of gold for a day, or a senum of silver, which is equal to a senine of gold; and this is according to the law which was given.

4 Now these are the names of the different pieces of their gold, and of their silver, according to their value. And the names are given by the Nephites, for they did not reckon after the manner of the Jews who were at Jerusalem; neither did they measure after the manner of the Jews; but they altered their reckoning and their measure, according to the minds and the circumstances of the people, in every generation, until the reign of the judges, they having been established by king Mosiah. [I have no idea why this strange passage is in the Book of Mormon.](#)

5 Now the reckoning is thus—a senine of gold, a seon of gold, a shum of gold, and a limnah of gold.

6 A senum of silver, an amnor of silver, an ezrom of silver, and an onti of silver.

7 A senum of silver was equal to a senine of gold, and either for a measure of barley, and also for a measure of every kind of grain.

8 Now the amount of a seon of gold was twice the value of a senine.

9 And a shum of gold was twice the value of a seon.

10 And a limnah of gold was the value of them all.

11 And an amnor of silver was as great as two senums.

12 And an ezrom of silver was as great as four senums.

13 And an onti was as great as them all.

14 Now this is the value of the lesser numbers of their reckoning—

15 A shiblon is half of a senum; therefore, a shiblon for half a measure of barley.

16 And a shiblum is a half of a shiblon.

17 And a Leah is the half of a shiblum.

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18 Now this is their number, according to their reckoning.

19 Now an antion of gold is equal to three shiblons.

20 Now, it was for the sole purpose to get gain, because they received their wages according to their employ, therefore, they did stir up the people to riotings, and all manner of disturbances and wickedness, **that they might have more employ**, that they might get money according to the suits which were brought before them; therefore they did stir up the people against Alma and Amulek. **So the lawyers are greedy and have very poor morals.**

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

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. **Not very subtle...**

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

24 Believest thou that there is no God? 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 mightest have cause to destroy me. And now behold, for this great evil thou shalt have thy reward.

26 And Zeezrom said unto him: Thou sayest there is a true and living God?

27 And Amulek said: Yea, there is a true and living God.

28 Now Zeezrom said: Is there more than one God?

29 And he answered, No.

30 Now Zeezrom said unto him again: How knowest thou these things?

31 And he said: An angel hath made them known unto me.

32 And Zeezrom said again: Who is he that shall come? Is it the Son of God?

33 And he said unto him, Yea.

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34 And Zeezrom said again: Shall he save his people in their sins? And Amulek answered and said unto him: I say unto you he shall not, for it is impossible for him to deny his word.

35 Now Zeezrom said unto 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. **Ok, this is a bit more sophisticated, if in a silly way. Theology throwdown.**

36 Now Amulek saith again unto him: 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.

37 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. **Because the gospel is a gospel of transformation. Heaven is not a location as much as it is a state.**

38 Now Zeezrom saith again unto him: Is the Son of God the very Eternal Father?

39 And Amulek said unto him: 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;

40 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.

41 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.

42 Now, there is a death which is called a temporal death; and the death of Christ shall loose the bands of this temporal death, that all shall be raised from this temporal death.

43 The **spirit and the body shall be reunited again in its perfect form**; 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.

44 Now, this restoration 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

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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.

45 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. Amulek is teaching that through the Atonement, deliverance from physical death is universal, but deliverance from spiritual death is conditional on our acceptance of that Atonement and our actions.

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. Does Zeezrom fear being held accountable, as Alma himself did? That seems to be the connection—Amulek’s teaching about the resurrection grips Zeezrom with the idea of standing before God for judgment.

Alma 12

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 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:

3 Now Zeezrom, seeing that thou hast been taken in thy lying and craftiness, for thou hast not 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 mightest 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

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encircle you about with his **chains**, that he might chain you down to everlasting **destruction**, according to the power of his **captivity**. *The Plan of Damnation and Unhappiness...*

7 Now when Alma had spoken these words, Zeezrom began to **tremble more exceedingly**, for he was **convinced more and more** of the power of God; and he was also convinced that Alma and Amulek had a knowledge of him, for he was convinced that they knew the thoughts and intents of his heart; for power was given unto them that they might know of these things according to the spirit of prophecy. *Zeezrom is having an awakening based on new interactions and knowledge. This awakenings can be incredibly painful as we process them. If we change because of these awakenings they are redemptive, but if we resist them they will make us miserable and often cause us to lash out at others because we refuse to examine ourselves.*

8 And **Zeezrom began to inquire of them diligently**, that he might know more concerning the **kingdom of God**. And he said unto Alma: 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? This is the vital shift for Zeezrom!! He is not asking Amulek questions to condemn him, but he is asking questions to understand the truth. And not just the truth, but the most important truths—what he needs to do with the new information that he at first resisted but is now accepting. It is also interesting to note that once again, the focus is on previously unexpected accountability.

9 And now Alma began to expound these things unto him, saying: 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. *This has been a very difficult lesson for me. It still requires work. What do we share when, with whom? I am a natural oversharer... not surprising to anyone who knows me. But I am working on this. We should be careful what we share, especially information and experiences that are sensitive or sacred.*

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. *This is a great formula!! Both how God works and how we should work. Share a little,*

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and then see how others respond, and then share more and more as trust is developed. This principle applies to interpersonal communication in important ways.

11 And they that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning his 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**. Important insight!! "the chains of hell" refer to the way that our human nature can trap us in vicious cycles where we experience less and less enlightenment and freedom.

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. Remember these are lawyers, so this analogy speaks to them.

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. What can harden our hearts? This is so important. Fear can. Anger and hate. But also certainty and self-assurance that closes us to other perspectives.

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. Seeking oblivion over accountability... Alma is also speaking from personal experience.

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 every man that believeth on his name and bringeth forth fruit meet for repentance. These are the pains of hell. We are so wired as humans to deny responsibility that a perfect awareness of our accountability and the consequences of our actions would sear our souls.

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**. We are moved beyond the power of God to redeem, and damned from a life of exaltation. Remember that salvation and damnation are *states of being* rather than locations.

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17 Then is the time when their **torments shall be as a lake of fire and brimstone**, whose flame 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. *Note the word “as”. Simile, so not literal flames.*

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. *Because our agency limits Atonement... God cannot redeem us if we put ourselves outside the power of that redemption.*

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

20 But there was one Antionah, who was a chief ruler among them, came forth and said unto him: 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?

21 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. *Note that Antonah is speaking from an informed perspective—he knows the scriptures. But he is using them only to argue, not to understand.*

22 Now Alma said unto him: This is the thing which I was about to explain. Now we see that Adam did fall by the 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 And now behold, I say unto you that 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 would have been void, making God a liar, for he said: If thou eat thou shalt surely die.

24 And we see that death comes upon mankind, yea, the death which has been spoken of by Amulek, which is the temporal death; 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. *I cherish the Mormon emphasis on the importance of this life.*

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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. *Another valuable insight... receiving a reward for state for which we are not prepared brings miserly, not satisfaction or joy.*

27 But behold, it was not so; but 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— *Agency is the most precious commodity of eternity... our quest is to claim as much freedom as we can, the freedom not to do whatever we want, but the freedom and ability to become God. The freedom that discipline brings (Contrast the freedom of sleeping in all day vs. the freedom to climb a mountain). I really resonate with the theme of “act rather than be acted upon.” Which do we do in our lives?*

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;

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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.

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.

Additional Reading: None

Scripture Chain: **N/A**
