

Alma 8–12: Alma and Amulek

Monte F. Shelley

Quotes

- I considered atheism but there weren't enough holidays.
- Smile! ... It is the 2nd best thing you can do with your lips.
- The man who does as he pleases ... is seldom pleased with what he does.
- The darkest hour has only 60 minutes!
- God wisely designed the human body so that we can neither pat our own backs nor kick ourselves too easily.
- I don't know what tomorrow holds, but I do know **who** holds tomorrow.

1. Compare Alma's message to different people

After the war with the Amlicites, the people repented and became humble. Two years later "⁶the people of the church began to wax proud, because of their exceeding riches ... obtained by their industry; and ... they [were] lifted up in the pride of their eyes, for they began to wear very costly apparel ... ⁸They began to be scornful, one towards another, and ... to persecute those that did not believe according to their own will and pleasure ... ⁹There began to be great contentions ... envyings, and strife, and malice, and persecutions, and pride, even to exceed the pride of those who did not belong to the church of God ... ¹¹The example of the church began to lead those who were unbelievers on from one piece of iniquity to another" (4:6, 8–9, 11)

Alma, the high priest, delegated the judgment seat, "that he might preach the word of God... to stir them up in remembrance of their duty, and that he might pull down, by the word of God, all the pride and craftiness and all the contentions ... among his people, seeing no way that he might reclaim them save it were in bearing down in pure testimony against them." (4:18–19)

To people of Zarahemla: "To gain salvation, men must repent and keep the commandments, be born again, cleanse their garments through the blood of Christ, be humble and strip themselves from pride and envy, and do the works of righteousness—The Good Shepherd calleth his people—Those who do evil works are children of the devil—Alma testifies of the truth of his doctrine and commands men to repent—Names of the righteous shall be written in the book of life." (5:Heading)

Message to people in the church: wicked, stripped of pride, **REPENT**, bar of God

"The Church in Zarahemla is cleansed and set in order" (6:Heading)

Some baptized; others repented or were excommunicated

To people of Gideon: "Christ shall be born of Mary—He shall loose the bands of death and bear the sins of his people—Those who repent, are baptized, and keep the commandments shall have eternal life—Filthiness cannot inherit the kingdom of God—Humility, faith, hope, and charity are required." (7:Heading)

⁶I trust that ye are not in a state of so much unbelief as were your brethren; I trust that ye are not lifted up in the pride of your hearts; ... that ye have not set your hearts upon riches and the vain things of the world; yea, ... that you do not worship idols, but that ye do worship the true and the living God. (7:10)

Jesus "shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers." (7:6)

Some critics allege that the Book of Mormon commits a foolish error by predicting that Jesus would be born "at Jerusalem" instead of Bethlehem. Before the 1887 discovery of the Tell El-Amarna Tablets, no one knew for sure that Bethlehem was also part of an area anciently called the land of Jerusalem. (R. Smith)

¹¹ He shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; and this that the word might be fulfilled which saith he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people. ¹² And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, ... that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities. (7:11–12)

SOED sick: physically, spiritually, mentally → afflictions and temptations?

SOED infirmity: [not + firm or strong] weakness [physical, spiritual,...]

How is this relevant to us?

He can understand and help me?

To be Christlike, I will have experiences to help me know how to help others.

To people of Melek: ⁴ He began to teach the people throughout all the land of Melek. ⁵ And ... the people came to him. ... And they were baptized throughout all the land. (Alma 8)

To people of Ammonihah: (Alma 8)

⁹ Satan had gotten great hold upon the hearts of the people of the city of Ammonihah; therefore they would not hearken unto ... Alma. ... ¹¹ They hardened their hearts, saying ... we are not of thy church, and we do not believe in such foolish traditions. ... thou hast no power over us. ... ¹³ [They] reviled him, and spit upon him, and caused that he should be cast out of their city.

- What was their church, its teachings and scripture? (16:11) **Nehorites; all will be saved**

Written law vs. Interpretation; like King Noah's priests

- Which city is most like our ward?

What message would we have gotten?

¹⁴ While Alma was thus weighed down with sorrow, behold an angel ... appeared unto him, saying: ¹⁵ Blessed art thou, Alma; therefore, lift up thy head and 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 ... Return to the city of Ammonihah, and preach again. ... 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.

Alma had repented (returned to God, stopped sinning) and became faithful in keeping commandments given to him by the angel or the Spirit. He focused on seeking to know and do God's will each day instead of wasting time on guilt trips for his past sins.

How did Alma respond to the angel's message?

¹⁸ After Alma had received his message from the angel ... he returned speedily to the land of Ammonihah.

2. Amulek

- a. Why did Amulek help Alma? (8:20)

²⁰ 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. (Alma 8:20)

- b. Why did Alma tarry “many days with Amulek before he began to preach unto the people”? (8:27)

To teach Amulek. To wait for public gathering?

- c. Amulek was a descendent of _____? (10:2–3)

Amulek, Alma, Helaman, and Mormon are specifically mentioned as “descendants of Nephi, son of Lehi” “who was a descendant of Manasseh. However, we do not know the names of Nephi’s children.

“Ishmael an Ephraimite — ‘Joseph Smith informed us that the record of Lehi was contained on the [116] pages that were first translated and subsequently stolen, and of which an abridgment is given us in the First Book of Nephi, which is the record of Nephi individually, he himself being of the lineage of Manasseh; but that Ishmael was of the lineage of Ephraim, and that his sons married into Lehi’s family, and Lehi’s sons married Ishmael’s daughters, thus fulfilling the words of Jacob upon Ephraim and Manasseh in [Genesis 48:16] which says: ‘And let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.’ Thus these descendants of Manasseh and Ephraim grew together upon this American continent, with a sprinkling from the house of Judah, from Mulek descended, who left Jerusalem eleven years after Lehi, and founded the colony afterwards known as Zarahemla found by Mosiah — thus making a combination, an intermixture of Ephraim and Manasseh with the remnants of Judah, and for aught we know, the remnants of some other tribes that might have accompanied Mulek. And such have grown up upon the American continent.’” (From “Discourse by Apostle Erastus Snow,” at Logan, Utah, May 6, 1882, JD 23:184–5) (James E. Talmage, *A Study of the Articles of Faith*, p.504-5)

How could Lehi be a descendent of Manasseh (10:2–3) since the tribe of Manasseh was part of lost 10 tribes?

About 200 years before the 10 tribes were taken captive, the King of Judah gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon: for they fell to him out of Israel in abundance, when they saw that the LORD his God *was* with him.” (2 Chr 15:9)

- d. What was Amulek’s social class? (10:4)

⁴I 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. (Alma 10:4)

- e. Was Amulek a righteous man? (10:5–6)

⁵ I have seen much of [God’s] 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. (Alma 10:5–6)

Both Alma and Amulek were visited by an angel to help them repent. Both had been wicked but became great missionaries.

⁴¹ There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. ⁴² And when

they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? (Lk 7:41-42)

How had their past helped them know how to succor or help these people?

The past gave them the desire to help others repent, and helped them to know how to help others who had hardened their hearts as they had done.

- f. At what cost did Amulek follow Alma? (15:16)

¹⁶ Amulek having forsaken all his gold, and silver, and his precious things... for the word of God, he being rejected by those who were once his friends and also by his father and his kindred” (Alma 15:16)

3. Alma’s Message to Ammoniahites (Alma 9)

¹ As I began to preach ..., they began to contend with me, saying:

² ... 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. ... 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?

Why did they reject the testimony of one man? The law of Moses required the testimony of two or more witnesses.

How long did it take to destroy Ammonihah?

One day (Al 16:2, 9–11)

⁸ 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.”

To *forget* or *remember* the commandments meant to break or keep them. Both words described doing not thinking.

¹⁵ It shall be more tolerable for [the Lamanites] 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.

Why will it be more tolerable for the Lamanites?

God had blessed, delivered, prospered, and preserved them.

4. Amulek’s Message to Ammoniahites (Alma 10)

- a. How did the people respond when Amulek testified that Alma’s words were true?

¹² 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.

- b. How did the lawyers respond?

¹³ 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.

Rabbi used to mean one who was trained in the law of Moses (lawyers). Some were judges.

- c. How was Amulek able to handle the questioning?

¹⁷ He perceived their thoughts, and he said ...: O ye wicked ... 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. ... ¹⁹ Well did Mosiah say ... ¹⁹ “If ... the voice of this people should choose iniquity, ... [and] fall into transgression, they would be ripe for destruction. ... ²² 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. ...²³ If ye will cast out the righteous from among you then will not the Lord stay his hand.

This was like Sodom which God would have preserved if only 10 righteous people were there. (Gen 18:30)

d. Did the lawyers and people repent?

⁸ They brought ... wives and children together, and whosoever believed ... in the word of God they caused that they should be cast into the fire; and they also brought the holy scriptures, and cast them into the fire also. (Al 14:8)

5. Why does Mormon explain the money system? (Alma 11)

Lawyers wanted “to get gain, ... therefore, they did stir up the people to riotings, ... disturbances and wickedness, that they might have more employ, that they might get money according to the suits which were brought before them. (Al 11:20)

Zeezrom tries to bribe Amulek with 6 Onties which would equal a judge’s salary for 42 days of work.

Measures	Silver	Gold	Like
7	Onti	Limnah	\$7.00
4	Ezrom	Shum/shun	\$4.00
2	Amnor	Seon	\$2.00
1½		Antion	\$1.50
1	Senum*	Senine*	\$1.00
½	Shiblon		\$0.50
¼	Shiblum		\$0.25
⅛	Leah		\$0.125

* Daily wage for a judge

“The beauty of this mathematical configuration is its simplicity. The values of 1, 2, 4, and 7 can be expressed with the use of a single piece, and the values 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, and 14 can be achieved with only two, while values of 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, and 18 can all be formed by using only 3 in combination. Not until one exceeds 13 does one need two of the same weights. ... We can detect links between Nephite measures and grains and similar systems ... known from the ancient Near East, including names, relative amounts, and official functions.” (Welch)

6. Did Zeezrom know scripture and words of prophets?

Zeezrom’s questions reveal that he does. (Al 11:26–34)

a. “Is there more than one God?” **No**

b. Will the son of God come? **Yes**

c. “Shall he save his people in their sins?” **No**

²¹ I have come unto the world to bring redemption unto the world, to save the world from sin. (3 Ne 9:21)

d. “Is the Son of God ^{Jesus} the very Eternal Father ^{Jehovah?}” (11:38)

³⁹ Amulek said ...: Yea, he is the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth ...; he is the beginning and the end ...⁴⁰ And he shall come into the world to redeem his people.

7. Alma’s Second Message (Alma 12)

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 ... men, according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him.

In Alma 13 (next lesson), Alma teaches these wicked people some pretty deep doctrine about the Melchizedek priesthood.

However, his purpose is to encourage faith in Christ and repentance, not to satisfy intellectual curiosity.

Now the people have two witnesses that (a) they must “repent or be destroyed,” and (b) the following teachings are true.

	Amulek	Alma
1. Atonement	11:40	12:33–34
2. Repentance	11:40	12:24
3. Judgment	11:41	12:14
4. Resurrection	11:41–42	12:24–25

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.

We lose our memories as we get older so we can die with a clear conscience.

8. Our Words, Works, Thoughts

¹³ If we have hardened our hearts against the word ...¹⁴ our words ... our works ... and our thoughts will ... condemn us; and ... we shall not dare to look up to our God. ... Then cometh ... a second death, which is a spiritual death ... yea, he shall die as to things pertaining unto righteousness. (Alma 12:13–14)

Why not dare look up to God?

Condemnation results in separation from God and his disciples.

a. **How do I relate to God and his words?**

b. **How do I treat those who do “not believe [and do] according to [my] own will and pleasure”?** (4:8)

⁸ The people of the church began to be lifted up in the pride of their eyes, and to set their hearts upon riches and upon the vain things of the world, that they began to be scornful, one towards another, and they began to persecute those that did not believe according to their own will and pleasure. (Al 4:8)

- We will either marry or give birth to our greatest challenges ... and teachers.
- Marriage and church are schools of love where we learn, practice, and are tested on our ability to love people who are different than us.
- Marriage and church are to perfect us. They are not rest homes for the perfect.

The images below illustrate pride and humility. See lesson 21 for more on pride and how these images relate.

<p>“The central feature of <i>pride</i> is <i>enmity</i> [hatred] ... toward God and ... our fellowmen.” (ETB)</p>	<p>The central feature of <i>humility</i> is <i>love</i> toward God and our fellowmen.</p>

9. How do the thoughts, words, works (deeds) differ?

	Proud	Humble
Pharisee or publican	judge others	seek forgiveness
Rich or poor		
Athlete or not		
Smart or not		
Talented or not		
Old or young		
Member or not		
Active or inactive		
Teacher or hearer		

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus ..., God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. ¹² I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. ¹³ And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other ... (Lk 18:11-14)

Each type of person above can be proud because he has reasons to believe (a) he does not need God, and (b) he is better than others and can look down on or mistreat them. Each person can be humble and seek to know how God wants him to use his gifts or talents to help others, not hurt them.

10. How to “gratify our pride, our vain ambition” (D&C 121:37)

- Not pray or read scriptures daily.
- Find fault with others:
Joseph: “The devil flatters us that we are very righteous, when we are feeding on the faults of others.” (TPJS, 41)
- Make fun of others. (“Put down humor,” name calling)
- Look down on, mock, scorn, or pick on others.
- Provoke others to anger. (Top 10 ways)
 Hurt people hurt people.
 Spouses, roommates, and friends usually know each other so well that they can list the top 10 things that provoke or make the other angry. They often do things on the list that they know will provoke the other to anger. They justify doing so because of what the other did or did not do to deserve it. They believe and act as if it is OK to hurt those who hurt you.
- Pat ourselves on the back. Like the Pharisee.

11. Could the Book of Mormon have been written by a 23 year-old American in the 1820s?

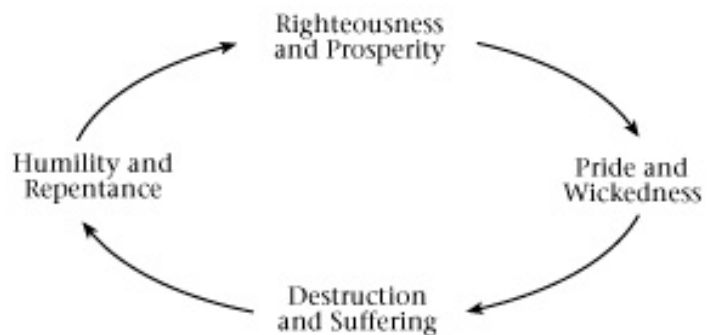
- Jesus would be born “at Jerusalem ... the land of our fathers” (Alma 7:10). Bethlehem was in the “land of Jerusalem.”
- Joseph did not have any experience with religious or secular lawyers when he described them so well in the Book of Mormon.
- Weights and measures: “Joseph Smith would have been hard pressed to produce on his own such an elegant, complex, yet practical system of measures, conforming so well with ancient realia.” (Welch)

Conclusion

Leave enough time for conclusion!

Like the people of the church in Alma’s time, we as a people become humble before God after times of affliction, war, and the death of loved ones. This happened after 9/11 when the Twin Towers collapsed. Afflictions stir people up to a remembrance of their duties to love God and neighbor.

After a few years when things get back to normal, many people forget God, become proud, and begin to look down on and mistreat others. Some people refer to this as the pride cycle.



As in Alma’s times, prophets invite and entice us to be humble in times of prosperity as well as prosperity instead of just being “fair weather saints.” To become like Christ who suffered afflictions, temptations, sickness and death that he might know how to help others, we too will experience similar things to help us learn how to help others during times of affliction.

Read Neal A. Maxwell quote below

Quotes

Neal A. Maxwell: How can you and I really expect to glide naively through life, as if to say, Lord, give me experience, but not grief, not sorrow, not pain, not opposition, not betrayal, and certainly not to be forsaken. Keep from me, Lord, all those experiences which made Thee what Thou art! Then let me come and dwell with Thee and fully share Thy joy! (Ensign, May 1991)

- Marriage and church are schools of love where we learn, practice, and are tested on our ability to love people who are different than us.
- Marriage and church are to perfect us. They are not rest homes for the perfect.

NOTE: The yellow shading shows what is NOT on the handout that I use in class. The handout makes it possible to share information while only briefly referring to it in class. The handout and any other supplements for the lesson are at www.sviewp.com.

Sources:

- Welch = John Welch, "Weighing and Measuring in the Worlds of the Book of Mormon", <http://maxwellinstitute.byu.edu>
- R. Smith = Robert F. Smith, "The Land of Jerusalem: The Place of Jesus' Birth," *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, <http://mi.byu.edu>.
- ETB = Ezra Taft Benson, "Beware of Pride," *Ensign*, May 1989, see lesson supplement at www.sviewp.com
- DFU = Dieter F. Uchtdorf, "Pride and the Priesthood," *Ensign*, Nov 2010, see lesson supplement at www.sviewp.com

GENERAL

- BMRC = Dennis L. Largey, *Book of Mormon Reference Companion*.
- TBM = Hugh Nibley, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon*, 4 vols.
- OM = Original Manuscript
- PM = Printer's Manuscript
- LDS View = This computer program with the scriptures in 11 languages was previously sold in the Church Distribution Center as *Scriptures on CDM*. It can now be downloaded with the scriptures in up to 30 languages (<http://ldsview.byu.edu>). At <http://WordCruncher.com>, you can download WordCruncher and Webster's 1844 Dictionary (2nd Edition). If LDS View was downloaded first, WordCruncher will let you see the English scriptures and when you click on an English word, you can see Webster's 1844 definition.
- Other Bible Translations are at <http://www.blueletterbible.org/>

BAJA model

- Baja = www.achoiceland.com

MESOAMERICAN model

- Sorenson = John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*.
- *Reexploring* = John W. Welch, ed., *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, <http://mi.byu.edu>
- Poulsen = homegeography.poulsenll.org/bomdirections.html

Hebraisms

- Par-Heb = Donald W. Parry, "Hebraisms and Other Ancient Peculiarities," <http://mi.byu.edu>
- Tved-Heb = John Tvedtnes, "The Hebrew Background of the Book of Mormon," chapter 8 in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*; <http://mi.byu.edu>

Other sources

- BD = *Bible Dictionary* (in English LDS Scriptures).
- GS = *Guide to the Scriptures* (in electronic LDS Scriptures)
- I-BofM = New Testament Institute manual, *The Life and Teachings of Jesus & his Apostles*, institute.lds.org
- KJV King James Version of the Bible.
- NIV = New International Version of the Bible
- TPJS = *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*
- SOED = Shorter Oxford English Dictionary
- OED = Oxford English Dictionary
- BDB = *Brown, Driver, Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*

- Bauer = Walter Bauer, *Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament*
- EJ = *Encyclopedia Judaica*
- Rona = Daniel Rona, www.israelrevealed.com/comp-sup-r.htm.
- MM = Meridian Magazine, Gospel Doctrine, www.ldsmag.com
- beardall2000.com/gospdoct.shtml;
- www.gospeldoctrine.com