

Alma 17–22: Ammon and Lamoni

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Quotes

- Some of God's greatest blessings come wrapped as undesirable problems.
- You're the answer to my prayers ... not quite what I prayed for, but nevertheless, the answer.
- The gospel is not insurance against pain and suffering. The gospel is a resource to help us in times of pain and suffering.
- Discouragement is like a new baby. The more you nurse it the more it grows.
- Love may be blind, ... but marriage is a real eye-opener.

1. How long were Alma and Amulek in prison?

- **7/04/10**—Amulek saw an angel
- Alma stayed “many days” with Amulek
- Alma and Amulek taught people
- Male believers stoned and cast out. They went to Sidom.
- Their women and children cast into fire and died.

To the wicked, the death of believers was proof that Alma had no power to save them.

Were Amulek's wife and children killed in the fire?

Why didn't Alma save the believers?

- Alma and Amulek put in prison and questioned after 3 days **3 months and 8 days after Angel**
- **10/12/10**—After they had suffered “for many days,” a quake freed them and killed chief judge, lawyers, priests, teachers.
- Alma and Amulek went to Sidom.
- Zeezrom healed and joined them. **Zeezrom's family killed in fire?**
- **2/05/11**—Ammonihah destroyed in one day **(4 months later)**

2. Ammon and his brothers return from their mission

² Alma did rejoice exceedingly to see his brethren. ... They had waxed strong in the knowledge of the truth; for they were men of a sound understanding and they had searched the scriptures diligently, that they might know the word of God. ³ ... They had given themselves to much prayer, and fasting; therefore they had the spirit of prophecy, and the spirit of revelation, and when they taught, they taught with power and authority of God. ⁴ And they had been teaching the word of God for the space of fourteen years among the Lamanites, ... yea, by the power of their words many were brought before the altar of God, to call on his name and confess their sins before him. (Alma 17:2–4)

3. Ammon and his brothers start their mission

⁹ They journeyed many days in the wilderness, and they fasted much and prayed much that the Lord would grant unto them a portion of his Spirit to go with them, and abide with them, that they might be an instrument in the hands of God to bring, if it were possible, their brethren, the Lamanites, to the knowledge of the truth, to the knowledge of the baseness of the traditions of their fathers, which were not correct. ... ¹⁰ And ... the Lord did visit them with his Spirit, and said ... Be comforted. ... ¹¹ Be patient in long-suffering and afflictions, that ye may show forth good examples unto them in me, and I will make an instrument of thee in my hands unto the salvation of many souls. (17:9–11)

Later we find out more about why the Lord visited them here.

²⁷ Now when our hearts were depressed, and we were about to turn back, behold, the Lord comforted us, and said: Go amongst thy brethren, the Lamanites, and bear with patience thine afflictions, and I will give unto you success. (26:27)

¹⁴ They had undertaken to preach the word of God to a wild and a hardened and a ferocious people; a people who delighted in murdering the Nephites, and robbing and plundering them; and their hearts were set upon riches, ... yet they sought to obtain these things by murdering and plundering, that they might not labor for them with their own hands. ¹⁵ Thus they were a very indolent people, many of whom did worship idols. (17:14–15)

¹⁸ Ammon being the chief among them, or rather he did administer unto them, and he departed ... after having blessed them ..., having imparted the word of God unto them, or administered unto them. (17:18)

Since white out was not available, corrections or clarifications may have been introduced with “in other words,” “or rather,” or similar phrases.

4. What was Ammon's “door approach” to king Lamoni? (17:22–25)

²² The king inquired of Ammon if it were his desire to dwell ... among his people. ²³ And Ammon said unto him: Yea, I desire to dwell among this people for a time; yea, and perhaps until the day I die. ²⁴ ... King Lamoni was much pleased with Ammon, and caused that his bands should be loosed; and he would that Ammon should take one of his daughters to wife. ²⁵ But Ammon said unto him: Nay, but I will be thy servant. (17:22–25)

5. Ammon and the scattering of the king's flocks?

²⁷ Lamanites ... scattered the flocks. ... ²⁸ Now the servants of the king began to murmur, saying: Now the king will slay us, as he has our brethren because their flocks were scattered by the wickedness of these men. And they began to weep exceedingly. ... ²⁹ When Ammon saw this his heart was swollen within him with joy; for, said he, I will show forth ... the power which is in me, in restoring these flocks unto the king, that I may win the hearts of these my fellow-servants, that I may lead them to believe in my words. ... ³¹ He flattered them by his words, saying: My brethren, be of good cheer and let us go in search of the flocks, and we will gather them together and bring them back unto the place of water; and thus we will preserve the flocks unto the king and he will not slay us. (17:27–31)

Spanish for “flattered” in verse 31: Ammon “los alentó” which means he “encouraged.”

OED *flatter*: **7. a.** To encourage or cheer (a person) with hopeful or pleasing representations; to inspire with hope, usually on insufficient grounds. Also, To foster (hopes).

In TV English, flatter usually refers to excessive and insincere compliments to get something you want.

In the Book of Mormon, flattery was usually done by Satan and his followers (e.g., Sherem, Noah's priests, Korihor, Amalickiah, Gadianton). Korihor taught Satan's words because they “were pleasing unto the carnal mind” (30:53). Perhaps the Book of Mormon definition of *flatter* might be to say things “pleasing to the carnal mind.” In Ammon's case, “he will not slay us” is “pleasing to the carnal mind.”

6. How did Ammon defend the flocks?

- Cast stones with his sling. Killed 6
- Sword cut off arms of those who raised their clubs
- Sword killed leader

7. What report did the servants give king Lamoni?

- Showed him the arms as a testimony
- We don't know if he is the Great Spirit or a man.
- "He cannot be slain by the enemies of the king"
- "We know he is a friend to the king"

8. Where was Ammon during the report?

⁹ Feeding the horses and preparing the chariots. (18:9)

Lamoni: "There has not been any servant ... that has been so faithful as this man; for ... he doth remember all my commandments to execute them." (18:10)

9. What happened when Ammon saw king Lamoni?

- Nothing for a long time
- Ammon knew his thoughts
- Lamoni asks if he is the Great Spirit
- Lamoni offers to give Ammon what he wants

²² Ammon being wise, yet harmless, he said unto Lamoni: Wilt thou hearken unto my words, if I tell thee by what power I do these things? ... ²³ And the king answered him, and said: Yea, I will believe all thy words. And thus he was caught with guile. (18:22–23)

Christ to 12 apostles: I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. (Mt 10:16)

SOED *guile*: 1. Insidious cunning, deceit, treachery; 2. A deceit, stratagem, wile, trick.

10. What was the outline of Ammon's first discussion?

To king and his servants.

- Do you believe there is a God? (Great Spirit)
- Do you believe God created heaven and earth?
- He began at the creation of the world,
- the creation of Adam, and the fall of man,
- rehearsed and laid before him the records and the holy scriptures of the people, (brass plates)
- rehearsed all the journeyings of their fathers in the wilderness, and the rebellions of Laman and Lemuel,
- expounded all the Nephite records and scriptures
- the plan of redemption, and the coming of Christ,
- all the works of the Lord did he make known unto them.

11. How did king Lamoni receive Ammon's message?

- Prayed for mercy,
- Fell to the earth as if dead
- Lay as if dead for the space of two days and two nights
- Wife asks Ammon what to do. Bury him?
- Wife said, "to me he doth not stink."
- Arose on the third day.

12. What happened to Lamoni while he was out?

⁶ Lamoni was under the power of God; he knew that the dark veil of unbelief was being cast away from his mind, and the light which did light up his mind, which was the light of the glory of God, which was a marvelous light of his goodness—yea, this light had infused such joy into his soul, the cloud of darkness having been dispelled, and that the light of everlasting life was lit up in his soul, yea, he knew that this had overcome his natural frame, and he was carried away in God. (19:6) "Light" is used 6 times

13. What did Lamoni say happened? Then what?

- "I have seen my Redeemer; and he shall come forth, and be born of a woman, and he shall redeem all mankind who believe on his name."
- Lamoni, queen, Ammon, and servants fell to the earth.

14. What happened when Abish gathered a crowd to see?

- Abish (a Lamanite Christian) gathers people
- Brother of thief leader tries to kill Ammon, falls dead
- Arguing. Is Ammon the great spirit or a monster.
- Queen, Lamoni, servants, and Ammon teach crowd
³³ Their hearts had been changed; that they had no more desire to do evil. ³⁴ ... They had seen angels and had conversed with them; and thus they had told them things of God, and of his righteousness. (19:33–34)

"The Spirit of the Lord Omnipotent ... has wrought a mighty change ... in our hearts, that we have no more disposition to do evil, but to do good continually (Mosiah 5:2).

15. How did the crowd respond?

³¹ As many as heard his words believed, and were converted unto the Lord. ³² But there were many among them who would not hear his words; therefore they went their way. ... ³⁵ As many as did believe were baptized; and they became a righteous people, and they did establish a church among them. (19:31–35)

16. What happened when Ammon wanted to get brothers out of prison?

- Lamoni goes with Ammon
- Meets Lamoni's father who calls Ammon a child of a liar
- Lamoni refuses to obey father's command to kill Ammon
- Ammon smites the father's arm but does not cut it off.

Missionary rule: Do not cut off the arms of your investigators.

17. What does Ammon want from the Lamoni's father?

- Brothers out of prison
- Lamoni keep kingdom and govern freely

18. What was his response to Ammon's request?

- Rejoiced for his life
- Saw Ammon had no desire to kill him (king had wanted to kill Ammon)
- Saw great love Ammon had for his son
- Granted request
- Asked Ammon to come see him (wanted to know more)

19. Aaron went to Jerusalem to teach Amalekites and the people of Amulon. What were their beliefs?

- Nephite blood, but Lamanite politics
- Religion of Nehor
- Build sanctuaries and assemble to worship God
- God will save all men
- Not believe foolish traditions about Christ
- Not know things to come
- Angry with Aaron, mocked him,

20. What did Aaron do after getting out of prison?

¹⁶ They went forth whithersoever they were led by the Spirit of the Lord, preaching the word of God in every synagogue of the Amalekites. ... ¹⁷ The Lord began to bless them, insomuch that they brought many to the knowledge of the truth; yea, they did convince many of their sins, and of the traditions of their fathers, which were not correct. (21:16–17)

21. Amalekites and Amulonites

¹⁴ The Amalekites were not converted, save only one; neither were any of the Amulonites; but they did harden their hearts, and also the hearts of the Lamanites. (23:14)

Jerusalem was a Lamanite city, built by Amulonites and Amalekites. It was destroyed at the time of Christ's death. The Lord said, "Waters have I caused to come up in the stead thereof to hide their wickedness and abominations from before my face, that the blood of the prophets and the saints shall not come up any more unto me against them" (3 Ne. 9:7).

22. How did Aaron approach and teach Lamoni's father?

- Aaron was led by the spirit to Lamoni's father
- Aaron offers to be his servant as Ammon had done to Lamoni
- Teaches a first discussion like Ammon's to Lamoni

23. What was the prayer of Lamoni's father?

¹⁸ O God, Aaron hath told me that there is a God; and if there is a God, and if thou art God, wilt thou make thyself known unto me, and I will give away all my sins to know thee, and that I may be raised from the dead, and be saved at the last day. (22:18)

- He was struck as if he were dead.
- Queen told servants to kill Aaron. Afraid
- Aaron lifts king
- Proclamation: Sons of Mosiah free to teach

Agnostic

Moroni's Promise, by Glenn Pearson, p. 43-46

"Frank graduated in philosophy. He said that after a couple of years in philosophy he had lost his faith in all Christianity. He told me he was an agnostic not an atheist.

Frank, you believe in the scientific method, don't you?

Yes. I now think it is the only method of discovering truth.

A fundamental aspect of the scientific method is experimentation, isn't it?

Yes.

If I could show you an experiment you could perform to find out if the Bible is true and that Christ is divine, would you perform it?

I certainly would; but I find it hard to believe that such an experiment exists.

I proceeded to explain the coming forth and translation of the Book of Mormon. Frank, kept asking me to explain the experiment he was supposed to perform to restore his faith in the Bible and Christ.

In the last chapter of the Book of Mormon there is a promise....

Will you perform this experiment?

No.

Why not? (alarmed and disappointed)

Because I cannot live up to the conditions of the experiment.

It says here that I must have faith in Christ and I do not have any faith in Christ.

I had never seen what Frank saw the first time he read it. I started praying to know what to say. Suddenly the Spirit gave me the location of a scripture in Alma about Aaron got the king to pray in the following manner.

"O God, Aaron hath told me that there is a God; and if there is a God, and if thou art God, wilt thou make thyself known unto me, and I will give away all my sins to know thee, and that I may be raised from the dead, and be saved at the last

day. And now when the king had said these words, he was struck as if he were dead." (Alma 22:18)

After I told Frank the story and read this verse, I said, "Frank, is there any reason why you couldn't pray like that king? Could you get on your knees and say, 'O God, if there is a God; Glenn has told me that there is a God and that thou art God...' And then tell him anything you wish to tell him and ask him anything you wish. Is there any reason you can't pray that way?"

No.

Well, will you do it?:

Yes, I will.

I promise you, Frank, that if you do, you will learn that the Book of Mormon is true, and then you will know that the Bible is true and Christ is the divine Son of God.

Frank was transferred. He wrote and told me that when he prayed, the Lord revealed to him that Christ was divine. He then asked if the Book of Mormon was true and the Lord revealed to him that it was. He said he had found some Mormons in his new camp, that he was attending their meetings, and that they were arranging his baptism.

Conclusion

Leave enough time for conclusion!

Like missionaries today, the sons of Mosiah had great desires to share the gospel as prompted by the Spirit (Mosiah 28:1–4). However, it was not easy. They experienced trials of their faith. At the start of their missions, they were depressed and about to turn back when the Lord comforted them and told them to “be patient in ... afflictions ... [and be] good examples.” Their afflictions included prison, mistreatment, rejection, mockery, threats, and possible death when the sheep were stolen or when weapons were used against them.

Read underlined parts of Henry B. Eyring quote

In our efforts to be missionaries, we may need to follow Ammon’s example by preparing people through service and good examples before we try to teach them. Their missions were not the easiest 14 years of their lives. However, they became more Christlike as they sought to know and do God’s will even when times were tough. Their good examples, love, and service helped prepare people to hear the gospel and receive a witness from God of its truthfulness.

The father of Lamoni said, “I will give up all that I possess, yea, I will forsake my kingdom, that I may receive this great joy.” When Aaron said he only needed to bow before God and repent, he said in prayer, “I will give away all my sins to know thee, and that I may be raised from the dead, and be saved at the last day.” (22:15, 18)

Read underlined parts of Neal A. Maxwell quote

As we read the other quotes, think how Ammon and his brothers were examples of these ideas.

Read “Other quotes exemplified ...”

As we seek to know and do God’s will each day, the Spirit will comfort us in our afflictions and guide our efforts to help members and non-members come nearer to God by making, understanding, and keeping covenants.

Quotes

Henry B. Eyring: I am struck by the way [Ammon] taught. ... Ammon prepared himself, but he did more. He prepared his student to be taught the doctrines of salvation. ... Now, remember that he not only protected the servants and the animals at the waters of Sebus, but he drove off the enemy. When the other servants brought the evidence of what Ammon had done, King Lamoni said, “Where is he?” They said, “Oh, he is in the stables. He is doing every little thing to serve you” (see Alma 18:8-9).

Isn’t that odd? He was called to teach the doctrines of salvation, but he was in the stables. Don’t you think he should have been praying and fasting and polishing his teaching plan? No, he was in the stables. (“The Book of Mormon Will Change Your Life,” *Ensign*, Feb. 2004, 13)

Neal A. Maxwell: The submission of one’s will is placing on God’s altar the only uniquely personal thing one has to place there. The many other things we ‘give’ are actually the things He has already given or loaned to us. However, when we finally submit ourselves by letting our individual wills be swallowed up in God’s will, we will really be giving something to Him! It is the only possession which is truly ours to give. Consecration thus constitutes the only unconditional surrender which is also a total victory. (*If Thou Endure It Well*, 44-55)

Other quotes exemplified by the Sons of Mosiah

- We get nearer to God not by traveling, but by loving and serving His children as we seek to know and do His will.
- Service is love in work clothes.
- Preach the gospel always, but use words only if necessary!
- I destroy my enemies when I make them my friends.
- ⁴⁴ Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you and persecute you; ⁴⁵ That ye may be the children of your Father who is in heaven (3 Ne 12:44–45; Mt 5:44–45).

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:

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 = bomgeography.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