



25. Alma² and the Nephite Reformation I

Alma 4-9

“And now behold, I ask of you, my brethren of the church, have ye spiritually been born of God? Have ye received his image in your countenances? Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts? . . . And now behold, I say unto you, my brethren, if ye have experienced a change of heart, and if ye have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, I would ask, can ye feel so now?” (5:14, 26)

“Come, We That Love the Lord” (Hymn 119)

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| 1. Come, we that love the Lord,
And let our joys be known.
Join in a song with sweet accord,
And worship at his throne. | 3. The God who rules on high,
And all the earth surveys
Who rides upon the stormy sky
And calms the roaring seas-- |
| 2. Let those refuse to sing
Who never knew our God,
But servants of the heav'nly King
May speak their joys abroad. | 4. This mighty God is ours,
Our Father and our Love.
He will send down his heav'nly pow'rs
To carry us above. |

Alma² and the Nephite Reformation (4:6–16:21)

- Pride afflicts the church (narrative, 4:6–10)
- Alma resigns the chief judgeship to preach (4:11–20)
- The Missions of Alma the younger (5:1–16:21)
 - First Mission: **Zarahemla** (5:1–6:6)
 - Sermon at Zarahemla (5:1–61)
 - Second Mission: **Gideon** (6:7–7:27)
 - Sermon at Gideon (7:1–27)
 - Third Mission: **Melek** (8:1–5; Mormon's summary)
 - Fourth Mission: **Ammonihah** (8:6–15:2)
 - Mormon quotes sermons about important doctrines in the midst of his narrative abridgment of this mission
 - Fifth Mission **Sidom** (15:1–19)
- Renewed Lamanite War (16:1–12)
- Alma and Amulek preach the gospel throughout the land (16:13–21)

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Alma Resigns the Chief Judgeship to Preach (4:11-20)

- The Problem
 - “ And it came to pass in the commencement of the ninth year, Alma saw the wickedness of the church, and he saw also that **the example of the church began to lead those who were unbelievers on from one piece of iniquity to another, thus bringing on the destruction of the people . . .** And now it came to pass that Alma, having seen **the afflictions of the humble followers of God, and the persecutions which were heaped upon them by the remainder of his people,** and seeing all their inequality, began to be very sorrowful; nevertheless the Spirit of the Lord did not fail him.” (Alma 4:11–15)
- An elder of the church, Nephiah, takes the chief judge's “seat”
 - “And **this [Alma] did that he himself might go forth among his people, or among the people of Nephi, that he might preach the word of God unto them,** to stir them up in remembrance of their duty . . . seeing no way that he might reclaim them save it were in bearing down in pure testimony against them.” (4:19)
 - Headnote to Alma's sermons: “*The words which Alma, the High Priest according to the holy order of God, delivered to the people in their cities and villages throughout the land.*”

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First Mission: Zarahemla

- **Sermon** at Zarahemla (5:1-61)
 - The Example of Their Fathers' Deliverance (5:1–13)
 - Call to Spiritual Deliverance (5:14–42)
 - All must Be Born of God (5:14-25)
 - The Need for Continued Change of Heart (5:26-32)
 - Hearken to the Call of the Good Shepherd (5:33-42)
 - Alma's Testimony (5:44–56)
 - His Call as a Witness (5:44–49)
 - The Coming of the Son of God, the King, is at Hand (5:50-52)
 - The Wicked Will Be Destroyed (5:53–56)
 - Final Plea: Follow the Good Shepherd (5:57–61)
- Reform of the church at Zarahemla (6:1-6, **abridged narrative**)

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Call to Spiritual Deliverance (5:14–42)

- All must be born of God (5:14-25)
 - “And now behold, I ask of you, my brethren of the church, **have ye spiritually been born of God?** Have ye received his image in your countenances? Have ye experienced this mighty change in your hearts?” (5:14)
 - Not all “members of the church” are always truly converted!
- The need for continued change of heart (5:26-32)
 - “And now behold, I say unto you, my brethren, **if ye have experienced a change of heart, and if ye have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, I would ask, can ye feel so now?**” (5:26)
 - “Have ye walked, keeping yourself blameless before God . . .” (5:27-32)
 - Been humble, cleansed through Christ’s blood, stripped of pride, avoid mocking ones brother?
 - Repentance must continue

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Alma's Testimony (5:44–56)

- ***“For I am called to speak after this manner, according to the holy order of God, which is in Christ Jesus; yea, I am commanded to stand and testify unto this people the things which have been spoken by our fathers concerning the things which are to come . . . And how do ye suppose that I know of their surety? Behold, I say unto you they are made known unto me by the Holy Spirit of God. Behold, I have fasted and prayed many days that I might know these things of myself. And now I do know of myself that they are true; for the Lord God hath made them manifest unto me by his Holy Spirit; and this is the spirit of revelation which is in me.”*** (5:44–46)
- ***“ . . . I know that Jesus Christ shall come, yea, the Son, the Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace, and mercy, and truth. And behold, it is he that cometh to take away the sins of the world, yea, the sins of every man who steadfastly believeth on his name.”*** (5:48b)

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Second Mission: Gideon (6:7–7:27)

- Headnote to Alma's Gideon sermon: *“The words of Alma which he delivered to the people in Gideon, according to his own record.”*
- Alma Travels to Gideon (6:7–8, **narrative transition report**)
 - A city and land named after the patriot-martyr Gideon
- **Sermon** at Gideon (7:1–27)
 - The Righteous Condition of the Church at Gideon (7:1–6)
 - **Alma Testifies of Christ (7:7–13)**
 - *Unlike Zarahemla, the spiritual preparation of the church at Gideon allows Alma to reveal further truth about Christ*
 - The Necessity of Repentance and Baptism (7:14–16)
 - Alma's Hopes Fulfilled in Gideon (7:17–21)
 - Concluding Exhortation and Blessing (7:22–27)

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Alma Testifies of Christ (7:7–13)



- “And behold, he shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers, she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel, who shall be overshadowed and **conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost, and bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God.**” (7:10)
 - All the necessary and important details of the Nativity accounts (compare Matthew and Luke, which differ on unimportant details)

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Jesus’ Atonement (Alma 7:11-13)

- “And he shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind . . . **he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people.** 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, according to the flesh, **that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities.**
- “Now the Spirit knoweth all things; nevertheless the Son of God suffereth according to the flesh **that he might take upon him the sins of his people, that he might blot out their transgressions according to the power of his deliverance;** and now behold, this is the testimony which is in me.”

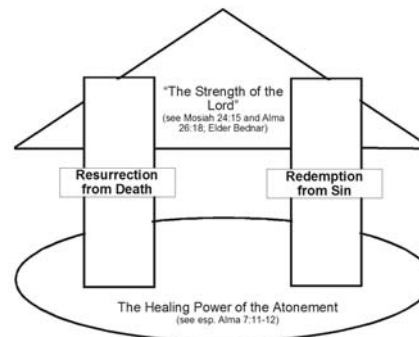
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The Breadth of Atonement

- **Redemption from the power of sin**
- **Resurrection from death**
- **Healing from infirmities, sicknesses, pains, sorrows, heartache**
- Enabling power to do good works
 - “The Atonement is not only for people who have done bad things and are trying to be good. It is for good people who are trying to become better and serve faithfully and who yearn for an ongoing and mighty change of heart.” (David A. Bednar, BYU Speeches Oct 2001, 8)



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Third Mission: Melek (8:1–5; Mormon’s summary)

- Alma’s teaching “according to the holy order of God” leads people throughout all the land to be baptized
- *That’s it!*

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Fourth Mission: Ammonihah (8:6–15:2)

- Mormon quotes **sermons** about important doctrines in the midst of his **narrative abridgment** of this mission
- Narrative Introduction
 - Alma Initially Rejected by the People of Ammonihah (8:6–13)
 - Alma Directed to Return Again to Ammonihah (8:14–18)
 - Meets Amulek, Who Becomes His Missionary Companion (8:19–32)
- Sermons to the Ammonihahites (9:1–13:31; next lecture)
 - *Headnote: “The words of Alma, and also the words of Amulek, which were declared unto the people who were in the land of Ammonihah. And also they are cast into prison, and delivered by the miraculous power of God, which was in them according to the record of Alma.”*