

Comments on Alma 34

After Alma finished responding to the second question, Amulek then stands up and addresses the crowd. Amulek's point of view is somewhat different than Alma's. Amulek himself was living among a population of dissenters, and had to confront a difficult change that required sacrifice. He brings that to bear in his testimony to this group, as we see in v. 2.

His approach is to explain the necessity of the doctrine of the doctrine of the Messiah (v. 8-16), and encourage them to pray for mercy (v. 17-26). Amulek emphasizes the need for mercy. Where the Zoramites emphasize correctness of doctrine and their own false sense of righteousness, all the while being egregious hypocrites, Amulek is emphasizing mercy, humility, repentance and charity. Amulek's goal is to appeal to the humbled Zoramites as an insider who has been through the same ordeal and understands their point of view first-hand.

Amulek's implicit message is the Zoramite doctrine is one of self-righteousness and hypocrisy. The notion you can trust in the correctness of your own doctrine and behavior results in you believing there is no need for a Messiah. If there is no need for mercy, then you do not need a Redeemer. But, the lack of this results in people who are selfish and lacking in compassion for others. This is why after preaching on the need for a Messiah, and for prayer, Amulek then exhorts them to seek the welfare of others in v. 27-29. They themselves have been ostracized from their own community because of their poverty, because of superficial things. Amulek is saying, they cannot allow this behavior in themselves, otherwise they are hypocrites. He is encouraging them to recognize the connection between the Zoramite doctrine and the way they have been treated.

1 AND now it came to pass that after Alma had spoken these words unto them he sat down upon the ground, and Amulek arose and began to teach them, saying: 2 My brethren, I think that it is impossible that ye should be ignorant of the things which have been spoken concerning the coming of Christ, who is taught by us to be the Son of God; yea, I know that these things were taught unto you bountifully before your dissension from among us. 3 And as ye have desired of my beloved brother that he should make known unto you what ye should do, because of your afflictions; and he hath spoken somewhat unto you to prepare your minds; yea, and he hath exhorted you unto faith and to patience-- 4 Yea, even that ye would have so much faith as even to plant the word in your hearts, that ye may try the experiment of its goodness.

5 And we have beheld that the great question which is in your minds is whether the word be in the Son of God, or whether there shall be no Christ. 6 And ye also beheld that my brother has proved unto you, in many instances, that the word is in Christ unto salvation. 7 My brother has called upon the words of Zenos, that redemption cometh through the Son of God, and also upon the words of Zenock; and also he has appealed unto Moses, to prove that these things are true.

v1-6 Amulek stands up and endorses everything Alma has said, and encourages them to believe and act on that belief.

v2 Amulek comes from a similar situation, he himself formerly living among dissenters, cf. ch. 10.

8 And now, behold, I will testify unto you of myself that these things are true. Behold, I say unto you, that I do know that Christ shall come among the children of men, to take upon him the transgressions of his people, and that he shall atone for the sins of the world; for the Lord God hath spoken it. 9 For it is expedient that an atonement should be made; for according to the great plan of the Eternal God there must be an atonement made, or else all mankind must unavoidably perish; yea, all are hardened; yea, all are fallen and are lost, and must perish except it be through the atonement which it is expedient should be made.

10 For it is expedient that there should be a great and last sacrifice; yea, not a sacrifice of man, neither of beast, neither of any manner of fowl; for it shall not be a human sacrifice; but it must be an infinite and eternal sacrifice. 11 Now there is not any man that can sacrifice his own blood which will atone for the sins of another. Now, if a man murdereth, behold will our law, which is just, take the life of his brother? I say unto you, Nay. 12 But the law requireth the life of him who hath murdered; therefore there can be nothing which is short of an infinite atonement which will suffice for the sins of the world. 13 Therefore, it is expedient that there should be a great and last sacrifice, and then shall there be, or it is expedient there should be, a stop to the shedding of blood; then shall the law of Moses be fulfilled; yea, it shall be all fulfilled, every jot and tittle, and none shall have passed away.

14 And behold, this is the whole meaning of the law, every whit pointing to that great and last sacrifice; and that great and last sacrifice will be the Son of God, yea, infinite and eternal. 15 And thus he shall bring salvation to all those who shall believe on his name; this being the intent of this last sacrifice, to bring about the bowels of mercy, which overpowereth justice, and bringeth about means unto men that they may have faith unto repentance. 16 And thus mercy can satisfy the demands of justice, and encircles them in the arms of safety, while he that exercises no faith unto repentance is exposed to the whole law of the demands of justice; therefore

only unto him that has faith unto repentance is brought about the great and eternal plan of redemption.

v8-16 Amulek explains why the Messiah is necessary. Christ will come to take the sins of the people on himself, because otherwise everyone will be condemned (v. 8-9). Sacrifices are only a symbol pointing at the Messiah's sacrifice of himself, which does have eternal consequences (v. 10-13). This eternal sacrifice makes repentance and mercy possible, so that justice does not condemn us (v. 14-16).

17 Therefore may God grant unto you, my brethren, that ye may begin to exercise your faith unto repentance, that ye begin to call upon his holy name, that he would have mercy upon you; 18 Yea, cry unto him for mercy; for he is mighty to save. 19 Yea, humble yourselves, and continue in prayer unto him. 20 Cry unto him when ye are in your fields, yea, over all your flocks. 21 Cry unto him in your houses, yea, over all your household, both morning, mid-day, and evening. 22 Yea, cry unto him against the power of your enemies. 23 Yea, cry unto him against the devil, who is an enemy to all righteousness. 24 Cry unto him over the crops of your fields, that ye may prosper in them. 25 Cry over the flocks of your fields, that they may increase. 26 But this is not all; ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness.

v17-26 Amulek encourages them to appeal to the Lord and for His mercy, and to pray to him over everything, regardless of where they are.

27 Yea, and when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you. 28 And now behold, my beloved brethren, I say unto you, do not suppose that this is all; for after ye have done all these things, if ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart of your substance, if ye have, to those who stand in need--I say unto you, if ye do not any of these things, behold, your prayer is vain, and availeth you nothing, and ye are as hypocrites who do deny the faith. 29 Therefore, if ye do not remember to be charitable, ye are as dross, which the refiners do cast out, (it being of no worth) and is trodden under foot of men.

v27-29 Amulek encourages them to have charity and compassion for each other, otherwise they are hypocrites.

Obviously, the contrast here is between the way they have been treated by the elites and how they want to be treated. And, if they act just as bad as the elites do, then they are just as awful.

v29 Amulek is clearly implying the Zoramite religion and practices are going to lead them to destruction.

30 And now, my brethren, I would that, after ye have received so many witnesses, seeing that the holy scriptures testify of these things, ye come forth and bring fruit unto repentance. 31 Yea, I would that ye would come forth and harden not your hearts any longer; for behold, now is the time and the day of your salvation; and therefore, if ye will repent and harden not your hearts, immediately shall the great plan of redemption be brought about unto you.

32 For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labors. 33 And now, as I said unto you before, as ye have had so many witnesses, therefore, I beseech of you that ye do not procrastinate the day of your repentance until the end; for after this day of life, which is given us to prepare for eternity, behold, if we do not improve our time while in this life, then cometh the night of darkness wherein there can be no labor performed. 34 Ye cannot say, when ye are brought to that awful crisis, that I will repent, that I will return to my God. Nay, ye cannot say this; for that same spirit which doth possess your bodies at the time that ye go out of this life, that same spirit will have power to possess your body in that eternal world. 35 For behold, if ye have procrastinated the day of your repentance even until death, behold, ye have become subjected to the spirit of the devil, and he doth seal you his; therefore, the Spirit of the Lord hath withdrawn from you, and hath no place in you, and the devil hath all power over you; and this is the final state of the wicked. 36 And this I know, because the Lord hath said he dwelleth not in unholy temples, but in the hearts of the righteous doth he dwell; yea, and he has also said that the righteous shall sit down in his kingdom, to go no more out; but their garments should be made white through the blood of the Lamb.

37 And now, my beloved brethren, I desire that ye should remember these things, and that ye should work out your salvation with fear before God, and that ye should no more deny the coming of Christ; 38 That ye contend no more against the Holy Ghost, but that ye receive it, and take upon you the name of Christ; that ye humble yourselves even to the dust, and worship God, in whatsoever place ye may be in, in spirit and in truth; and that ye live in thanksgiving daily, for the many mercies and blessings which he doth bestow upon you. 39 Yea, and I also exhort you, my brethren, that ye be watchful unto prayer continually, that ye may not be led away by the temptations of the devil, that he may not overpower you, that ye may not become his subjects at the last day; for behold, he rewardeth you no good thing. 40 And now my beloved brethren, I would exhort you to have patience, and that ye bear with all manner of afflictions; that ye do not revile against those who do cast you out because of your exceeding poverty, lest ye become sinners

like unto them; 41 But that ye have patience, and bear with those afflictions, with a firm hope that ye shall one day rest from all your afflictions.

v30-41 Amulek closes his sermon by encouraging them to hear what has been said and repent so they may experience redemption (v. 30-31). Our mortal life is the time to prepare to either be taken captive by the adversary or be exalted by the Lamb of God (v. 32-36). He admonishes them to not reject the doctrine of Messiah any more, to not reject the Spirit, to pray everywhere, and be humble and patient in their afflictions (v. 37-41).

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