

Book of Mormon 23
More than One Witness
(Alma 8-12)
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Here is inspirational background)

I. Alma testified that after man was sent out of Eden, God sent witnesses from Heaven itself to help them through this “probationary stage” and thus be able to return to Him (Alma 12:24).

A. “Therefore he sent angels to converse with them, who caused men to behold his glory (Alma 12:29).

B. Angels frequently help in God’s work to bring to pass man’s immortality and Eternal Life (Alma 8:14-15, 18-20; 10:7; 12:28-9).

C. Alma was comforted and commanded by an angel to return to Ammonihah where he had just been cast out (Alma 8:24-25).

D. Thus though the world has ceased to believe, the Book of Mormon adds to the Biblical message that angels do minister and witness to men.

E. **In fact, one of the great messages of the Restoration is that God has not left us to struggle alone, with only our own reasoning as guides.** While some men may be “brilliant,” earthly man does not have all truth needed at his disposal. 2 plus 2 does not even make 4 if there is another factor to the equation hidden somewhere. Only when we can see the entire picture, **which only God sees**, can truth be fully comprehended. That is why the wisdom of wise men *will* perish.

F. Angelic messages still come in our days. Many modern prophets have said they were taught by angels. One was Wilford Woodruff who said, "Joseph Smith visited me a great deal after his death, and taught me many important principles" (*The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff*, p. 288).

G. Recently, President Russell M. Nelson shared how he was visited by the presence of two young children who had died of heart failure. He had been devastated that he had not been able to save them through his medical skills. Subsequently their parents had become bitter toward him and the church, and he had lost track of them, for years. These girls lamented to him that their family was not sealed. They pleaded with him to help them. Acting upon this visitation, he found the father [the mother was deceased], and gave him this message. Thankfully, the father received the message, changed his life, and the family was subsequently sealed. [See *LDS Living*, May 4, 2016. This story is also told on President Nelson’s Facebook page].

H. It is a marvelous and merciful blessing that God does at times send angelic messengers!

II. The Lord **always requires his earthly witnesses to work together in a set of at least two. These scriptures teach why the testimony of at least two witnesses is so necessary.**

A. Alma's testimony **was magnified** with the addition of Amulek's (Alma 10:12).

B. Even the heart-hardened people of Ammonihah were more sobered when a second witness verified the truths first spoken by Alma (Alma 10:12).

C. After Amulek’s witness, Alma spoke again “to establish the words of Amulek, and to explain things beyond or to unfold the scriptures beyond that which Amulek had done” (Alma 12:1).

D. In our more dangerous days, we find it additionally advisable for emissaries of the Lord to go together --- both for their physical protection and for the protection of those they visit.

E. The Lord had His special purposes in providing Two Great Witnesses of scripture: the Bible and the Book of Mormon. They bear similar, but together **more sure** witness of Jesus Christ, as given by two separate nations!

III. While the Lord provides **at least** two or three witnesses to all things, **he has actually provided "clouds of witnesses" that we might know His truths.**

A. I once took a class on the Old Testament at the University of Florida. I was very excited that a professor under whom I was to study was a famous scholar and translator of some of the Dead Sea Scrolls. I felt very lucky to be gleaning knowledge from such an eminent scholar of Middle Eastern religions, history, and languages.

How dismayed and shocked I was when I heard him making sport of everyone's cherished beliefs. He persistently insisted that God was only a "personification of a principle --- like Uncle Sam." He taught the Old Testament was a collection of myths borrowed from neighboring heathen nations. He taught that any idea things in the Old Testament prefigured the supposed "Christ" was "mad." One day he claimed the origins of Mormonism could be traced to the fact that Joseph Smith fell down a flight of stairs as a child.

Of course, my faith did not waver. But I was disturbed to look around me at many young men and women there. I sensed from the looks upon their faces that many were not strongly grounded in their faith. But I knew, had I the chance, I could have lectured or born testimony **for many hours** to show them **what great weights of evidence there were beneath the foundation of all those beliefs which he sought to undermine.**

B. I can personally testify there are answers to the questions of disbelievers. The witnesses that exist to refute disbelief are multitudinous --- enough for many, many books! If we will listen.

For God has prepared not one witness, not two witnesses, or three witnesses, **but "clouds of witnesses"** (Hebrews 12:1) to guide us to His truths.

C. However, He has generally left it up to us to develop sufficient desire **to sincerely seek those witnesses.** Those who have insufficient desire are usually left to wander in darkness and error.

D. It is also left to men to humble themselves, so they might receive truth from God's witnesses, when they are blessed to have it offered to them.

1. It was made clear that it was because the people at Ammonihah had been lifted up in pride, that they refused the witnesses of Alma and Amulek.

E. Believers are not naïve, as disbelievers suggest. In fact many are questioners. My own questions have led to searching, and my searching has always led to witnesses God prepared for us, and not just to satisfactory answers. My questions and searching have always led **to greater faith and understanding.**

F. Not only are there multitudes of witnesses from the Lord, but they are powerful ones. If we ignore them, we will ultimately find ourselves saying, not "How could I have known?" but "Why was I not more earnest in seeking truth? **Why was I so blind to God's many, great and powerful witnesses?"**

IV. Alma gave strict warnings to those who not only reject the witness of God's prophets, but even try to lay traps to trip them up (Alma 10:13-18).

A. “Nevertheless, there were some among them who thought ... by their cunning devices they might catch [Alma and Amulek] in their words, that they might find witness against them, That they might deliver them to their judges ... [to be] judged according to the law, and that they might be slain or cast into prison...” (10:13).

B. Amulek rebuked them thus: “O ye wicked and perverse generation, for ye are laying the foundations of the devil... [by] laying traps and snares to catch the holy ones of God. Ye are laying plans to pervert the ways of the righteous and to bring down the wrath of God upon your heads” (10:17-18).

C. The scriptures persistently say that those who lay traps for the righteous will eventually be caught in their own traps.

V. **A vital truth is taught through Amulek for Our Days.** He warned those who cast out the righteous will then be left without God’s protection. For they are casting out those very persons whose presence was their salvation. Thus they would be destroyed.

A. He said: “If it were not for the prayers of the righteous... ye would even now be visited with utter destruction.... Now **therefore if ye will cast out the righteous... the Lord [will not] stay his hand**; but in his fierce anger he will come out against you” (Alma 10:22-23). (Emphasis added).

1. Samuel the Lamanite later told the people of Zarahemla that when *they* cast out the righteous from among them, they would be ripened in iniquity, and would be destroyed (Helaman 13:14). His warnings were fulfilled.

B. This reality was first witnessed in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Remember that the Lord had promised Abraham that even if there were just ten persons who were still righteous in those cities, He would not destroy them (Genesis 18:16-33).

But when the wicked foolishly turned upon those few among them who were righteous, who were then in essence their saviors, destruction was poured out upon them (Genesis 19).

These real events were also foreshadowings. They all have “Last Days” overtones. All these warnings are pointing to our days. **When the wicked turn upon the few righteous who dwell among them, and are the sole reasons why the Lord is still preserving them**, then the Lord will pour out his Final Wrath upon mankind, to cleanse the earth for His Second Coming.

VI. **Disbelievers of God’s witnesses work out their own punishment.**

A. “Therefore, he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word; and he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full.

And to them that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word **until they know nothing** concerning his mysteries” (Alma 12:10-11). (Emphasis added)

B. Alma says those who are very hardhearted against God’s witnesses are consequently led down to greater darkness (Alma 16-17).

C. Meanwhile, those who receive the word with joy are led to greater light and knowledge and thus to glory, for "The Glory of God is Intelligence" (D&C 93:36).

1. This “intelligence” is far more than knowledge of the things of the world. It incorporates a fuller understanding of God --- of His works --- and of His ways.

D. Alma and Amulek gave their powerful united witnesses of Christ’s redemption, and challenged their hearers to either accept those witnesses, or harden their hearts against them. Thus they would either receive great blessings or severe consequences (Alma 12:30-37).