



## Show Notes & Transcripts

### Podcast General Description:

Follow Him: A *Come, Follow Me* Podcast with Hank Smith & John Bytheway

Do you ever feel that preparing for your weekly *Come, Follow Me* lesson falls short? Join hosts Hank Smith and John Bytheway as they interview experts to make your study for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' *Come, Follow Me* course not only enjoyable but original and educational. If you are looking for resources to make your study fresh, faithful, and fun--no matter your age--then join us every Wednesday.

### Podcast Episode Descriptions

#### Part 1:

How can we teach the hard hearted? According to Dr. Daniel Sharp, Alma and Amulek proclaim the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the wicked in Ammonihah while teaching the power of prayer, missionary work, and the reality of angels.

#### Part 2:

In this powerful testimony of the plan of redemption, Daniel Sharp dispels Nehor's doctrine and explains Alma and Amulek's understanding of Jesus Christ's Atonement.

# Timecodes:

## Part 1

- 00:00 Part I - Dr. Daniel Sharp
- 01:40 Introduction of Dr. Sharp
- 06:30 What to look forward to
- 08:51 God raises up friends
- 11:28 The Joseph Smith Papers and Webster's 1828 Dictionary
- 14:33 Alma 8:1-2 - Alma's role and the order of the church
- 18:38 More than one way to be a believer
- 20:49 Alma 8:3-5 - Success in Melek
- 22:04 Alma 8:6-15 - Ammonihah and Alma's efforts
- 25:10 A lesson about God's timing
- 30:07 A missionary's focus
- 32:45 Dr. Sharp shares a personal story about missionary goals
- 39:04 Nehor and the evils of Ammonihah
- 40:10 Alma 16:11 - The Desolation of Nehors
- 42:28 Alma 15:15 - Traits of the followers of Nehor
- 43:24 Alma 8:13 - An angel commands Alma
- 46:14 Zeezrom doesn't question angelic visits
- 47:58 Alma 8:19-32 - Alma is fed by Amulek
- 50:00 Alma 10:4-6 Amulek introduces himself
- 51:37 Alma 10 and 11 - Amulek's first talks
- 52:51 Dr. Sharp shares why he decided to serve a mission as a new member
- 54:10 Alma 10:6 - Living below our privileges
- 57:06 Alma 9:1 - Alma and Amulek return to Ammonihah
- 59:26 Alma 9:12 - Alma preaches the gospel and warns Ammonihah
- 1:02:51 Alma 9:30 - Harsh language
- 1:04:56 Alma 10 and 11 - a perfect junior companion
- 1:06:45 Testimonies and two witnesses
- 1:09:38 End of Part 1 - Dr. Daniel Sharp

## Part 2

- 00:00 Part II—Dr. Daniel Sharp
- 00:07 Law of witnesses
- 03:38 Alma 10:17-23 - Alma bears testimony
- 04:46 Alma 10:24-26 - Prayers of the righteous
- 07:32 Alma 10:30-Alma 11:20 - Zeezrom
- 10:18 The plan of redemption and role of Christ
- 12:11 Alma 11:26-29 - True and living God
- 14:02 Jeremiah 10:10 - Jehovah of the Old Testament
- 19:05 Alma 11:30-33 - Angelic visits and debating Jehovah
- 24:10 Alma 11:38 Jesus and the Father

- 26:52 Alma 11:44 - Jesus's titles
- 29:50 Webster's 1828 Dictionary and redemption
- 35:04 Alma and the sons of Mosiah use plan of redemption
- 37:16 Helaman 14-15-19 - Samuel the Lamanite's understanding of the plan
- 43:49 Alma 11:30 - Jesus as Redeemer
- 45:00 Alma 12 - Alma refutes the doctrine of Nehor
- 49:00 Alma 12:25 - Resurrection is essential
- 51:41 Alma 12:32-41 - Context for the plan of happiness
- 54:51 Dr. Sharp shares his testimony of Jesus Christ
- 58:54 End of Part II– Dr. Daniel Sharp

## References:

“Amulek Receives Alma into His Home: Alma 8.” Book of Mormon Videos - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Accessed June 10, 2024.

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/video/2020-03-0520-amulek-receives-alma-into-his-home-alma-8?lang=eng>

Anderson, Donald B., and Tyler Griffin. “The Great Plan of Happiness: A Christ-Centered Visual Approach.” The Great Plan of Happiness: A Christ-Centered Visual Approach . Accessed June 10, 2024. <https://rsc.byu.edu/vol-18-no-1-2017/great-plan-happiness-christ-centered-visual-approach>

Bowen, Matthew L., and Daniel B. Sharp. “Scripture Note-“For This Cause Did King Benjamin Keep Them”: King Benjamin or King Mosiah?: .” RSC. Accessed June 10, 2024. <https://rsc.byu.edu/vol-18-no-1-2017/scripture-note-cause-did-king-benjamin-keep-them-king-benjamin-king-mosiah>

Brown, S. Kent. “Ammonihah: Measuring Mormon’s Purposes.” RSC. Accessed June 10, 2024. <https://rsc.byu.edu/witness-restoration/ammonihah-measuring-mormons-purposes>

Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “The Great Plan of Happiness.” Teaching Seminary: Preservice Readings - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, January 1, 2004. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/teaching-seminary-preservice-readings-religion-370-471-and-475/the-great-plan-of-happiness?lang=eng>

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Timing.” Homepage - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 1, 2003. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/liahona/2003/10/timing?lang=eng>

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “David A. Bednar on Instagram: “What Does It Mean That the Restoration of The Church of Jesus Christ Is Ongoing?”” Instagram. Accessed June 10, 2024. <https://www.instagram.com/davidabednar/reel/CuerhIitN8R/>

Elder Dieter F. Uchtdorf of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Missionary With Work: Sharing What Is in Your Heart.” Homepage - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 1,

2019. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2019/04/14uchtdorf.title5-p52?lang=eng#title5>

Elder Gary E. Stevenson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Love, Share, Invite.” General Conference - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 3, 2022. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2022/04/43stevenson?lang=eng>

Elder LeGrand R. Curtis Jr. General Authority Seventy and Church Historian and Recorder. “The Ongoing Restoration.” Homepage - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 1, 2020. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/ensign/2020/04/the-ongoing-restoration?lang=eng>

Elder Patrick Kearon of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “God’s Intent Is to Bring You Home.” General Conference- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 7, 2024. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2024/04/45kearon?lang=eng>

“History of the Scriptures.” About the Scriptures - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, January 1, 2020. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/about-the-scriptures/history?lang=eng>

“The Joseph Smith Papers.” josephsmithpapers.org. Accessed June 10, 2024. <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/>

“June 17–23: ‘Jesus Christ Will Come to Redeem His People.’ Alma 8–12.” June 17–23: “Jesus Christ Will Come to Redeem His People.,” January 1, 2023. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/manual/come-follow-me-for-home-and-church-book-of-mormon-2024/25?lang=eng>

Largey, Dennis. “Book of Mormon Reference Companion .” Deseret Book: Books, DVDs, Music, Art & more for LDS Families - Deseret Book. Accessed June 10, 2024. <https://www.deseretbook.com/product/P3294022.html>

Matthews, Robert J. “The Probationary Nature of Mortality.” The Probationary Nature of Mortality . Accessed June 10, 2024. <https://rsc.byu.edu/book-mormon-alma-testimony-word/probationary-nature-mortality>

President Dallin H. Oaks First Counselor in the First Presidency. “Kingdoms of Glory.” General Conference - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 30, 2023. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2023/10/17oaks?lang=eng>

President Dallin H. Oaks First Counselor in the First Presidency. “The Great Plan.” General Conference- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 5, 2020. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2020/04/51oaks?lang=eng>

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf Second Counselor in the First Presidency. “It Works Wonderfully!” General Conference - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 2, 2015.

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2015/10/it-works-wonderfully?lang=eng>

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf Second Counselor in the First Presidency. “Your Potential, Your Privilege.” Homepage - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, April 2, 2011.

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2011/04/your-potential-your-privilege?lang=eng>

President Ezra Taft Benson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. “Jesus Christ-Gifts and Expectations.” BYU Speeches, February 19, 2024. <https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/ezra-taft-benson/jesus-christ-gifts-expectations/>

President Russell M. Nelson President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. “The Everlasting Covenant.” General Conference - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 1, 2022. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/liahona/2022/10/04-the-everlasting-covenant?lang=eng>

Sharp, Daniel B. “Justice, Mercy and the Atonement in the Teachings of Alma to Corianton.” RSC. Accessed June 10, 2024. <https://rsc.byu.edu/give-ear-my-words/justice-mercy-atonement-teachings-alma-corianton>

Sister Wendy Watson Nelson, and President Russell M. Nelson of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. “Keep on the Covenant Path!” President and Sister Nelson’s Devotional for Youth - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, March 1, 2019.

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/new-era/2019/03/president-and-sister-nelsons-devotional-for-youth/keep-on-the-covenant-path?lang=eng>

Spencer, Joseph. “The Structure of the Book of Alma.” Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, Volume 26, Number 1, 2017.

<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1609&context=jbms>

Taylor, John. “The Temple at Logan-the Liquor Traffic-Church Organization-Duties of Its Officers-Treatment of Transgressors-an Interesting Anecdote and Its Moral-Variou Offices and Callings of the Priesthood, Etc.-The Guidance of God-Honor Due to His Priesthood-Growth and Progress of God’s Work-Its Opposition by the World-the Regeneration of the Lamanites and General Salvation of Man John Taylor.” John Taylor: The Temple at Logan, Etc (Journal of Discourses). Accessed June 10, 2024. <https://journalofdiscourses.com/23/25>

“Video Short - Your Potential, Your Privileges.” Homepage - The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Accessed June 10, 2024. <https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/media/video/2013-01-0001-your-potential-your-privileges?lang=eng>

“Webster’s 1828 Online Dictionary.” American Dictionary of the English Language. Accessed June 10, 2024. <https://webstersdictionary1828.com/>

## Biographical Information:



Dr. Daniel Sharp is a professor at Brigham Young University-Hawaii where he teaches courses in History and Religious Education. His PhD is from Claremont Graduate University in Religious Studies with an emphasis on New Testament Studies. *His dissertation focused on singular readings in three early Coptic manuscripts of the Gospel of John.* Since 2017 Dr. Sharp has been a Research Specialist in charge of the papyri for the Bodmer Lab Project. This is a joint venture between the University of Geneva and the Martin Bodmer Foundation. *This assignment has led to several publications and presentations on the Bodmer Papyri.* In recent years, Dr. Sharp has become obsessed with understanding the provenance of the Bodmer Papyri and other related collections and in tracing the illicit papyri trade of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century from Egypt to Western Institutions. Dan is a convert to the Church, he joined the Church when he was eighteen years old. A year later, he was called on a mission to Campinas, Brazil. After returning from his mission, he met his wonderful wife, Carrie, at a Family Home Evening Group in Provo, Utah. They have been married for almost twenty-eight years. They have five sons together, three wonderful daughters-in-law, a grandson, with a second grandson on the way.

## Fair Use Notice:

*The Follow Him Podcast with Hank Smith and John Bytheway* may make use of copyrighted material, the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright holder. This constitutes a “fair use” and any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law. In accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107, the material on this podcast is offered publicly and without profit, to the public uses or the internet for comment and nonprofit educational and informational purposes. Copyright Disclaimer under Section 107 of the Copyright Act of 1976, allowance is made for “fair use” for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, and research. In such cases, fair use is permitted.

No copyright(s) is/are claimed.

The content is broadcasted for study, research, and educational purposes.

The broadcaster gains no profit from broadcasted content. This falls under “Fair Use” guidelines:

[www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html](http://www.copyright.gov/fls/fl102.html).

## **Note:**

The *Follow Him Podcast with Hank Smith and John Bytheway* is not affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints nor Brigham Young University. The opinions expressed on episodes represent the views of the guest and podcasters alone. While the ideas presented may vary from traditional understandings or teachings, they in no way reflect criticism of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day leaders, policies, or practices.



## Alma 8-12 Part 1

GUEST: DANIEL B. SHARP



- Hank Smith: 00:00:04 Hello my friends. Welcome to another episode of followHIM. My name's Hank Smith. I'm your host. I'm here with my non-Ammonihah-like co-host John, Bytheway. John, you are not like the city of Ammonihah, but we are going to discuss the city of Ammonihah today. So what are you looking forward to?
- John Bytheway: 00:00:23 Oh, lots of things. When I was a kid, just parenthetically, I thought it said ammonia. We've seen Alma go into Zarahemla and go into Gideon, and boy, now he gets transferred to, what would we say, a tough area. One of the things I love about this is in our day, we have mission leaders who were doctors or dentists or CEOs, and they stepped down from that, kind like Alma stepped down, and go into a place where they're very vulnerable and it's so fascinating to think of Alma stepping down from where he was and now going where he gets all sorts of interesting experiences, shall we say. So I'm looking forward to that.
- Hank Smith: 00:01:08 John, we're joined today by Dr. Daniel Sharp. Dan, if we can call you Dan, what are we looking forward to today with Alma eight through 12?
- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 00:01:18 Like John said, there's a lot of interesting things about missionary work in these chapters we'll be looking at. We get introduced to Amulek, sort of a new character who's going to become a faithful friend and companion to Alma. What I'm excited to talk about is the doctrinal teachings and the plan of redemption that are in these chapters, and especially focusing on the role of Christ in that plan. I think that's, along with the missionary stories, some of the great content of these chapters.
- Hank Smith: 00:01:40 Fantastic. John, Dan is new to our podcast. We haven't had him on before, so introduce him to everybody listening.
- John Bytheway: 00:01:48 Hank, I love reading these bios because I feel like our audience knows there are some really brilliant people out there who are faithful Latter-day Saints. Dr. Daniel Sharp is a professor at



Brigham University, Hawaii, or Hawaii as my mom used to say it, where he teaches courses in history and religious education. He has a PhD from Claremont Graduate University in religious study with an emphasis on New Testament studies. His dissertation focused on singular readings in three early Coptic manuscripts of the Gospel of John. Since 2017, Dr. Sharp has been a research specialist in charge of the papyri for the Bodmer Lab project, which is a joint venture between the University of Geneva and the Martin Bodmer Foundation. I'm smiling because this is so cool, and this has led to several publications and presentations on the Bodmer Papyri. In recent years, Dr. Sharp has become obsessed with understanding the provenance of the Bodmer Papyri and other related collections in tracing the illicit papyri trade of the 20th century from Egypt to western institutions.

00:02:58      How cool this? Okay, keep going. Dan is a convert to the church. He joined the church when 18 years old. A year later, he was called on a mission to Campinas Brazil. After returning from his mission, he met his wonderful wife in a family home evening group in Provo, Utah. They've been married for almost 28 years, have five sons, three wonderful daughters-in-law, a grandson, and another grandson on the way. I want to know what is the Bodmer Papyri, first of all?

Dr. Daniel Sharp:      00:03:27      There was a gentleman named Martin Bodmer who was a Swiss collector and he collected lots of things. He had the goal of creating a library of world literature. Part of his collection, he collected some papyri. These include some of the earliest manuscripts of the Bible.

John Bytheway:      00:03:44      Oh wow.

Dr. Daniel Sharp:      00:03:45      There's a manuscript called Papyrus Bodmer II, which is also known in the New Testament circles as Papyrus 66. It has multiple names, which just makes things even more confusing, but it's basically one of the earliest copies of the Gospel of John from roughly the second century. It's a little debated the date of it, but they also have some of the earliest manuscripts of non-biblical texts of things like the Infancy Gospel of James, some of these apocryphal New Testament texts. And they also have some Iliad, some classical texts like The Iliad, The Odyssey, plays of Menander. So it's this large collection. It's one of the most important collections. Of course I'm biased, of course, because I'm in charge of it, but it's one of the most important collections of papyri in the world, especially in a private collection. In 2017, they decided they wanted to digitize it to make it available to the world, and they contacted a couple of specialists, me and

another gentleman to sort of help them organize descriptions of it and get the content online.

John Bytheway: 00:04:42 Wow.

Dr. Daniel Sharp: 00:04:43 Real exciting.

John Bytheway: 00:04:44 Well, thank you for joining us. Hank, we interview some smart people on here.

Dr. Daniel Sharp: 00:04:49 And some people just faking it like me.

Hank Smith: 00:04:52 Well, it sounds like we have a modern day Indiana Jones almost.

John Bytheway: 00:04:56 Yeah.

Hank Smith: 00:04:57 We're going to have to get you a hat, the Indiana Jones hat. Yeah. We can play the music.

Dr. Daniel Sharp: 00:05:03 One of my colleagues at the Bodmer Foundation, he drew me a little picture. I wish I'd brought it, but he called me Sharp Lock Holmes is what he called me. He didn't say Indiana Jones, but Sharp Lock Holmes, and he had a little picture of...

00:05:14 What do you call it?

00:05:14 ... deer hunter, deerstalker cap or whatever it's called and a pipe, and it said no tobacco inside because he knew I was an LDS and stuff. But anyway, he's a really good guy.

Hank Smith: 00:05:24 That's fantastic. All right, so we'll switch. We'll switch our music over to Sherlock Holmes. Dan, let's jump into the Come, Follow Me manual and see where you want to go with these chapters. It says this. "God's work will not fail, but our efforts to help with his work sometimes seem to fail, and at least we may not immediately see the outcomes we hope for. We might feel a little like Alma when he preached the gospel in Ammonihah, rejected, spit on and cast out. Yet when an angel instructed him to go back and try again, Alma courageously returned and God prepared the way for it. Not only did he provide Alma with food to eat and a place to stay, but he also prepared Amulek who became a fellow laborer, a fierce defender of the gospel and a faithful friend. When we face setbacks and disappointments as we serve in the Lord's Kingdom, we can remember how God supported and led Alma, and we can trust that God will support and lead us too, even in difficult circumstances."

	00:06:21	And that seems to be what Alma is going to face, difficult circumstances. So Dan, where should we start?
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	00:06:30	Responding to the Come, Follow Me manual, I really like that last sentence, even in difficult circumstances. If one were to come away from the manual and think, "Well, Alma had difficult circumstances, then God supported him and everything was fine for Alma," that would be a mistake. That's not what we're going to see. Some of Alma's most horrific experiences are going to be after this. We're going to see, in the upcoming weeks, that Alma and Amulek are going to have to witness the burning of people in front of them, believers, and he's going to wind up eventually being thrown into prison, which frankly is probably not as bad as watching people burn to death, but it's no lovely thing. And later in his life, he'll have a son on a mission who winds up having trouble and having to go through a severe serious repentance process.
	00:07:22	His struggles aren't over. God does comfort us in our trials, but he doesn't necessarily remove them. And to me, the greatest takeaway, one of the things that hopefully we can look at a little bit today is I think the most comfort he gets is Amulek. Having someone to support you in your testimony can make all the difference in your trials. During the early part of my marriage, my wife and I spent quite a bit of time on the East coast. We lived for a few years in upstate New York, we lived a few years in Connecticut, and it seemed like we always had callings involving the young men and young women. As you said in the bio, I have five sons, two grandsons. We only seem to produce boys in the Sharp family. I don't know if that's why the Lord always puts my wife in young women's to sort of give her some women to hang out with. So we're always involved with the youth.
	00:08:11	And one of the things I noted when we lived on the east coast is a lot of these young people would sometimes be the only member of the church in their school, and that could be really hard. You feel so alone and if there's no one there to support you. And sometimes all you need is just one friend, one person who will support you in your values, who will support you in your testimony, maybe not necessarily a member of the same church, lots of people have good values, but one person stand by you. Both literally and spiritually, Amulek feeds Alma and gives him the support he needs.
Hank Smith:	00:08:51	I love it. Whenever I think of these chapters, I think of <a href="#">President Benson</a> 's quote. I'm sure you've both heard it. "Men and women who turn their lives over to God will find out that he can

make a lot more out of their lives than they can." And he goes through this list of deepen their joy, expand their vision, quicken their minds. And then towards the end, "Raise up friends." Raise up friends. As I hit these chapters, I wonder who are the friends that the Lord has raised up in my life? All of our listeners could say, "Oh yeah, this person and this person, just the right time in the right place in my life, we connected." I'm glad you brought that up first. Makes me happy.

Dr. Daniel Sharp:

00:09:32

As I was thinking about preparing for this, you said we're going to do Alma chapter eight through 12, and one of the things I like to do is look at context, a little bit of what's going on. John talked about earlier in the intro was this idea that Alma has been going to different cities. He was the chief judge over the Nephites and he was the high priest, and he's stepped down. He gave up being the chief judge and is now focusing being the high priest and he's gone to some different cities. He's going to get to the city of Ammonihah and Melek, actually first in these chapters. I think a lot of listeners are probably aware, probably familiar with the idea that the verses that we have in the Book of Mormon are not part of the original Book of Mormon. These verses were all added later. But what maybe at least my students seem to be less familiar with is the idea that the chapters that we currently have, the divisions are also not part of the original Book of Mormon.

00:10:27

There's a great quote from the church's website. If I could just read, it says, "The first edition of the Book of Mormon had consisted of large unnumbered chapters which made citing a particular passage difficult. So in subsequent editions, some of these large paragraphs were divided in verse numbers were signed to the paragraphs, but the paragraphs were still generally long. In 1879, [Elder Orson Pratt](#) divided the Book of Mormon into small chapters and verses for easier reference. His numbering system became the standard for all Latter-day Saint editions." So the chapter divisions we're looking at now when you say, "Hey, let's look at chapters eight through 12," these are a modern way of thinking about the Book of Mormon. It's not the way Mormon would've divided up the Book of Mormon. The 1830 Book of Mormon has different chapter breaks and what most researchers think is that the chapter breaks in the 1830 Book of Mormon reflect the breaks that would've been on the gold plates.

00:11:28

The 1830 are the same as what we find in the original manuscript to the dictated parts of Joseph Smith's manuscript, right? What does any of this mean? Who cares? Great question. Glad you asked. We're going to read chapters 8 through 12. I

want to know how did Mormon divide that up? What would this have looked like on the plates? What was the original intention of the people who wrote this? How did they look at it? And luckily today in our day and age, that's easy to discover. It's free and anyone can do it. All you got to do is Google JSPP, and then 1830 Book of Mormon.

00:11:58 So JSPP, of course, is [Joseph Smith Papers Project](#). One of the top search results will be from the Joseph Smith Papers website. And you click on that and you'll see a picture of the Book of Mormon, 1830 copy of the Book of Mormon. And on the top is the little thing says Table of Contents. And if you click on the table of contents for the 1830 Book of Mormon, it'll give you a list of the original Book of Mormon chapter breaks, and then in brackets, it'll give you the modern chapter breaks. If we do that for our particular section, what we'll see is chapters 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, these five chapters in the original Book of Mormon are actually four different units.

Hank Smith: 00:12:39 It's fantastic. I'm on the Joseph Smith Papers website right now, and these pictures are high definition. It's a fantastic resource. My kids frequently say they get lost on YouTube for hours. And for me, it's the Joseph Smith Papers website. I could say for hours reading through, because you've got the photos right in front of you. You can even go read the printer's manuscript.

Dr. Daniel Sharp: 00:13:02 Yeah, it's amazing the resources that are available and available freely to anyone who wants them. For me, context is really important. Let me be clear. I am grateful every day for the modern chapter divisions. Today as we go throughout this, I'm sure we'll be saying, Chapter eight, verse nine, chapter 12, verse six," because it's so useful, so convenient. There's no getting around the utility of these small chapters and verses, but I think it's also important to understand that they don't reflect necessarily the intention of the original authors. And so it's important to also see how did they think about this? And to realize if we decide every day to read a chapter a night, that's great, that's wonderful. That'd be a great goal, but that's totally arbitrary, where we start and stop. Those chapters are just made up by Elder Pratt in 18, whatever it was, 1876.

Hank Smith: 00:13:54 1879.

Dr. Daniel Sharp: 00:13:56 That's a skill I try to develop in my own reading. I have found it helpful. As we go through today, I want to talk about all these scriptures because they're all great, but I want to think about them in these four units, unit one being chapter eight, unit two being chapter nine, unit three being chapters 10 and 11, and

then unit four being chapter 12 to 13, verse nine. That's how Mormon thought about it, as far as I can tell. It's at least how Joseph Smith thought about it.

- Hank Smith: 00:14:24 Yeah, so when we cut the lesson off at 12, we're cutting right in the middle of what Mormon had written. Should we jump into chapter 8?
- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 00:14:31 Yeah, that'd be great.
- John Bytheway: 00:14:33 Alma 8, verses one and two. "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, he returned to his own house at Zarahemla to rest himself from the labors which he had performed, and thus ended the ninth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi."
- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 00:14:59 So in Alma chapter four, verse 20, it says, and thus in the commencement of the ninth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi, Alma delivered up the judgment seat to Nephi this other Nephite person who was going to take over that job, and confined himself, Alma, holy to the high priesthood of the holy order of God to the testimony of the word according to the spirit of revelation and prophecy. It was the beginning of the ninth year of the reign of the judges that Alma said, doing both of these jobs, wearing both these hats is too much. I'm going to focus on just being the high priest. And now we see that we're starting and thus ended the ninth year of the reign of the judges in chapter eight. It's been one year that he's stopped being the chief judge. And in that time, as you pointed out, he's gone to a couple of cities already. In chapter five, he goes to the city of Zarahemla, and then in chapter six is when he goes to the city of Gideon to preach.
- 00:15:54 So he's done these other cities, and now he's going for rest, but year has gone by. That's kind of the intro here.
- Hank Smith: 00:16:01 I noticed that in chapter eight, verse one, he taught a lot more things to the people of Gideon. And I don't like it when Mormon says, "Oh, I can't write all that," because Gideon was an amazing place. We talked with Dr. Belot last week and the incredible things that he taught there. And then I read, oh yeah, he taught a lot more. I can't write it all down.

Dr. Daniel Sharp:	00:16:22	Yeah. They talk a lot about the difficulty of engraving on the plates. When I get to my daily journal, I get a little lazy sometimes and don't want to write it all down, just summarize.
Hank Smith:	00:16:31	Yeah. Thus it sufficeth me, right?
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	00:16:36	In chapter eight, it says, "Now it came to pass that Alma returned from the land of Gideon having established the order of the church." What is the order of the church? Today, I would think of the order of the church being prophets and apostles and a quorum of the 70, maybe. We'll have a ward and stake. What is the order of the church in 83 B.C. in Alma's time? What does that mean to establish the order of the church? It tells us earlier, in the scriptures in chapter six, I think it gives the answer. So you're supposed to have that in mind as you read chapter eight, so let's refresh what it means.
Hank Smith:	00:17:12	Dan, I have that right here, chapter six, one through four. And now it came to pass that after Alma had made an end of speaking unto the people of the church, which was established in the city of Zarahemla, so that's chapter five, he ordained priests and elders by laying on his hands according to the order of God, to preside and watch over the church. And it came to pass that whosoever did not belong to the church who repented of their sins were baptized unto repentance and were received into the church. And it also came to pass that whosoever did belong to the church that did not repent of their wickedness and humble themselves before God, I mean those who were lifted up, the pride of their hearts, the same, were rejected and their names were blotted out." That reminds me of what his father did back at the end of Mosiah, that their names were not numbered among those of the righteous,
Hank Smith:	00:18:00	"And thus, they began to establish the order of the church in the city of Zarahemla. All right, so Mormon expects us to remember when he tells us that in Gideon he did this same thing. We go back to chapter 6. Oh, I know what that means.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	00:18:14	The point here is that Mormon has explained already what the order of the church is, that the order of the church is about how do people come into the church, how do people sadly, sometimes have to leave the church. He explains about that they have this sort of elders and priests as far as ordained ministers. That's all we really know about that goes on here in the Nephites at this time anyway.
	00:18:38	Like I said in my bio, I joined the church when I was 18, so I didn't grow up learning about Nephites and Lamanites or

anything, but I think when I joined the church I had this simplistic idea that all of the Nephites were always members of the church except for when they were wicked, and all the Lamanites were never members of the church except for a few examples here and there, but this idea that the Nephite society when they weren't evil were all members of the church. But what we see here is it suggests that there's within the city of Zarahemla, even though this is chapter 6 talking about where he's going to go to Gideon, that this is referring back to his time in Zarahemla, that there were people there who could be baptized unto repentance and enter the church.

00:19:20 So, there's more than one way to believe or to exist in the Nephite society. They're not all of the same church. This is going to become important as we look at chapters 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 because we'll see people from the order of Nehor, and we're going to talk about them, and we're going to see potentially, possibly another religious view also expressed in some of the questionings that go on there.

00:19:46 I think it's an important idea to understand that Alma's establishing the order of the church, and part of that is baptizing Nephite people, or at least people in the land of Zarahemla ... maybe they were Mulekites or something ... but people that had different religious understanding were joining this people of God.

Hank Smith: 00:20:03 I really enjoy getting to know Mormon a little indirectly, and he expects us to be pretty close readers. He's like, "Well, you know what the order of the church is. We just talked about that." Yeah.

Dr. Daniel Sharp: 00:20:14 Exactly, yeah. That brings me to another online resource I really love, and that's the scripture search, that now I can just type in order of the church, and that phrase comes up. I'm like, "Oh, look, there's a connection to be made." We have so many resources. I don't know that Mormon necessarily ... I guess he saw our day, but I don't know that he saw churchofjesuschrist.org search tools, but maybe so. I don't know.

Hank Smith: 00:20:34 Yeah, or the app.

Dr. Daniel Sharp: 00:20:35 Yeah, the app.



Hank Smith:	00:20:37	Speaking of church organization, I noticed between verses 2 and 3, Dan, Alma doesn't get that much of a break. He's like, "Go home. Got 10 minutes of rest. Back out."
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	00:20:49	I don't know exactly how long of a rest it is, but yeah, he's not down for very long. In verses 3 through 5, he goes on this mission to the city of Melek. That one's quite successful. There's not a lot said. This city does pop up a couple more times in the Book of Mormon. What we'll find out is that Amulek and Zeezrom, two characters we'll meet in the upcoming chapters of 9 and 10, they will actually wind up eventually living in Melek. They'll have to leave Ammonihah.
	00:21:16	Then the final mention of the city is in Alma chapter 45. It says, "Alma leaves the city of Zarahemla as if he was going to walk to Melek, and no one ever saw him again." I don't know. It's this city that apparently is close to Ammonihah. Don't know much about what happened there. Talk about Mormon taking a little break or something. Yeah, don't know much about the preaching.
Hank Smith:	00:21:37	One thing that <a href="#">Dr. Joe Spencer</a> has pointed out that I really love is that Alma visits a number of cities, but Mormon chooses to highlight three, Zarahemla, Gideon, and Ammonihah, and then Joe points out that later on he's going to highlight these three sons, Helaman, Shiblon, and Coriantumr, and it seems to fit that same pattern.
John Bytheway:	00:22:00	Parallel, yeah.
Hank Smith:	00:22:01	Yeah, these three cities parallel the three sons.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	00:22:04	Oh, interesting. At the end of verse 6, He says "he came to a city which was called Ammonihah." That's the last little line of verse 6, and then verse 7 says, "Now, it was the custom of the people of Nephi to call their lands and their cities and their villages, even all their small villages after the name of him who first possessed them, and thus it was with the land of Ammonihah."
	00:22:23	The reason I think that's interesting is because I have no idea who Ammonihah is, but Mormon says that as if I'm supposed to know.
Hank Smith:	00:22:30	Yeah.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	00:22:32	We learned this interesting tradition. Oh, the Nephites named their cities after the people who first possessed them. Well,

that's nice. Who's Ammonihah? As you use your online tools ... Or, at least, I could never find any ... this is the first mention of this in the entire Book of Mormon. If I were one prone to speculation, I wonder if this is something that might've been mentioned earlier by Mormon in some of the lost pages, if there was some story about Ammonihah or something because it seems to me that Mormon assumes the reader gets the reference.

Hank Smith:	00:23:02	Sounds like I need to move to Hanksville.
John Bytheway:	00:23:05	Are you the one who first possessed Hanksville?
Hank Smith:	00:23:07	Yeah, I could tell people that after I moved there. Any of our listeners in Hanksville, please let me know. Just let me know if there's any houses for sale.
John Bytheway:	00:23:17	We have a home for you here, Hank.
Hank Smith:	00:23:18	Yeah.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	00:23:20	Chapter 8 again verses 8 through 13, we can get Alma's first attempt at Ammonihah. Mormon set this up, said he's gone to this other city. He's had some success. Now, he's coming to Ammonihah, and we see here that things don't go quite as well in this first attempt. Well, frankly, they don't go that well in the second visit either, but this is the first visit now.
	00:23:42	What's going on here is it says, "They harden their hearts, saying to them, 'Behold, we know thou art Alma.'" He talks about how wicked they are, the hardness of the hearts. In Alma chapter 8, verse 9, Mormon gives us a little summary of the people who are in Ammonihah. It says, "Now, Satan had gotten a great hold on the hearts of the people of the city of Ammonihah. Therefore, they would not hearken unto the words of Alma." Then it says, "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. 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 this church, and we do not believe in such foolish traditions.'"

	00:24:37	There's a few things that are going on here, but one of them is this word nevertheless. Alma knew the people who were wicked, nevertheless, he prayed for them. Even though he prayed for them, nevertheless, they rejected them. In verse 10, you see the way that Alma prayed or what he prayed for for these people. He labored much in the spirit. He wrestled with God in mighty prayer. He poured out a spirit upon the people who were in the city that he would grant that they might baptize them unto repentance. Nevertheless ...
Hank Smith:	00:25:09	Didn't happen.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	00:25:10	What did we learn about prayer or about God's timing?
Hank Smith:	00:25:14	There's so often that we want things to happen. We beg God for them to happen, and they don't. It happens to Alma. It happens to most of us.
John Bytheway:	00:25:26	I think it's a beautiful lesson and a helpful lesson for missionaries because verse 10 that he might baptize them. <a href="#">President Dallin H. Oaks</a> gave a talk at BYU. He said, "In the summer of 2001, Sister Oaks and I were in Manaus, Brazil. I spoke to about 100 missionaries in that great city on the Amazon. I reminded the missionaries that some of our most important plans cannot be brought to pass without the agency and actions of others. A missionary cannot baptize five persons this month without the agency and action of five other persons. A missionary can plan and work and do all within his or her power, but the desired result will depend upon the additional agency and action of others. Consequently, a missionary's goals ought to be based upon the missionary's personal agency and action, not upon the agency and action of others." That's from a talk he gave called Timing.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	00:26:27	Thank you for that quote by Elder Oaks, and it ties exactly in because we'll talk more about Alma's failure in Ammonihah in a moment and the people there in a moment, but Alma's praying that he can baptize these people, and he gets rejected and cast out of the city. Then he meets an angel, and the angel says in verse 15, "Blessed are 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 times thou receivedst the first message from him."
	00:26:58	Alma is feeling down because he didn't baptize a lot of people. That's what he'd been praying for. But like you said, that's beyond his control. The angel's trying to teach him. You have great cause to rejoice because you have been faithful in the

things God commanded you to do from the moment I spoke to you and told you to do it. That's what you can control. You can set your own goals.

- 00:27:21 I happened to serve my mission in Brazil, and frankly, it wasn't too hard to find people to teach and baptize. I had some friends in Austria and other parts of the world that struggled to find anyone to baptize, and if we only measured our missions and our success in terms of baptism, I think we're missing the point. I think this is an important point, this idea that you can't force other people. You can only control your own self, and I think that's what the angel's trying to teach.
- John Bytheway: 00:27:49 I love that. In verse 15, I have sent this as I've written to missionaries, "P.S. Read Alma 8:14 and 15. When the angel says, Thou hast great cause to rejoice," Alma could have said, "Why? I failed. They spit on me. I had no baptisms." And the angel continues, "You've been faithful in keeping the commandments of God from the time you received that first message from him," and I just love that. You have done what you are asked to do. You've kept the mission rules, however you want to articulate that, and therefore, you have great cause to rejoice.
- 00:28:26 Then, the end of verse 15, I don't know how the government in heaven works, but that last sentence, "Behold I am he that delivered it unto you." Thank you, Mormon, for including that. I am the same angel who knocked you and your friends over in Mosiah 27. Alma, I scared you so bad, but you're doing so great.
- Hank Smith: 00:28:48 Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 00:28:49 Go back into town, you're going to meet your companion. I love the teaching moment there. You've done what you could do. Your goal in verse 10 was baptisms, but you've been faithful in keeping the commandments, and you have great cause to rejoice for that.
- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 00:29:04 What would you say then ... I don't know the answer to this question because my son has recently come off a mission. I have another son that's about to go on a mission, and at least my experience from my own mission and from what I've seen even recently is that still lots of mission goals have to do with baptisms. In the light of Elder Oaks' advice here in Manaus, how would you contextualize that?
- John Bytheway: 00:29:30 My kids served in France and Iceland. Getting someone to even talk to you was difficult. These verses helped them do what

you're supposed to do. You set your goals according to what you can control. If I could set goals that my favorite college football team would win all the time, I have no impact on. I guess I could set a goal for that.

- |                   |          |   |
|-------------------|----------|---|
| Dr. Daniel Sharp: | 00:29:54 | Why do I get so upset when they don't win? That's why why why?  |
| Hank Smith:       | 00:29:56 | Yeah.   |
| John Bytheway:    | 00:29:58 | I know Hank is a big Jazz fan. I set a goal that the Jazz would win, but I don't really have anything to do with the outcome of that.   |
| Hank Smith:       | 00:30:05 | They keep breaking my heart, yeah.  |
| John Bytheway:    | 00:30:07 | Maybe I can be one voice in 65,000 at the stadium. I was really grateful that Elder Oaks said, "You focus on what you can do." One of the sobering verses from the Doctrine and Covenants, this is section 138, and it's verse 25, "I understood the Savior spent about three years in his ministry among the Jews and those of the House of Israel endeavoring to teach them the everlasting gospel and call them unto repentance, and yet, notwithstanding his mighty works and miracles and proclamation of the truth in great power and authority, there were but few who hearkened unto his voice and rejoiced in his presence and received salvation at his hands." Even the Savior, even in his presence, not everybody listened and believed and followed. It's amazing to think about. |
| Dr. Daniel Sharp: | 00:30:57 | And we can assume that the Savior was perfectly obedient. This is a given.  |
| John Bytheway:    | 00:31:03 | Yeah.   |
| Dr. Daniel Sharp: | 00:31:03 | So, we can see that those results are not tied to obedience. Perfect obedience does not necessarily guarantee overwhelming success. Having said that, we should point out just to be true to the scriptures that Alma is kicked out of the city and spit upon, but then he is going to return and eventually Zeezrom will be baptized. So, it's important that his prayer is not answered necessarily the way he wants and not necessarily in the time he wants. But in Alma 14:1, it does say that some people do believe and repent. This is outside of our scripture block, but these are people of Ammonihah in Alma chapter 14, verse 1.   |

John Bytheway:	00:31:48	Yeah, it says the believers were cast out. So, some believed him when he and Amulek went back in. Good point.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	00:31:55	Then eventually in chapter 15, verse 12, I think it is, Zeezrom winds up being baptized. We don't know who Zeezrom necessarily is yet. We haven't talked about him, but he's going to wind up being antagonistic towards Alma in the upcoming chapters, and Alma baptized Zeezrom.
	00:32:11	Maybe that's the way it turns out. Sometimes maybe we don't necessarily see the success. I also don't want to leave the impression that, well, if you're faithful, you baptize one person because that may not be true either. But just to be true to this particular scripture story, one person, at least Zeezrom, wound up being baptized.
John Bytheway:	00:32:31	Maybe you guys have heard the idea of if you should bring, save it be one soul from section 18. Maybe that could even be yourself, that you become converted to the gospel while you're doing the Lord's work, which is wonderful if that's a result.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	00:32:45	I love that interpretation of that scripture, and I think that's really applicable. If I can share a story though, about baptism goals and maybe how prayers might be answered differently than we thought, I was in a ward council. I was the ward mission leader, actually. Every year we were supposed to set a goal for baptisms, and I live in Lā'ie, Hawaii. That's a place that's predominantly made up of members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. In fact, my ward boundaries, we knew every member. There were not that many people we could baptize. There's always people we could minister to. There's people that could be strengthened, that could help progress along the covenant path, but as far as actually getting them baptized, there were very few people. And the year before we'd actually baptized three people, which was like a record-setting thing in our ward.
	00:33:38	The ward council said, "You know what? Our goal is zero. We're not going to baptize anyone this year. We're just going to focus on helping the three people we baptized last year progress along the covenant path, make sure they get to the temple and get sealed," and these sorts of goals. About a week or two later, we come for another ward council, and the bishop says, "Well, the stake president says zero was not a goal. He said we need a new goal." As the ward council, we're sitting there, I was just like, perhaps I didn't have much faith. I don't know. But as the ward mission leader is like, "Well, let's just say one. One's good.

We can find one person, or at least have a goal and see what happens."

00:34:15 There were some other members in the ward council who were saying, "Why do we have such little faith? Let's say 20. Maybe someone will move in. Why are we limiting God's possibilities? Let's say 20." It was a heated discussion. There was a lot of involvement. Then the bishop, who has the keys of this council, he looked up at one point, and he said, "There are eight souls." It was one of the most spiritual experience. Everyone in the ward council felt something right there, and we accepted eight souls as our goal. As that year went out, I had no question and no doubt that we had received a spiritual revelation. I gave a talk in sacrament meeting with the whole ward about this goal and how we were going to work towards it, and the year came and went. At the end of that year, we had baptized zero souls. Not one person had been baptized. I remember at the time really starting to question was it a spiritual experience I'd had. Did I do something wrong? Was I not a good ward mission leader? Or maybe it was the bishop's fault. I don't know. What happened? How do I interpret this? How do I interpret my spiritual experience the way I thought this would play out?

00:35:35 I thought about it for a long time. I don't know if struggled with it is the right word. It's not like I was going to leave the church or anything about it, but it's something I really thought about how to interpret spiritual experiences. For us, the end of that story is, I still don't know exactly what it meant, but I do know about a year later or so, I can't remember exactly how much time, but after the goal had clearly passed,

Dr. Daniel Sharp: 00:36:01 I met one of the young men who we had sort of thought about, one of the people who was actually not a member and we had thought about focusing on to try to help them learn about the church and he was actually coming back from the temple. He had been baptized and in addition to having been baptized, he was actually from the Philippines and had a miraculous experience where he had met some family members that he didn't know existed and had just come back from the temple from baptizing. Another person we had prayed for, there was a man in our ward who had adopted a couple of young boys. They were not members of the church and we were kind of pressuring them to get baptized just so we could do a goal. We were trying to take their agency away. The father finally said, "Back off and we're going to handle this the right way." Bless him for it, putting me in my place, rightly so. The year was, well, gone, but over time that young man did join the church and actually eventually served a mission for two years and I have no

idea how many souls he may have brought unto the Lord through that mission.

- 00:37:02 I think sometimes things may be fulfilled a little bit differently. I think there's still value in setting goals. I don't know if even though we set a goal of eight, at the end of the year we hadn't reached that goal, working towards the goal united us as a ward. It focused our efforts and our prayers and I think served a purpose even if it was just to change me and yes, we did see some fruits. I don't know if it adds up to eight or not, but I believe we had a spiritual experience and I believe that there's a value even if we don't always see how it works out.
- John Bytheway: 00:37:38 You focused on what you could do and you've talked about, you're still wondering. Look at that word in verse 10. Labored much in the spirit, wrestling. I think all of us wrestle with things. I love the idea of a spiritual wrestle because you get stronger in the process.
- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 00:37:58 I actually saw that Bishop, he recently was called as a mission president, which should be interesting given this story. He's going to be serving in Tokyo. It's been a few years since this happened and we talked about how this was really a spiritual experience for our ward and it blessed us.
- John Bytheway: 00:38:15 I think the Lord can take the long view too. There was Parley Pratt and then there's Brigham Young, who took a couple of years. God has the long view and maybe doesn't put the kind of deadlines that we do sometimes. It's a good discussion to wrestle with.
- Hank Smith: 00:38:30 Yeah. Dan, I liked your story because it wasn't the bishop saying, "If we are faithful enough, this will happen" because then everyone might be thinking, well, I'm just not faithful enough. I can picture a missionary in Iceland thinking I'm not faithful enough. It's the work isn't happening. When that's not the case, you focus on the things you can control. Isn't that what the angel said, right? You have great cause to rejoice, you have been faithful.
- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 00:39:04 That's all you can control. Alma, I don't want to downplay the horrors that he's going to see in the coming chapters and the suffering he's going to have, but in the end, in the long view, he's comforted. I think his wrestle becomes settled. Shall we return back to the people of Ammonihah for a moment because I think we need to set up a little bit more about why these people were so wicked or at least why Alma in Mormon perceive them as so wicked and part of that is we have to



understand the relationship to Nehor. It's going to become important to understand some of the conversations that Alma's going to have later on and Amulek as well.

- 00:39:44 The reason for tying the people of Ammonihah to Nehor comes from Alma chapter 16:11. It is a little bit outside of our reading assignment, but we can see that I'm not amiss to sort of make this connection, it happens later in our reading. A spoiler alert, in case you haven't read this before, is that Alma's going to wind up prophesying that if the people of Ammonihah do not repent, that God will utterly destroy them. This is Alma chapter 16 verse 11. John, can you read that for us?
- John Bytheway: 00:40:15 Alma 16:11. "Nevertheless, after many days their dead bodies were heaped up upon the face of the earth and they were covered with a shallow covering and now so great was the scent thereof, that the people did not go in to possess the land of Ammonihah for many years. And it was called Desolation of Nehors, for they were of the profession of Nehor who were slain and their lands remained desolate."
- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 00:40:42 I wanted to bring the scripture up, not so much to focus on the sad destruction of these people that I'm sure you'll talk about in great detail in the coming chapters, but just to sort of make this connection that they called this area the Desolation of Nehors because the people of Ammonihah were, at least many of them, of the profession of the Nehors. In Alma chapter 14, verse 16 and verse 18, we see that many of the lawyers and the judges of this people are of the profession of Nehor.
- Hank Smith: 00:41:10 Isn't this another place where Mormon has the expectation that we've read closely? He's like, you remember that, all the way back in Alma chapter one. It was what I saw as doctrinal competition. Let the most popular doctrine win.
- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 00:41:27 Here in verse four of Alma chapter one, it talks about he, being Nehor, testified unto the people that, "All mankind should be saved at the last day. That they need not fear nor tremble, but that they might lift up their heads and rejoice for the Lord God had created all men, he had also redeemed all men and in the end, all men shall have eternal life." That question about who was created by God, who's going to be redeemed by God and who's going to have eternal life. Those questions are what Zeezrom, Amulek and Alma are going to be debating, the extent of the Redemption, the extent of eternal life. The other thing that's going to be important because they believe all mankind will be saved, there's obviously no need to repent. If you think

		everyone's going to be saved, everyone's redeemed, there's no purpose for repentance.
John Bytheway:	00:42:21	And if someone disagrees with you, you can just smack him with your sword.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	00:42:24	You just kill him because in the end you're going to be saved, what difference does it make.
	00:42:28	Another of the traits of the followers of Nehor, you can see in Alma chapter 15 verse 15, does someone else want to read that?
Hank Smith:	00:42:39	But as to the people that were in the land of Ammonihah, they yet remained a hard-hearted and a stiff-necked people and they repented not of their sins, ascribing all the power of Alma and Amulek to the devil, for they were of the profession of Nehor and did not believe in the repentance of their sins.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	00:42:58	The people of Ammonihah are Nephites and yet not everyone who's a Nephite is a member of the church of God. They specifically say, Alma, you're not our high priest. When he comes to preach to them and go, we don't have to listen to you. You're not the chief judge anymore. You're not the high priest of our church, so what church are they? At least many of them seem to be of the profession of Nehor and that's going to set the stage for some of their questions and comments and the way they behave, really.
	00:43:24	That brings us back to Alma chapter eight. Alma has gone to the city of Ammonihah. He has been rejected of the people after praying. Verse 13, "They caused that he should be cast out of their city. He departed thence", like it was his choice. I wanted to leave anyway. I just think that's kind of funny. They cast him out, so he left. Then he leaves and then like we mentioned already, an angel comes, appears to him and as John pointed out, it's the same angel that had visited him when he was a rebellious youth. I heard in an earlier podcast how you brought up the possibility, not necessarily a doctrine, but the idea that what was taught by King Benjamin in the Book of Mosiah was given to him by an angel and that angel perhaps might've been Abinadi and that this was a possibility because of the similarities between what King Benjamin teaches and what Abinadi taught.
	00:44:21	What we'll see in the coming chapters is that you cannot understand Amulek or Alma without understanding Abinadi. It's imperative to understand Abinadi in order to understand how

Amulek answers Zeezrom's questions. I have always assumed the reason for that is because Amulek is going to learn from Alma. We're going to see in a moment that Alma's going to spend a good deal of time in Amulek's house before they go out preaching together. John, you mentioned thanks heavenly order for allowing the same angel who came to visit this youth, come back after his success. I mean we've seen Moroni be used over and over as sort of the prophet of the Restoration. It'd be interesting to think if Abinadi had some sort of similar role. We're going to see Amulek is also visited by an angel and it's not clear whether that's the same angel who visited Alma or a different angel. There's a few angels coming in this chapter, but there's clearly a connection between what Amulek teaches and what Abinadi teaches.

- |                   |          |   |
|-------------------|----------|---|
| John Bytheway:    | 00:45:19 | I want that to be true. I just think it would be so cool that Alma who defended Abinadi, that Abinadi has now been watching over that family, so I hope that's true. It reminds me of my favorite <a href="#">President John Taylor</a> quotation. This is from Journal of Discourses, Volume 23, page two 22. This is so beautiful. "God lives and his eyes are over us and his angels are round about us and they are more interested in us than we are in ourselves, 10,000 times, but we do not know it." The idea of they're more interested in us and then putting a multiplier on it, 10,000 times more interested and I wonder if that could be Abinadi being so interested in Alma, the only one that he got through to that day and Alma's son, Alma the Younger. |
| Dr. Daniel Sharp: | 00:46:14 | One of the things that I also think is amusing, coming up in this chapter we'll see in the coming chapters is Zeezrom, this person we'll meet, is going to question Amulek on a lot of things, but one of the points Zeezrom seems to just accept without ever questioning is the fact that Amulek sees an angel. He questions the existence of God. He questions the Messiah, all these things, but when Amulek says, an angel told me, that's how he knows is true. Zeezrom never just goes, what? That's your best evidence.   |
| John Bytheway:    | 00:46:42 | I never thought of that before. That's interesting.   |
| Dr. Daniel Sharp: | 00:46:45 | You'd think he'd poke a little hole in that one. If I tried to tell someone today, "The reason I know this is because an angel told me." Perhaps for Zeezrom, the idea of ministering angels is not that foreign either. Maybe that's a given for him or maybe it was so absurd it wasn't worth questioning. I don't know which one. Returning now to Alma and this encounter with the angel. The angel tells him that he needs to return to Ammonihah. Alma chapter eight, verse 18 says, "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." I think there's probably many a lesson that's been made on that verse, that when you get that spiritual prompting to go back.

- |                   |          |   |
|-------------------|----------|---|
| John Bytheway:    | 00:47:31 | Good point.   |
| Dr. Daniel Sharp: | 00:47:31 | It reminds me of Nephi, this idea that God has commanded Alma to return to the city, but it's not easy. He's got to sneak in a back way and it's not going to necessarily go all that well for him either when he gets there. The Lord commands Nephi to return to Jerusalem or tells Lehi, who tells Nephi to return to Jerusalem to go get the brass plates and it's not easy. It takes several chances and a lot of violence in order to accomplish this task.   |
| John Bytheway:    | 00:47:58 | When I read the end of verse 19, this guy used to be the chief judge and now he's begging for food. Whoa. "Will you give to an humble servant of God something to eat?"   |
| Dr. Daniel Sharp: | 00:48:11 | I used to live when I was young, in Bangkok, Thailand and you would see these Buddhist monks who were not allowed to ask for food, but would go up and down the street with a bowl and people would willingly come out and donate food to them because of the work that they were doing because they saw them as holy men and would provide for them even though they weren't necessarily begging or making them do it. Maybe this is a similar model of just devotion, of taking care of those who need taking care of.  |
| Hank Smith:       | 00:48:43 | I think it would be fun to see this arrangement that here's Alma coming back into the city going, I have no idea how this is going to work out. Here's Amulek going, really, I'm going to meet somebody and then to have those two intersect would be a fun thing for heaven to see, I think.   |
| Dr. Daniel Sharp: | 00:49:02 | Yeah. Now looking at Alma chapter eight, verse 19 to 32, this is where we get our introduction to Amulek and who this guy is. He's going to say some more about himself later when Amulek stands up to teach. In Alma chapter 10, he'll introduce himself a little bit to the crowd he's talking to. He introduces himself, we learn a little bit about him. What I think is going to be important later, which I didn't necessarily pick up on the first time I read this, Amulek takes in Alma, he feeds him because an angel told him to and then they're going to go and preach to the people of Ammonihah together, but that's not immediate. There's a passage of time that that's covered in verse 27, sort of an undetermined amount of time. |

John Bytheway:	00:49:47	"Alma tarried many days with Amulek before he began to preach unto the people." I mean it says in verse 26 he had fasted many days. That sounds pretty awful, so he had to get his strength back up.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	00:50:00	Yeah. As we get to know who Amulek is, maybe we should peek ahead to a little bit about what he says about himself. If we cheat and look a little ahead to Alma chapter 10, he says about himself, for example, in verse four he talks about how he had acquired riches and had become an industrious man, so he's some sort of successful person. He's known amongst his town. People know who he is, but he does say in verse five and six that he didn't really know much about the ways of God. He didn't consider himself a religious person. He wasn't a great church member. He wasn't a religious leader. That's not who he was, so this visit with the angel must've been quite a shocking experience to him. This is something new to him.
	00:50:42	The reason I think this is relevant is Amulek is going to wind up doing a great deal of teaching in the coming chapter and I think it's important as we look at how and what Alma teaches and the level that he teaches at, to realize that this is a relatively new member and that he seems to have just learned from Alma, maybe from the angel, maybe from both, some of these doctrines. As he explains them, he's going to be explaining them in a rather simple way and then Alma is going to get up afterwards and expound more upon the way Amulek taught. That's going to become important as we start to see what Amulek teaches and how he says things, that we understand that he's new. I don't know if you caught it as you were reading my bio, but I joined the church and went on a mission a year later. I didn't know what I was talking about and when I finished the two years, I felt like I kind of caught up to my peers at my age level that I kind of knew what was going on, but man, I was lost those first few times.
	00:51:37	Chapter 10, chapter 11, these are Amulek's first talks, in his first area of his first mission. Maybe we're going to have to give him a little slack as we look at his teachings on redemption, resurrection and mostly the first death.
Hank Smith:	00:51:51	Amulek does say in chapter 10, verse 10, "For behold, I say unto you that as the Lord liveth, even so has he sent this angel to make these things manifest unto me and this he has done. While this Alma hath dwelt in my house, he has blessed mine house. He has blessed me, my women, children, father, kinsfolk, the blessing of the Lord hath rested upon us." It seems that

Alma had done some teaching to Amulek and his family before they head out on this companionship.

- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 00:52:21 I'm assuming this is during those days that he tarried there. Back in chapter eight, verse 27, it says, "Alma tarried many days." During this take and apparently the angel returned again, so Amulek has again seen this angel. There's some serious tutelage going on here. I mean, this is pretty good instruction, but yeah, he's kind of learning this stuff. That's important.
- Hank Smith: 00:52:43 Even though he's new, he's ready to testify. I like that. I like that about you, that you went out on a mission going, well, here we go.
- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 00:52:52 Can I tell you why I decided to go on a mission?
- Hank Smith: 00:52:55 Please.
- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 00:52:56 I joined the church when I was 18 and when I was investigating the church, people let me kind of do whatever I want and they let me go to Sunday school with people in high school. I was 18, I just had started college, but most of my friends were in high school, so they let me go to Sunday school with seniors in high school and I learned and stuff, but as soon as I got baptized, they said, oh no, that's not where you belong. You're in elders quorum. Suddenly I was thrown into all these people who seemed really old to me. They were probably 27 or something, but they seemed ancient. What am I supposed to do here? The one thing I noticed was, it seemed every lesson these older gentlemen would share some story from their mission. How powerful a mission must be that 20 years later, they're still calling upon those experiences and those experiences are still shaping their life? I wanted that for me and I wanted that strength.
- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 00:54:00 That was one of the main reasons I went on a mission and now that I'm 50 years old and I've had a lot of spiritual experiences since my mission, but I still find myself relying on those experiences as being shaping, as being formative for my progression. Serving a mission is really important, and that's one of the reasons I went out there.
- John Bytheway: 00:54:10 Oh, I like that. Could we spend some more time on verse six of Alma 10? Amulek, I am fascinated by this character. Now listen to this humility here, verse six, "I did harden my heart. I was called many times and I would not hear." And there's obviously a difference between would not and could not. "Therefore, I

knew concerning these things, yet I would not know." And I was, "Whoa, is it possible to say I know but I don't want to know? Or to suppress a testimony type of a thing? "So I went on rebelling against God, until an angel says, 'Go home, you're going to feed a prophet of the Lord tonight.'"

00:54:50 Reminds me of a statement Brigham Young made. He said, "There's no doubt, if a person lives according to the revelation given to God's people, he may have the spirit of the Lord to signify to him his will, and to guide and to direct him in the discharge of his duties, in his temporal as well as his spiritual exercises. I'm satisfied, however, that in this respect, we live far beneath our privileges."

00:55:15 I've heard Amulek characterized as someone who is living beneath his privileges. And I think all of us would say, "Yeah, I'm probably living beneath my privileges." But the Lord used him, and made him an instrument, and a powerful instrument. And I remember [President Uchtdorf](#) giving that talk called Your Potential, Your Privileges. You remember that? Where he told the story about the guy in a cruise ship that was eating pork and beans in his room all week, and discovered at the very end that his ticket had covered all of the meals he should have been eating. And President Uchtdorf says, "He discovered he'd been living far beneath his privileges."

Dr. Daniel Sharp: 00:55:53 Yeah, thank you. That's a great insight. I really like they turned that Elder Uchtdorf talk into a little [video](#).

John Bytheway: 00:56:01 It's so good. You feel so bad for the guy that's been eating pork and beans and powdered lemonade in his room, when he drops everything that was in his hands, when he finds out I could have been eating at the banquet table every night. "I'm living beneath my privileges." I see Amulek as that guy, which makes the story so great that the Lord would say, "You're not as active as you could be, or you're not as fired up as you could be, but I'm going to grab you and use you, and you're going to be a great help to Alma."

Dr. Daniel Sharp: 00:56:32 He still had to respond. It's incumbent upon us to then react to that time, to recognize we're living below our privileges, and step it up. If it's not an angel, but a ministering brother or sister who comes to visit us.

00:56:45 Now in Chapter 9, Alma and Amulek are going to set out on their preaching to the people of Ammonihah. The first thing I'd want to point out is, this is unit two. We talked about how the Book of Mormon is divided into different sections. This is a new

chapter. It's also a new unit. And what's interesting here is verse one.

- John Bytheway: 00:57:05 This is Alma 9:1, "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 Ammonihah, it came to pass that as I began to preach unto them, they began to contend with me, saying..."
- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 00:57:21 And then we'll get what he said. But what I want to point out is that shift in the beginning of verse one, to the first person, I Alma. In the podcast, during the Words of Mormon part, you talked about hearing the voice of Mormon and stuff, and how he has made the Book of Mormon and compiled it.
- 00:57:37 Just above Chapter 9 in the one I have, there's a little thing that says, "The words of Alma, and also the words of Amulek." That little section, which should not be in italics if you have a modern edition, is actually part of the record of the plates. Up until the point where it says, comprising Chapter 9-14, inclusive. The chapter heading, which is in italics, is added later.
- 00:57:58 But what we see here is a shift. Mormon seems to actually, for Chapter 9, literally copy word-for-word Alma's record. But this is word-for-word, the words of Alma. It's one of the few times in the Book of Mormon, we don't get any editorial comment. In the next unit, which is Chapters 10 and 11, in the original Book of Mormon, those go together, in that unit, what we'll see is an interspersing of direct quotations from the record of Alma, but we also will see some commentary from Mormon.
- 00:58:31 He'll talk about Alma in the third person, and he'll give us some background on money that we need to know in order to understand the story. You get this kind of mixing of literary types. And then from that point on, it's just sort of Mormon's, mostly his summary with some quotes, but you got that kind of mix.
- 00:58:48 Chapter 9 is unique. This unit seems to be set apart because this is literally just Alma speaking. But when you talk about getting to know the voice of Mormon, here's a chance to get to know the voice of Alma, unedited, unfiltered, Alma unfiltered.
- 00:59:03 This may not change anyone's testimony or anything, but if the complexity of the Book of Mormon is maybe a weird way to gain a testimony, but for me it's just one of the testimonies of the beauty of this book, and that this is not constructed by a



farm boy from upstate New York, but that this is really an ancient record, which shows various authors at various times.

00:59:26 Let's do a quick overview of Chapter 9. I think one of the important things to see in Alma Chapter 9, is this new message that Alma brings with him, which is the message the angel gave to him. So originally, Alma goes to Ammonihah. I assume he's teaching the doctrine of Christ, faith, repentance, baptism, gift of the Holy Ghost, this message. But in Verse 12, we see that there's something a little bit extra here, especially for this people. Hank?

Hank Smith: 00:59:52 Yep. Alma 9:12, "Behold, now I say unto you that he commandeth you to repent, and except you 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." That's some good news to deliver.

Dr. Daniel Sharp: 01:00:19 Yeah. So you see that this people, and this goes to a little bit how not every scripture is universally applicable, that in this one circumstance, this one people, he's universally, "I say unto you, he commandeth you to repent. And except you repent, you can nowise inherit the kingdom of God." I think that's probably a universal truth.

01:00:39 But in this instance, to this people, if they don't repent, God's going to smite them off the face of the earth. And we'll see, as we already looked at, that that happens. In Alma Chapter 16, that is what's going to happen. But as I was reading this, I was thinking, "Why are these people different?" Alma's going to go on, and he's going to talk about the Lamanites, in the upcoming verses. How the Lamanites were cut off from the presence of the Lord.

01:01:05 He's going to go on and say that the Lamanites of his generation, by the time Alma's alive, are just doing that because it's the tradition of their fathers. They're not openly rebelling against God, they're following the same things that they've been taught. And because of that, God is granting them mercy and they're not being cut off of the face of the land.

01:01:26 But he's saying, "You," this people, the Ammonihah, "have been given so many opportunities, so many chances." And it goes on, he lists all of these blessings that they've had. And yet they're choosing to rebel and harden their heart. And because of that,

they're going to wind up being destroyed from the face of the land.

- 01:01:46 As we look ahead to Alma discussing the plan of redemption, in Chapter 12, there is a slight parallel between those of us who overcome the spiritual and physical death of Adam, which through no fault of our own, we've all been cut off from God's presence because of the Fall. We're not being held accountable for that, because it's not our fault.
- 01:02:15 However, if we continue to rebel against God, and refuse to repent, and if we harden our heart, we're going to suffer a second death, and we'll be cut off from his presence. That's the plan of redemption that Alma's going to outline. And we see this almost on an earthly parallel, between these people that are sinning because they don't know any better, and the people that are sinning because they are openly rebelling against God.
- Hank Smith: 01:02:42 I noticed that they knew what was coming. They're like, "Go ahead. I know what you're going to say. You're going to say repent or this city's going to be destroyed."
- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 01:02:51 At the end, as shocking as it might be, the people of Ammonihah do not respond well to this message that God's going to utterly destroy them. I don't know why. Specifically, Alma does use some rather harsh language. Do you want to read Verse 30 of Chapter 9?
- John Bytheway: 01:03:09 Yeah, Alma 9:30, "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." Yeah, them's fighting words.
- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 01:03:29 Yeah. In verse eight of Chapter 9, he says, "You wicked and perverse generation." And he calls them this as well. They don't respond well. In our own day, as we listen to prophets and apostles, they definitely deliver the message the Lord wants them to deliver. Sometimes as members of the church, we struggle with the way they deliver it, and wish maybe they could have done it in a different way.
- John Bytheway: 01:03:51 I've heard Hank quote Matthew 26:22 a few times, "Lord, is it I?" Instead of thinking, this must be for everybody else.

Hank Smith:	01:04:01	Yeah. And sometimes I think we pick things out that we don't like. Instead of hearing the overall message, I pick out a word, a phrase that the prophet used, or this apostle used. I don't like that phrase. Instead of, I miss the message.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	01:04:19	We strain at a gnat. What's the expression?
Hank Smith:	01:04:21	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	01:04:21	Strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.
Hank Smith:	01:04:22	Swallow a camel.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	01:04:24	Yeah, we're missing the whole message. I guess in this case, you miss the camel too because you're focusing on that little tiny thing.
Hank Smith:	01:04:31	Yeah, because Alma did say, back in 26 and 27, that the son of God is full of grace, equity, truth, patience, mercy, long-suffering. He'll redeem those who are baptized unto repentance and have faith on his name. That we see later that they're really upset about him saying that there would be fire and brimstone. They picked that piece out to focus on.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	01:04:56	Yeah, let's move to the next unit, which would be Alma Chapter 10 and 11. Because as we pointed out in the original Book of Mormon, in 1830, and probably on the gold plates, this was seen as one unit. It starts off with Amulek standing up and testifying to what Alma had said.
	01:05:14	Like you pointed out, this is first person. This appears to be a continuation of the record of Alma, moving on from Alma quoting himself, to Alma quoting Amulek. It's not until later where we get Mormon inserting a little commentary on what's going on. But I'm assuming, and I could be wrong, that now these are the words which Amulek preached to the people, this is Alma saying this, I think.
	01:05:36	Basically what he does, at the first, between verses 1-11, is Amulek introduces himself and shares a testimony. And his testimony basically is, all I know is what this other guy said was true. An angel told me it was true, so I trust it. This guy's true.
	01:05:53	When you guys first contacted me about participating in this podcast, and told me what chapters I'd be going over, I was talking to a friend of mine. Her name's Karen Bybee, she lives out in Geneva right now. She's on a mission for the church.

She's a senior missionary. She's working with the UN there for the church.

01:06:09 And she said how she loved Amulek, and she loved these chapters. And the reason she said really stood out to me, and I think applies right here, is when she was a junior companion serving her mission in, I believe it was Italy, she struggled at the beginning so much, just to say anything in the language. She couldn't talk hardly. And all she could do at the end was bear her testimony, and say, "What that person said was true. I know that that was true."

01:06:35 And she goes, "That's why I love Amulek. He's the perfect example of a junior companion." Thank you Sister Bybee. She was a great blessing to our life in many ways, and here she is still helping us.

Hank Smith: 01:06:45 I like what Sister Bybee taught us there. I've thought about Chapter 10, that there's two witnesses. And we have these same two witnesses. One, we have the prophet. And two, we have our neighbors around us.

01:06:59 The prophet speaks in General Conference, and then my neighbor speaks in Fast and Testimony meeting. Maybe I'm thinking as like a micro witness, we have the prophet speaking to the whole church. And then we have our micro witness, my neighbor, saying that they believe in what the prophet has said. We all have Almas in our lives and we all have Amuleks. Those who stand up, who have lived among us, or who do live among us, and say, "I believe."

Dr. Daniel Sharp: 01:07:30 Yeah, that's interesting, "I tried what that person said, and yeah, it worked."

Hank Smith: 01:07:34 I am not one to speak up in church all that often. At least I wasn't for a long time. Fast and Testimony meeting, I would sit and listen. And Sunday School and Elders Quorum, I would sit and listen. And then after reading about Amulek, I thought, it's important for those of us who know, to tell our neighbors that we know. It's not like we need to get up every Sunday, or every Fast and Testimony meeting, to bear testimony.

01:08:10 But we can be a little bit like Alma, Amulek, and say, "I should have said something earlier." What'd you say, John? "I knew..."

John Bytheway: 01:08:18 But I would not know.

Hank Smith:	01:08:19	"... but I would not know." Just to shout out to those who are willing to go up in Fast and Testimony meeting and tell their neighbors what they know.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	01:08:28	That is important. I think sometimes we feel like, " Oh, I've already said this," or something. But it's important that we bear witness to each other, come together and be strengthened through each other's experiences, by learning from each other. How is it that you've tried to implement this in your life? How is it that you've tried to follow this command of God? How has it blessed your life? And seeing that and hearing that can help give us the motivation to step on, to keep going.
Hank Smith:	01:08:52	Those who are strong can help those who are weak. That will change. Sometimes I'm the strong one, sometimes I'm the weak one.
John Bytheway:	01:08:59	That's, when Alma's people are delivered, it's Mosiah 24, "Stand as witnesses for me hereafter." Or is that Alma's people out of the Land of Helam, that they're commanded to do that. "I'm going to deliver you so that you will stand as witnesses for me, hereafter," Mosiah 24:14.
Hank Smith:	01:09:19	And Dan's right, we sometimes think, "Oh, they don't want to hear from me again. I was up there 10 years ago, I'm sure everyone remembers." Right?
John Bytheway:	01:09:27	They remember.



- John Bytheway: 00:01 Welcome to part two with Dr. Daniel Sharp, Alma chapters 8 through 12.
- 00:07 I've always thought it was strange that he gets kicked out, departed hence, as you said. He comes back in with Amulek and then they say, "Who's God that sends us no more authority than one man?" Well, they apparently didn't recognize that Amulek was his companion now. And then Alma's like, "Okay, God's going to level this place. Now my companion would like to tell you the same thing. Go ahead, Elder." And Amulek gets up and it says in Alma 10:12, "the people began to be astonished seeing there was more than one witness who testified of the things they were accused which." There's that law of witnesses.
- 00:50 I'm glad you guys are talking about this because maybe we don't think of it as much as they did, but when Amulek got up and he's like, "You guys know me, I'm a man of no small reputation," and he says it, that's when they're like, "Oh, wait a minute." They began to be astonished.
- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 01:04 Yeah. And it seems that at least some portion of this crowd is lawyers and judges because they're going to take a prominent role in the story. This idea of witnesses, John, as you pointed out, you referred to the law of witnesses. This is a reference to Deuteronomy 19:15, which says that "one witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity or for any sin and any sin that he sinneth at the mouth of two witnesses or at the mouth of three witnesses shall the matter be established."
- 01:36 As Alma's standing up and saying, "Look, God's told me this is your crime. I'm witnessing against you your crime." They're saying, "Look, we're following the law of Moses. One witness isn't going to cut it. This isn't good enough." So now once you've got that second witness, it's like, "Uh-oh, we better do something to undermine that second witness, otherwise we stand condemned according to this law."

John Bytheway:	01:58	And that's when the lawyers popped up. Good point.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	02:01	Exactly. So the rest of the time is the lawyers trying to undermine Amulek as a valid witness because Deuteronomy goes on and talks about how in verse 16 through 19, that was Deuteronomy 19:15, the law of witnesses, 16 to 19 talks about how to deal with a false witness, that a false witness, if someone bears a false witness, then that false witness should get the punishment instead, that that's a real crime.
	02:26	What we're going to see is they're trying to undermine Amulek as a witness, and you might be thinking like, "Why does this matter? Why is this so important?" It has to do with this law of witnesses.
John Bytheway:	02:35	Uh-oh. Okay, we got to take this guy on now because the law just got involved.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	02:41	This also gives us another insight, theoretically anyway, into the teachings of Nehor that Nehor while being an antichrist, apparently these people who were mostly followers of Nehor seem to accept the Old Testament.
	02:56	We see amongst some apostate groups in the Book of Mormon, whether it's the wicked priests of Noah, or in this case, people who are interpreting the Old Testament in a way where they don't think they need a messiah. Do you remember Abinadi's question: Do you think salvation comes by the commandments alone? And the wicked priests of Noah saying, yes, this is where salvation comes through the commandments.
	03:17	Just because these people aren't of the church of God that Alma is, doesn't mean they don't have any sort of scripture background. Seems to be they do have a common belief. They have a different interpretation of it.
Hank Smith:	03:28	So here comes the lawyers, right?
John Bytheway:	03:31	Hank, that is exactly what I wrote in my margin. Deuteronomy 19:15. Here come the lawyers.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	03:39	They start to interact with these lawyers, yes. You can see that for example, Alma chapter 10, verse 17 to 23, this is where Amulek kind of calls out the people. Now he's talking more for himself. And the first part is testimony is pretty much following Alma, but now he's using language similar to Alma. So if you compare like Alma 10: 17, which says, "Now they knew not that

Alma could know their designs, but it came to pass that as they began to question him, he perceived their thoughts and he said to them, 'Oh, you wicked and perverse generation'" which is recall the same thing that Alma had called these people back in Alma chapter 9 verse 8. He's using similar language. He says, "Ye lawyers and hypocrites, you're laying the foundation for the devil for ye are laying traps and snares to catch the holy people."

04:26 The lawyers in attempting to make Amulek cross his words so they can call him a false witness so there won't be two witnesses against them, in order to do that, they're not doing that sincerely. The lawyers themselves are becoming false witnesses against Amulek. Amulek is using the same law to condemn them.

04:46 So in verse 24, the lawyers are going to respond and they're going to say, "This man, Amulek, doth revile against our laws, which are just and our wise lawyers whom you have selected." And what's hilarious is, I think hilarious, Amulek's going to respond and say, "No, I didn't say anything against your law, just your lawyers." He never denies having called out their lawyers. He says in verse 26, "Behold, have I testified against your law?" That's a question, right? Yeah. Do you want to read that for us, John?

John Bytheway: 05:19 Yeah. Alma 10:26, "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."

Dr. Daniel Sharp: 05:33 Maybe I'm understanding it wrong, but the way I understand this is the law they're referring to is this law of witnesses. And what he's saying is you're trying to argue against me by saying I'm a false witness. That makes you a false witness. So I'm not arguing against your law. I'm using your law to prove that you are going to be condemned because you're in fact, the false witness. That's kind of what this battle going back and forth.

05:54 But we did skip over I think an important part that I want to pause on, and that's the prayers of the righteous, which are here in these verses as well. Should we look at Alma 10:23? Do you want to read that for us?

Hank Smith: 06:07 Yeah, sure. This is Amulek speaking. "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; you



shall be smitten by famine, pestilence, and sword; and the time is soon at hand except ye repent."

- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 06:30 Unfortunately, or horribly or however you want to say it, the people of Ammonihah are going to burn the believers and they're going to destroy them, and some of them are going to flee. The city of Ammonihah, we've foreshadowed already or read the scripture, will be destroyed, but it is not destroyed until all of the righteous have left.
- Hank Smith: 06:49 Someone might walk away from this story as you read about the destruction of Ammonihah and think, "Wow, the Lord is very aggressive and angry with these people," when it seems if you choose to do this, this is what's going to happen. And how many times have they warned them?
- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 07:07 Yeah, it's important to realize that Alma went there in the first place just to tell them to repent or whatever, like a normal missionary. And when they wouldn't, the angel turned them back and said, "Go tell them again. If they don't repent, not only will they suffer problems later, they're going to be cut off now, they're going to be destroyed. Make sure they have a chance."
- Hank Smith: 07:28 It's not a popular message, but it's an important message.
- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 07:32 On that cheery note in chapter 10 verse 30, up through chapter 11 verse 20, we kind of get introduced to Zeezrom. Now remember that the start of chapter 11 verse 1, as I talked about already as sort of an arbitrary break here to make this more manageable I guess as a section, but in the original published Book of Mormon, and in the original dictation, most likely on the gold plates, this was part of the same chapter. So as we start with chapter 10, verse 30, we meet Zeezrom. Do you want to read 31 and 32?
- John Bytheway: 08:08 "And now 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. Now, the object of these lawyers was to get gain; and they got gain according to their employ."
- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 08:25 Someone anyway, whether it's Alma or Mormon is going to give us a summary of the monetary system of how judges are paid and what coins values are. It seems to me it only serves one purpose. In verse 22 Zeezrom is going to offer Amulek six onties of silver. It seems to me that the main purpose of all this

		discussion of monetary stuff is to let you know how much money that is. If you do the math, it comes to 42 days of pay for an attorney.
Hank Smith:	08:56	And then 11:12, ezrom, it's almost like Zeezrom, almost like there's a play on how much he loves money.
John Bytheway:	09:03	Wow, I think you're right here, Dan. Either it's Alma or Mormon wants us to know how much Amulek is getting offered.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	09:12	Yeah. So if you look at verse 20 again of chapter 11, it says "Now, it was 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 so forth and so forth. And then at the end of the verse it says, "therefore they did stir up the people against Alma and Amulek."
	09:32	The fact that they're referring to Alma and Amulek in the third person as opposed to Amulek and myself is why I think that this is actually a Mormon insertion and not an Alma insertion. Does that make sense?
John Bytheway:	09:44	Yeah.
Hank Smith:	09:44	Yeah.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	09:45	You'll see that a few times throughout here where we refer to Alma and Amulek in the third person and you don't have the I anymore. And maybe that was a choice of the author, or maybe that's how Alma talks about himself. I don't know.
John Bytheway:	09:54	And maybe Mormon is trying to show us how they were so specific with their money. Because he does bookend it with verse 32. "It was the object of these lawyers to get gain." You go over to verse 20, "It was the sole purpose to get gain."
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	10:11	I think that that bookend is even more clear when you stop seeing chapter 11 as a break, when you see it as one flowing unit.
	10:18	Let's focus though. What's really interesting though is the plan of redemption as outlined by Alma in chapter 12 and the role of Christ as outlined here in chapter 11. Zeezrom says, "Look, can I ask you some questions?" And Amulek basically says, "Sure." But I think it's interesting that the first thing Zeezrom says is not a question at all. "Here's some money. Deny Christ." He goes,

"Can I ask you some questions?" "Yes." "If you'll deny the existence of a supreme being," that's verse 22, "here's six onties of silver." In other words, 42 days worth of work. "I'll give it to you if you'll deny a supreme being."

- 10:50 Why does he want him to deny a supreme being? Because then this would show that he was a false witness and it would undermine him as a witness. It would put Alma as a single witness and give him reason to accuse Amulek, which therefore apparently by being able to accuse Amulek, I guess it gives Zeezrom a job.
- 11:09 There's another important point, but back in Alma chapter 1, when we were introduced to Nehor, we also learned something else about Nephite law, which is maybe a little bit distinct from just Deuteronomy. In Alma chapter 1 verse 17, it said that "the people durst not lie, if it were known, for fear of the law, for liars were punished; therefore, they pretended to preach according to their belief; the law could have no power on any man for his belief."
- 11:37 You were allowed to believe whatever you wanted in this society. But if you lied about what you believed, that was a problem. Amulek has already testified in the existence of God, of a supreme being. Now Zeezrom's trying to get him to deny it so that he can point out he's a false witness, undermine the witnesses.
- John Bytheway: 11:56 You say you lied about your belief. Wow, interesting.
- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 11:59 Yeah. And therefore I can accuse you, take you to a court, charging, get some onties-
- John Bytheway: 12:06 Gets some onties to fill up my car.
- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 12:07 Yeah. Of course Amulek, he doesn't fall for it. And he says, "I'm not going to deny that."
- 12:11 And then we get to Alma 11:26 to 29. Can we just read that?
- Hank Smith: 12:16 Alma 11:26. "And Zeezrom said unto him: Thou sayest there is a true and living God? And Amulek said: Yea, there is a true and living God. Zeezrom said: Is there more than one God? And he answered, No."
- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 12:32 Before we go on and try to figure out what Amulek is talking about here, I think it's important to understand who Amulek is

referring to when he talks about the true and living God. Remember that Zeezrom said, "Will you deny there is a supreme being," back in verse 22. If you take this money and deny the supreme being, you'll be all good. In verse 25, Amulek says, "It was only your desire, Zeezrom that I should deny the true and living God that you might have cause to destroy me." So that's where this phrase true and living God entered the conversation. Amulek brought it up saying, "You told me to deny the true and living God," even though that wasn't exactly the phrase Zeezrom used. And now Zeezrom says, "Do you say there's a true and living God?" And then Amulek says, "Yea there is a true and a living God."

- |                   |       |  |
|-------------------|-------|--|
|                   | 13:20 | I bring that up because if he said that it's possible to come away thinking, "Oh, he's talking about a true God, and a living God," two separate beings. And that seems to be how Zeezrom is partially interpreting this because his next question is, "Is there more than one God," to which Amulek responds no.  |
|                   | 13:39 | Zeezrom's question makes a little bit less sense in light of the current textual version we have of this text, because what Amulek is saying is there is a true and a living God. Who is that? What does that mean? So let's look at Jeremiah 10:10, shall we? This will give us an Old Testament, roughly contemporary with Lehi on true and living God and what this might mean. |
| John Bytheway:    | 14:02 | Okay, I've got it here, Jeremiah 10:10. "But the Lord is the true God. He is the living God and an everlasting king. At his wrath, the earth shall tremble and the nation shall not be able to abide his indignation."   |
| Dr. Daniel Sharp: | 14:18 | Thank you. And again, here you see that these are separate titles. He's a true God. He's a living God. And the description here is for the Lord.   |
| John Bytheway:    | 14:26 | Yeah, it's in small capitals, meaning it's Jehovah.  |
| Dr. Daniel Sharp: | 14:31 | The original text here said Jehovah. Maybe Yahweh. We'll pronounce it Jehovah. This is the name. The true and living God, the true God and the living God are both titles for Jehovah. This is the God that they believed in.  |
|                   | 14:47 | Now, why would Amulek say there's only one God if he's talking about Jesus? Where's Heavenly Father in this equation? Why would you answer there's only one God if who he's referring to is Jesus?   |

Dr. Daniel Sharp:	15:00	And I think it's important to look at Exodus 20:2 and 3 in order to understand how the ancient Nephites would've understood this being a people who followed the law of Moses. This is one of the 10 Commandments. It's pretty famous, but I'm not sure we always think about what it's actually saying, Exodus 20:2 and 3.
John Bytheway:	15:19	"I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me."
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	15:29	Again, what do you notice about this commandment? Who is the Lord God that is commanding them to have no other gods beside them? The word Lord, again, if you are looking at the written text, you see is written in those all capitals sort of small capitals. But this is the technique the King James translators used to indicate that the original Hebrew text had the word Jehovah here.
John Bytheway:	15:49	Okay.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	15:50	For the Nephites, this is an important point, Jehovah is their God. It is the God who they covenanted with. It is the father of their covenant, the person who covenanted with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. That's Jehovah. The person who appeared to Moses on the Mount Sinai and gave the 10 Commandments is Jehovah. The person who is the object of their worship throughout this text is Jehovah. This is, for them, their God.
	16:20	At first, this may be really confusing for us as Latter-day Saints because we don't follow the law of Moses really, first of all. Most biblical scholars now, not just Latter-day Saints scholars, but most biblical scholars understand that the ancient Hebrews believed in what was called the Council of the Gods.
	16:38	If the listeners want to see sort of a quick little rundown, there's an interesting YouTube video done by this group called the BibleProject because I want to emphasize, again, this isn't a Latter-day Saint concept. This is a pretty current scholarly concept, the idea of the Divine Council. Because you might hear this and think, oh, this is the church trying to force their ideas.
	16:56	But the idea is that there is a Divine Council. There's a most high God who has a child God. Now in some versions of the Divine Council, the most high God has several children, and many of the stories of the Old Testament seem to be of a battle between Jehovah, who is the God of Israel, and the gods of these other

countries, other nations. And there's some question, and it depends a little bit on the story and the interpretation of that story, whether it's a question of both of these gods are children of the most high God or whether Jehovah is the only child of the most high God and everyone else is false gods.

John Bytheway:	17:37	Yeah, that makes sense.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	17:38	The Book of Mormon is quite clear that there is a most high God who has a son and that son's name is Jehovah, and Jehovah is the God who has created the heaven and the earth. He is the Son of the most high God, but He Himself because He's divine, He lives in heaven, He Himself is a God.
	17:57	The Book of Mormon makes it clear. Jehovah is Himself divine and is the one who made the heaven and earth. This is really a central message of the Book of Mormon, the idea that Jesus is Jehovah, the God of Israel, the person who made that covenant and that He personally has come down to earth to atone for the sins of His people.
	18:24	When Amulek is answering Zeezrom and he says to him, "There is one God and it is the true and living God," he's answering this from the point of view of a Nephite, who is saying, "For us, in the law of Moses, there is only one God with whom we interact. Everybody else is a false god. All those other so-called members of the Divine Council are not real. This is our God." It's not a statement of saying there's no such thing as a heavenly father. I think too often we read modern Trinitarian ideas into the Book of Mormon because we don't understand the ancient context.
Hank Smith:	19:03	That's fascinating.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	19:05	Let's keep going and see how Zeezrom then responds to this. Who will read verse 30 and 31?
Hank Smith:	19:12	This is Alma 11:30. "Now, Zeezrom said unto him again, "How knowest thou these things?" 31, "And he said, 'An angel hath made them known unto me.'" 32, "Zeezrom said again, 'Who is he that should come? Is it the Son of God?'" That's interesting. I remember you saying earlier, Dan, that he doesn't say, "That's crazy." He just keeps going.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	19:33	That's right.
Hank Smith:	19:34	Yeah.

Dr. Daniel Sharp:	19:34	He ignores that whatsoever. "Yeah, okay, that's fine." Verse 33, "And he said unto him, 'Yea.'"
	19:38	So the next question is, okay, wait a second, Dr. Sharp, Daniel, Dan, whatever, Danny Boy, whatever you want to call me, you just went on explaining that Amulek is saying that there is only one God and that God is Jehovah. And yet here, Zeezrom asks him, "Is the person who comes the son of God," and you're saying, and Amulek answers yes. Doesn't this now suggest that the person coming is different than Jesus or different than Jehovah and isn't that false doctrine? Like what is really being said here?
	20:15	So in Mosiah 13:28, in the midst of this sort of conversation about does redemption come from the law of Moses or come from somewhere else, in Mosiah 13:28 Abinadi says, "And moreover I say unto you that salvation doth not come by the law alone and were it not for the atonement, which God Himself shall make for the sins and iniquities of His people, that they must unavoidably perish notwithstanding the law of Moses."
	20:45	And he goes on in verse 33 and 35 and brings out this point more. "Did not Moses prophesy unto them concerning the coming of the Messiah and that God should redeem His people? Yea, and even all the prophets who have prophesied ever since the world began, have they not spoken more or less concerning these things? Have they not said that God Himself should come down among the children of men and take upon Him the form of man and go forth in mighty power upon the face of the earth? Have they not said also that He should bring to pass the resurrection?"
	21:17	Like you said, he goes on and quotes Isaiah 53, and the whole purpose of that is just to prove that Jehovah is the one who's going to be the suffering servant, that God Himself would come down amongst the children of men.
	21:28	Sometimes we forget this aspect of the Book of Mormon. We talk about Jesus is the Christ, but we forget one of the central messages. If we go to the title page of the Book of Mormon, the part that says, "The Book of Mormon account written by the hand of Mormon..."
Hank Smith:	21:42	"The eternal God." I think I know what you're going to say.

Dr. Daniel Sharp:	21:45	Exactly right. Gives a few things, but one of the things it says here, "The purpose of this book," again, this is from the title page towards the middle paragraph, there's a little dash and it says, "And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ." And I think a lot of times in Sunday school lessons, we just stop there and put the book down, but the sentence isn't over yet.
	22:09	The Book of Mormon was not written just to convince people that Jesus is the Christ. It's that Jesus is the Christ, the eternal God. This is the central message of the Book of Mormon. God Himself cares enough about you to come down to earth to redeem you. That's the condescension of God. That's the amazing message of the Book of Mormon.
John Bytheway:	22:34	After this part in Mosiah 13, Mosiah 14, here's this suffering servant, that's Christ. And in verse one of Mosiah 15, "I would that ye should understand that God Himself shall come down among the children of men and shall redeem His people." So this God is the Redeemer. That's what you're saying.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	22:51	Yeah. It's not just Christ is the suffering servant. It's Jehovah is the suffering servant. That's God. That's the amazing part of this. That's what all the prophets have been testifying.
	23:03	And now he goes on in verse two and says, "And because He dwelleth in the flesh, He shall be called the Son of God." So the Son of God, as far as Abinadi is concerned, is a title for Jehovah because He dwells in the flesh. The Son of God is referring to the fact that He will become human, that He is not going to remain a divine personage. But he says, "He dwelleth in the flesh, He should be called the Son of God and having subjected the flesh to the will of the father, being the father and the Son."
	23:36	So this phrase that Jesus is the father and the Son is not saying that heavenly father and Jesus Christ is the same person, is not a description of two different beings. What it's saying is that the personage that's walking around on earth is both divine and human. This is a description of the nature of Christ. It's one of the things that the Patristic fathers debated for centuries in the early parts of Christianity. What is Christ? He's fully God and fully human. Abinadi sums this up in three verses.
	24:10	Now remember, just side note, Zeezrom most likely is a member of the order of Nehor, which means he believes everyone's going to be saved so this entire concept is something he probably doesn't believe. You see in verse 38, Zeezrom



changes tactics and goes back to, "Now Zeezrom saith again unto him, 'Is the son of God the very eternal father?'"

24:33 Now, I think if you asked most members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints what's the correct answer to this question, they would all say, "No. The first vision clearly shows that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ, two different people. I served my mission. I know what the answer to this is." But I think we're surprised by what Amulek says. He says, "Yea. He is the very eternal father." It goes on and says, "He's the very eternal father of heaven and of earth." And I've heard some people try to start to finesse that and say that like Amulek is playing word games. Amulek is trying to dance in some sort of fine line or something with Zeezrom. But yeah, Jesus is the eternal father of heaven and earth. He is the father of the covenant.

25:17 For me last week we studied King Benjamin in Mosiah where he talks about taking upon you this new name and entering into this covenant, and the name you're taking upon you is the name of Christ, that Christ is your father. You are the children of Christ because you've taken upon you these names. He's the father of the covenant. He's the father, the creator of the world.

25:37 Again, from a Nephite point of view, Jehovah is the eternal father and I think this is an important distinction. What's going to happen later in the Book of Mormon, again spoiler alert, is in 3 Nephi when Jesus shows up, He introduces Himself as we saw as the God of Israel. But in chapter 12, He's going to tell the people to not pray to Him anymore, but to pray to heavenly father. And we just read that like, "Well, of course, that's a given."

26:05 But this for them, I think is a paradigm shift that shows the truth of the Book of Mormon, it shows how this is an ancient people who were living under a different dispensation. This is not a modern creation of Joseph Smith, who certainly would've put in more Trinitarian theology. And this is an ancient text reflecting this ancient understanding of who God is and who Jehovah is and the relationship that humanity has with Jehovah.

Hank Smith: 26:31 Yeah, we've seen that with Nephi's dream and again, with the angel, with King Benjamin, there's no mention of God, the father, as in heavenly father. Their mention is God Himself shall come to earth. Same with Abinadi, God Himself. So this is in their mind, Jehovah, He's the God and He's coming here.

John Bytheway:	26:52	Could you shed some light on verse 44, Alma 11? He starts talking very specifically about resurrection and then at the top of page 237, "Be arraigned before the bar of Christ, the Son and God, the father, and the Holy Spirit, which is one eternal God." So that sounds really Trinitarian.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	27:12	Excellent point. And normally, I think before I really thought through this, my answer to my students always was, "They're one in purpose. Let's move on." While clearly Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost are one in purpose, that is obviously a true doctrine, I don't think that is necessarily what Amulek had in mind here. I think that what we see here are three separate titles again for Jesus. We learned from the Gospel of John that the father judges no man, but has given all judgment to the Son. It's my understanding of the atonement of Jesus Christ that He is uniquely qualified to be our judge because He has suffered all of our sins and transgressions and knows us better because of His empathy, His actual earthly experience on this earth. The reason God Himself had to come to Earth was so that he could judge us because, otherwise, the judgment could never be just. He would never know fully our experiences and whether our repentance was sincere.
	28:16	Knowing that we'll be judged by Christ, we've already pointed out that the Son of God is a title for the human nature of Jesus and God, the Father. Now, we've already pointed out in verse 39 that Amulek said that the Son of God is the very eternal father. This isn't just a human being that's going to judge us. It is Jehovah, a person with divine knowledge and with eternal experience.
	28:43	I, again, think this is a reference to Jesus because at the time that this was written, 82 years BC, Jehovah was a personage of spirit. My understanding is that these are three different descriptions of Jesus. He is Christ, the Son. He is the father of heaven and earth, and He is that Holy Spirit with whom all the prophets up to this point of time have interacted with. So that's who will judge us, that person.
Hank Smith:	29:09	And it seems in this verse that Amulek's bringing up is he's not so concerned about how we see the godhead here, but the judgment that is coming.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	29:18	That's a great transition because that's going to be really Zeezrom's question and problem. Because remember, Zeezrom most likely, like many of the people of Ammonihah, is a member of the Nehors, which are people that think everyone is going to be saved. God created all people, God will redeem all people, all

people will have eternal life. So the idea that people will resurrect and be judged for their sins is, "Wait, what? Wait, wait. Say again? Wait, that changes everything. I was told we'd all have eternal life."

29:50 This brings us into chapter 12. First of all, there's like a first-person transition, if we want to keep kind of following that. If we look at verse 46

Dr. Daniel Sharp: 30:00 Chapter 11 says, "Now, when Amulek had finished these words, the people began again to be astonished, and also as Zeezrom began to tremble, and thus ended the words of Amulek or this is all that I have written." I think the I here is probably Alma. We've had some quotes from the record, and now we get, "Now Alma seeing the words of Amulek," so this is obviously Mormon now coming back in and summarizing, so we have this sort of transition, which again, probably helps explain in the original Book of Mormon the fact that chapter 12 is a different block of text from 10 and 11. Remember, chapter eight was one block. Chapter nine was one block, which was Alma by himself. Ten and eleven, which was Alma mixed with Mormon commentary, and now we have chapter 12 as a separate transition block.

30:46 Here, I want to talk about the plan of redemption, which really began back in chapter 11, verse 40 to 46. But before we do, we've got to set this up a little bit. I'm really excited. Sorry, I'm going to jump out of my seat because I think we need to set some understandings. One of my favorite study helps, non-scripture study helps for understanding scriptures is the 1828 Webster Dictionary. When I was a student at BYU, I had Marcus Martins as a professor who wound up becoming my colleague at BYU Hawaii. We actually worked together for many years there, but he told us in class, I remember when I was a student, he said, "The most important study aid you can get is a dictionary." So that year for my birthday, I asked my mom to buy me a dictionary because they're like a hundred bucks. If you buy a big, real dictionary, they're pretty thick. Nowadays, they're all free online so you don't have to pay anything.

31:39 The problem with a dictionary is words change over time, so the modern dictionary my mom bought me was great, but it gave me modern definitions of words. Joseph Smith translated this book into English in 1830. The fact that you can for free get a dictionary from 1828, roughly the same time Joseph Smith translated this book, gives us an idea of what these words meant to him. So as we're talking about the plan of redemption and that Christ is coming to redeem his people, I think the first

important thing to do is look up the word redeem in 1828 and see what this would've meant to Joseph Smith. You just Google 1828 Webster Dictionary. John, are you turning around? Do you have this on the shelf, the 1828 Webster Dictionary printed out?

Hank Smith: 32:24 He has an original.

Dr. Daniel Sharp: 32:27 He was alive back then? I didn't-

Hank Smith: 32:28 Yeah, yeah.

John Bytheway: 32:28 I knew Noah Webster. I was friends with Noah Webster. I have the [Book of Mormon reference companion](#) and it has an appendix in the back of 1828 Webster. I could look it up. Okay, so redeem, the number one definition. We should tell people, what's the website? [WebstersDictionary1828.com](#). It says, redeem, number one - to purchase back, to ransom, to liberate or rescue from captivity or bondage, or from any obligation or liability to suffer or to be forfeited by paying an equivalent. As to redeem prisoners or captured goods, to redeem a pledge. Number two, to repurchase what has been sold, to regain possession of a thing alienated by repaying the value of it to the possessor.

Dr. Daniel Sharp: 33:23 One way to think about this is like if you went to a pawn shop and you drop something off, you get a little ticket, and then you come back and you can redeem the ticket if you give them the right amount of money and you get that object back. This is one idea of redemption, but probably the more common one is this idea that it said in definition one, to purchase back, to ransom, to liberate or rescue from captivity. That in the ancient world, it was common when war was taking place to capture prisoners of war and then they would become slaves to the new owners. They would become subject to the new people and their slaves, but they could be bought back. If you paid the owner the correct price, you could purchase back those people. So the idea of redeeming is the idea that you had someone or something of value that has become slave to something else, and then the redeemer comes and purchases them back and gives them their value, and this is important in understanding our idea of the plan of redemption.

34:27 And what Alma's going to lay out is that because of the fall of Adam, all people have become lost and fallen. We've seen that phrase a few times already, that because of the fall of Adam, all people have become captive to the devil. In 2nd Nephi, chapter nine, verse 10, it talks about if you weren't resurrected, if you were stuck down there, you'd become subject to that devil and

you become their property. But what Christ has done through the plan of redemption is he has redeemed mankind from the Fall. He has brought them back from that fallen state.

- John Bytheway: 35:04 I, for fun doing some research, found that plan of salvation is the phrase used I think three times in the Book of Mormon, but plan of redemption is used 15 times. By far, it's the most common way to describe the plan of salvation in the Book of Mormon.
- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 35:20 How many times is that found here in Alma? Do you know?
- John Bytheway: 35:23 Oh, it's exactly what I tell my class. I say notice who used the phrase. It is the sons of Mosiah and Alma use it most of the time. Gee, why would that be? Because they were knocked flat by an angel and they needed to be redeemed. I like the fact that the word redeemer is in plan of redemption. I mean, Savior is in salvation but it's Spanish, Salvador. What are the different names for the plan in the Book of Mormon? Plan of salvation three times, in Jarom 1 and 2, Alma 24:14, Alma 42:5. Plan of redemption, 15 times, Jacob 6:8, Alma 12:25. Here's this chapter, Alma 12. Alma 12:26, Alma 12:30, Alma 12:32 and Alma 12:33.
- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 36:14 So that was five just in this chapter?
- John Bytheway: 36:16 Yeah. Then Alma 17:16, so here's Ammon. Alma 18:39, Alma 22:13, that's Aaron. Alma 29:2, Alma 34:16 to 31, that's end-like, isn't it? Alma 39:18, Alma to his son, Corianton. Alma 42:11 and 13. So that's all 15 references to plan of redemption, and notice, except for Jacob, they're all Alma and the sons of Mosiah. That's pretty cool. And then there's also merciful planet, the great creator, great and eternal plan of deliverance from death, plan of restoration, great plan of happiness and plan of mercy. I'm just glad that there isn't one that says plan of punishment or plan of condemnation or plan of judgment, because that's how we think.
- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 37:07 The great plan of you stink. Yeah.
- John Bytheway: 37:08 Yeah. They're all really nice words. We're going to be redeemed, we're going to be saved, that we're going to have mercy, we're going to have happiness.
- Dr. Daniel Sharp: 37:16 That's a great point. Before we dive into Alma's interpretation of the plan of redemption, I'd love to look at Samuel the Lamanite, because this is my favorite, and probably for me,

what has influenced my understanding of this plan more than anything else. And it's in Helaman chapter 14. I'm looking at Samuel the Lamanite prophesying about the death of Jesus Christ in Helaman chapter 14, verse 15 through 19,

- |                   |       |  |
|-------------------|-------|--|
| John Bytheway:    | 37:45 | Helaman 14:15. "For behold, he surely must die that salvation may come. Yea, it behooveth him and becometh expedient that he dieth, to bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, that thereby, men may be brought into the presence of the Lord."  |
| Dr. Daniel Sharp: | 38:02 | Notice the important part about the resurrection is that it's so that men may be brought into the presence of the Lord. Let's keep reading verse 16, as he expounds on that.   |
| John Bytheway:    | 38:12 | "Yea behold, this death bringeth to pass the resurrection and redeemeth all mankind from the first death."   |
| Dr. Daniel Sharp: | 38:19 | Okay, and we're talking about the plan of redemption, a redeemer, and what we see here is a universal redemption. "This death bringeth to pass the resurrection and redeemeth all mankind." No limitations placed on this, but what does it redeem them from? The first death. Now, I think if you asked your students, what's the first death? I know as a missionary, this is what I taught. The first death is physical death. The first death is the fact that my body's going to die, and that's what the resurrection overcomes for me. The resurrection overcomes physical death, but that is not, according to Samuel the Lamanite, what the first death is. So do you want to keep reading now and bring that in? |
| John Bytheway:    | 38:59 | "...and redeemeth all mankind from the first death, that spiritual death."   |
| Dr. Daniel Sharp: | 39:04 | A little shocker there. I didn't see that coming. Yeah, the first death is actually a spiritual death. The first problem humanity faces is the fact that as Alma talks about and Amulek talked about, all mankind by the fall of Adam have become lost and fallen and are cut off from the presence of God. Adam is going to partake of the fruit, and the day he eats thereof, he shall surely die, which means that he becomes mortal, and eventually, he'll suffer physical death. But what also happens that day, which we maybe don't think about that much, is Adam has to leave the Garden of Eden after he partakes the forbidden fruit.   |
|                   | 39:43 | In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve, they walked and talked with God. They were in the presence of God. Once he partakes   |

the physical fruit, Adam leaves the presence of God and for the rest of his mortal life, he interacts with God through angels, through messengers, through sacrifice. He doesn't directly enter the presence of God again. He's become a fallen man in that sense. He's left His presence, cut off from the presence of the Lord. Through birth, everyone who's born immediately is cut off from the presence of God. You don't live in God's presence on this earth, and that is the first obstacle that needs to be overcome. What the next verse is going to explain is how the resurrection overcomes the fall of Adam.

John Bytheway:	40:32	Verse 17?
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	40:34	Yeah.
John Bytheway:	40:35	So Samuel the Lamanite continues, "But behold the resurrection of Christ redeemeth mankind, yea even all mankind, and bringeth them back into the presence of the Lord."
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	40:46	And what we see here is a universal redemption. All mankind will be redeemed. Now, we need to go back and think about Nehor. Remember, he was a false teacher and he taught three things, well, in addition to people being popular and stuff. But as far as doctrinally, God created all people, God would redeem all people, and all people would have eternal life. And a fun game to play is what's the truth and what's a lie? The way the devil and the Antichrist work is they give some truth and they give some lie. God created all people. Well, okay, yeah, that's true. Nehor, I'm with you. God redeemed all people. I think sometimes as Latter-day saints, we think that's the lie. But according to Samuel the Lamanite, that's not a lie. It seems to me that a close reading of Samuel the Lamanite suggests that the first death is a spiritual death, and the second death is a spiritual death.
	41:39	The first death, maybe better explained, is a physical and spiritual death caused by the fall of Adam. So this is something that happens to you through no fault of your own. You never did anything wrong to be born. You're cut off from God's presence because of Adam, and because your agency is not exercised during this fall, you're redeemed from that fall without any effort or exercise of your own. You will return to God's presence. All humanity will return to God's presence through the saving, redeeming grace of Jesus Christ.
	42:13	Now, when you return to God's presence, you'll now be judged according to your actions. That's what Heavenly Father wants, is to hold people accountable for their actions, and the action

which we need to do is believe in Jesus Christ and repent. Because it's a given, you're not going to be perfect. Those who repent, they will not suffer the second death, but if you have a hard heart, if you refuse to repent, then you are forced to leave the presence of God. You're cut off again from His presence, and that is the second spiritual death.

42:44 That's a great summary of the plan of redemption in just a few verses. I really like that. It really changed the way I thought about it. As a missionary, I think I used to dismiss too quickly resurrection, kind of like, "Yeah, there's physical death, but whatever. That's all taken care of. Don't worry about it." But here, it says that the resurrection brings everyone back to the presence of God. And also in verse 18, "It bringeth to pass the condition of repentance." The it in that sentence refers to resurrection. I don't know if we think about that very much.

43:19 If you weren't brought back into the presence of God, if you didn't know that was a reality or didn't believe that was a reality, I don't think you would ever have the hope or the faith necessary to repent. Why bother? You'd be like the Nehors. Well, you wouldn't believe in repentance because there'd be no judgment. There'd be no need. But the fact that you understand that you're going gives the resurrection of Christ. The fact that we're going back to God's presence gives us the faith, the hope, the ability through the atonement of Jesus Christ and the mercy it provides.

43:49 I want to take that understanding of the plan of redemption, making sure we understand, and now go back and read Amulek and Alma. Because for example, if we go back to Alma chapter 11 really quick, verse 40, this is talking about this eternal father who would be the redeemer, how he's coming to earth. Can someone read that? Alma, 11:40.

John Bytheway: 44:13 Yeah, this is great. So this is back to Amulek, talking to Zeezrom and testifying of Christ. "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."

Dr. Daniel Sharp: 44:36 As we think about Samuel the Lamanite, and he talked about this universal redemption - all people will redeemed from the fall of Adam - and now we look here at Amulek, it almost seems as if he's suggesting that the redemption is only for his people. Now, one way to understand that is, well, He's the father of Heaven and Earth. Everyone's His people. But it also goes on



and says, "He takes upon the transgressions of those who believe on His name."

- |                   |       |   |
|-------------------|-------|---|
| Dr. Daniel Sharp: | 45:00 | There's one way to understand Amulek to think he's saying that the redemption of Christ is limited to a few people. Do you understand the distinction there? Who is being redeemed? Is it all people? Samuel the Lamanite pointed out, or is it just those who believe on his name? What is the power of the redemption? This is where the point I tried to make earlier in this podcast that Amulek is a new member and maybe doesn't have all the right language to explain things may be in play here, I wonder. Because when Alma does stand up, he does say in Alma chapter 12 verse one, he does say that he opened his mouth, Alma, 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. |
|                   | 45:49 | So I'm trying to clarify and unfold a little bit more about Amulek. But I also think the key to understanding Amulek is verse 41 because he's talking about these people who will not be redeemed and he says, "Therefore, the wicked remain as though there had been no redemption made, except to be the loosing of the bands of death." And I think it's that phrase, "As though," that's important in understanding those people were redeemed from the fall of Adam, but because they chose to remain in their sins and they chose to rebel, it's as though there was no redemption made.  |
| Hank Smith:       | 46:29 | Dan, I love this. I've never seen Alma 12 as a refutation of the doctrine of Nehor.   |
| Dr. Daniel Sharp: | 46:36 | Yeah. I think it's most clear in chapter 12, verse eight where you get Zeezrom's panic question because at this point, Zeezrom, he's starting to believe that these people are being led by the spirit because they seem to know how to answer his questions and he's like, "Wait, wait, what does this thing that..." He said to Alma, "What does this mean, which Amulek has 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?" Like, "Wait, what?"  |
| Hank Smith:       | 47:06 | And it's great. By the end of Alma 12, he's brought them all the way to the Savior and repentance. He's been able to refute Nehor and said, "This is why you need the Son."   |
| Dr. Daniel Sharp: | 47:21 | Yeah. There's a shift in verse 20-21 where a different person asks a different question.  |

Hank Smith:	47:26	Yeah. He jumps in for Zeezrom, right? He's like, "Whoa."
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	47:29	Yeah. You look like you're getting weak here and you're questioning. You look like you're starting to buy this nonsense. Let's ask another tough one. This is Antionah. As far as I can tell, this is the only mention of this person in the entire Book of Mormon, so I don't know much about him, other than he was a chief ruler. It doesn't say a chief priest or a lawyer, which is interesting. They were ruled by judges, so maybe this makes him a judge. I don't know.
	47:51	There was one Antionah who was the chief ruler among them, and he came forth and said to them, "What does this that thou hast said that man should rise from the dead and be changed from the mortal to an immortal state, the soul can never die? 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."
Hank Smith:	48:18	He's using the scriptures to try to get them to like, "No, no, no, you're not right. Look, I know what the scriptures say."
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	48:24	That's exactly right. And Alma's response is just great. He goes, Well, that's the thing I just wanted to explain. Thanks for asking. Yeah. He clarifies in verse 22 that Adam's death did not only bring about a physical death but also transformed all humanity into a lost and fallen people. In other words, a spiritual death. We see that Alma's right in line with Samuel the Lamanite. It's not just a physical death we're trying to overcome, it's a spiritual separation. In verse 25, we get this idea that resurrection is an essential part of the plan of redemption. Yeah. You want to read that for us, verse 25?
Hank Smith:	49:00	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.
Dr. Daniel Sharp:	49:15	So again, trying to help us think a little bit about the importance of resurrection and Christ's overcoming death. President Nelson warned us against talking about the atonement of Jesus Christ by just simplifying it to the Atonement, so maybe I shouldn't just be saying resurrection like it's some independent thing of Jesus. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is part of the atonement of Jesus Christ. If atonement means to put us at one with God, it

is the resurrection of Jesus Christ which puts us back into God's presence. It is an essential part. I remember one time a stake president friend of mine was preparing an Easter message for the stake presidency and he was looking at the wording and he asked my opinion, I just happened to be around him.

49:57 It wasn't like I was some expert or something, and he said, " This time of Easter, we think about the resurrection of Jesus Christ and his Atonement." And I thought, "I'm not sure that's the way the Book of Mormon sees it." The resurrection is not a separate appendage, it's an essential part of putting us at one with God. If it had not been for the plan of redemption, there could be no resurrection. The plan of redemption is about resurrection, remembering that resurrection is not just overcoming physical death, resurrection is overcoming the fall of Adam. All of those effects have been reversed by the atonement of Jesus Christ.

Hank Smith: 50:35 This is what happens when you know your stuff. Look at Alma, and Amulek even, this, "Well, I'm going to fire off questions." And if you're well versed, if you've done your research, if you've done your study, he's able to lay out an argument for why the doctrine of Nehor is false and why this plan of salvation is going to work.

Dr. Daniel Sharp: 50:56 And like you said, why Christ, who is the eternal God, is essential for it. Alma is going to bring up, it's not in this chapter, but back in chapter seven when he was teaching a few chapters earlier, he teaches about how, through Christ's life experiences, he learns how to succor his people. And this is another essential part of the atonement of Jesus Christ that, yeah, a distant God knows all things, the Spirit knows everything, but through his experience, Jesus Christ gains an understanding of us through taking upon him the sins of his people, their infirmities, their sickness. It gives him this ability to know them and to judge them.

John Bytheway: 51:41 I've loved Alma 12:32 because it's something that [President Boyd K. Packer](#) pointed out once, the sequence, "Therefore God gave unto them commandments, after having made known unto them the plan of redemption." Some people might look at the gospel as a list of do's and don'ts, the long list of rules and do's and don'ts, but God, He presents the plan of happiness first and then the do's and don'ts make sense. Well, you always start with the plan first as it says, and that's the sequence in Alma 12:32. He gave them commandments, but that was after he made known unto them the plan of redemption. What do we have to offer for the church? A bunch of rules? No, we have the

plan of happiness and the commandments come later in the context of the plan of happiness. Then they make sense.

Hank Smith: 52:32

Yeah. If you understand the plan, the commandments come easy.

Dr. Daniel Sharp: 52:35

Let's look at 33 and 34, like you said, he's letting people know this plan and then it says, "But God did call on men, in the name of his Son, this being the plan of redemption, which was laid." The idea is, yes, there's a God, which is Jehovah for these Nephites, but salvation's not going to come from far away, that Jehovah will become the Son. We already looked at how Amulek pointed out how the Son of God is a title for him, that he's going to become human. This being the plan of redemption which was laid saying, "If you will repent and harden not your hearts, then will I have mercy on you through my Only Begotten Son." Therefore, God cannot lie. That's an essential part that Alma believes in the justice of God. God said that, "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."

53:32

When you talk about this list of do's and don'ts and stuff of the gospel, I just think all of that's bad atonement theory. The plan of redemption has been laid out so simply that what is asked for us is just to repent, just to try, just to keep going. It's not an overwhelming list of things to do. God has said, If you will repent, you will have a claim on mercy. Therefore, all you got to do is repent. It's not a complicated system. You've already been redeemed from the fall of Adam. You will go back to God's presence. It's not a question. Do you want to stay there? Great. Daily repentance. The prophet has told us what to do. As you walk this covenant path, do the best you can. Keep on that path, keep repenting. Let things go to the wayside that get in the way of that. That's a really powerful plan.

Hank Smith: 54:27

He finishes that way. Seeing we know these things and they are true, let us repent. Let us repent and not harden our hearts and we'll enter into the rest of God. It seems that Alma has gotten to the simplicity on the far side of complexity where he's going to walk us through something that is doctrinally deep. On the far side of it, he says, "Now, isn't it simple?" Let's say I'm a listener, I'm at home, I've gone through the complexity of these chapters, especially chapters 11 and 12, what's my takeaway here?

Dr. Daniel Sharp: 55:01

The way I feel the Spirit most strongly in my own personal life, in my own scripture study is when I come to the scriptures with

a question and when I study and pour over the doctrine. The reason I love the Book of Mormon is because of the way it testifies of Jesus Christ and his Atonement. What I tried to show here a little bit in this podcast is that the theology of the Book of Mormon is so deep. I teach a class on the history of Christian theology at Brigham Young University-Hawaii. It's not a religious education class, it's a history class. So we just look at how theology has developed over time. We use a textbook and so forth. But I love to just show my students how these debates go on for years and years and then you have Abinadi show up and give this explanation of the dual nature of Christ, or you have these other theologies about the plan of redemption. I just love the theology of the Book of Mormon.

55:56 It's a testimony to me that this is a real ancient history of an ancient people and a real book, and I could study it forever. My PhD is in New Testament studies, but I have learned more about the Atonement of Jesus Christ from the Book of Mormon than any other book. The simple takeaway I would hope people would take is the idea that Jesus Christ has redeemed us from the fall of Adam, and because of that, we will all stand before God to be accountable for our actions. The justice of God is not trying to punish us for sin. The justice of God is trying to hold us accountable for what we've done. And if what we have done is repent, then the justice of God demands that we be given forgiveness because God has said that is how it will be. That's my testimony.

Hank Smith: 56:52 That is wonderful.

John Bytheway: 56:54 Beautifully said. Yeah.

Hank Smith: 56:55 We worship God with our heart, mind. The Book of Mormon is stretching our minds. It's a form of worship when we do that. Oh, it's fantastic. Dan, thanks for being with us today. Thanks for taking your time to walk us through these chapters.

John Bytheway: 57:10 Thanks for listening.

Hank Smith: 57:11 Yeah. We loved having you. With that, we want to thank Dr. Daniel Sharp for being with us today. What a treat. This is mind-expanding stuff. We want to thank our executive producer Shannon Sorensen, our sponsors David and Verla Sorensen, and we always remember our founder Steve Sorensen. We hope you'll join us next week. We're going to continue with Alma and Amulek in the city of Ammonihah on followHIM. Before you skip to the next episode, I have some important information. This episode's transcript and show notes are available on our

website, [followhim.co](http://followhim.co). That's [followhim.C-O](http://followhim.C-O). On our website, you'll also find our two books, *Finding Jesus Christ in the Old Testament* and *Finding Jesus Christ in the New Testament*.

57:55

Both books are full of short and powerful quotes and insights from all our episodes from the Old and New Testaments. The digital copies of these books are absolutely free. You can watch the podcast on YouTube. Also, our Facebook and Instagram accounts have videos and extras you won't find anywhere else. If you'd like to know how you can help us, if you could subscribe to, rate, review, and comment on the podcast, that will make us easier to find. Of course, none of this could happen without our incredible production crew, David Perry, Lisa Spice, Jamie Neilson, Will Stoughton, Krystal Roberts, Ariel Cuadra, and Annabelle Sorensen.

President Russell M. Nelson: 58:32

Whatever questions or problems you have, the answer is always found in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Turn to him. Follow him.

## SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO?



- Hank Smith: 00:03 Hello, everyone. Welcome to followHIM Favorites. You know that John and I are sharing a single story to go with each week's lesson.
- 00:09 John, we are in Alma 8 through 12 this week. I'm going to share a story, but you know it as well as I do, so please fill in the gaps here. There's this moment in chapter 11 where this man Zeezrom offers Amulek six onties of silver, which must be a lot, right? Six onties?
- John Bytheway: 00:30 I guess it's a lot.
- Hank Smith: 00:31 Yeah. If he will deny the existence of a supreme being and Amulek does not take him up on his offer. The story I wanted to share is about McKay Christensen. John, I know you know this story. McKay Christensen was an incredible athlete and maybe he still is. McKay, if you're listening. He was highly sought after by colleges, both in baseball and football.
- 00:55 He held California state records in both sports. Absolutely incredible. But John, there were many professional teams that wanted him to skip college and come straight to playing professional baseball. Now, can you imagine being a senior in high school, you're 17 or 18 years old, and you're getting offers from professional baseball teams?
- 01:19 I remember hearing his dad say that he was helping him through this as they're offering him this much money and this much money, and he came to the point where he had to tell the teams that were trying to pick him up that he was going to serve a two-year mission, and many of the teams went away. They thought, well, that's not for us.
- 01:39 But there was one baseball team who really wanted him to come play for them. I think his dad said something like this, that they're both on the line. And this baseball team manager, I guess, or owner says, "Tell you what, instead of serving your

mission, come play baseball and we'll make that your mission. We'll talk about your religion as a member of this team." And just to sweeten the deal, John, he says "I'll give you a 1 million signing bonus."

John Bytheway:	02:12	And this was a while ago, too,
Hank Smith:	02:14	Back in the '90s.
John Bytheway:	02:15	Yeah, that's what I spend to fill the Sequoia today. But yeah, keep going.
Hank Smith:	02:19	\$1 million. John, can you imagine? You're 17. You're 17. Would you like a million dollars just for signing a piece of paper? You don't have to go on a mission. You can just stay home and play baseball. Oh, I'm so glad this wasn't me, John, because I can't imagine. I would think, oh, I could get that Ford F-150.
John Bytheway:	02:40	Come on, Hank. You had talent scouts after you, you know that.
Hank Smith:	02:44	I had so many. Then if I remember right, his dad actually started to weep as he tells this story, where his 17-year-old son on the phone with an owner of a professional baseball team says, "That's awfully gracious of you, sir, but my mission's not for sale."
John Bytheway:	03:06	Amazing.
Hank Smith:	03:08	Unbelievable moment for a young man. That's awfully gracious of you, sir. But my mission's not for sale. Well, John, you know the rest of the story. McKay goes and serves a mission in Japan. He's drafted anyway as a missionary. He's drafted and something only McKay Christensen, maybe it's only happened to him ever. He gets traded while on his mission. Can you imagine?
	03:34	"Hey, by the way, you got traded today." "I did?" He comes home and he still plays baseball. Right, John?
John Bytheway:	03:41	Yeah, he does. In fact, I'm looking at his baseball card right here.
Hank Smith:	03:46	That's awesome. McKay, if you're out there, you can correct any of the mistakes we made.
John Bytheway:	03:50	Yeah, I know this story, Hank, and while he was on his mission, he got up in the middle of the night to sign baseball cards, and I have one of them. And it says something on the back that you



will not see in any other baseball card in the world probably. It says, "Christensen made a commitment prior to signing with California. Therefore, he will begin his pro baseball career when he returns from his Mormon mission to Japan in 1999."

Hank Smith:	04:16	That is awesome. Now, John, I know that you know that story because I got it from your book, Sports: Life Lessons from Court Field and Gridiron. If anybody wants to pick that up, you can get it at your local DI.
John Bytheway:	04:32	Desert Industries because it's out of print.
Hank Smith:	04:34	John and I have our own shelf there.
John Bytheway:	04:37	That's right.
Hank Smith:	04:37	Desert Industries. Hey, join us on our full podcast. It's called followHIM. You can get it wherever you get your podcast. We're walking through these chapters, Alma 8 through 12 with Daniel Sharp. Dr. Sharp does a great job with these chapters, and then come back here next week. We'll do another followHIM Favorites.