

June 17-23, 2024

Alma 8–12

“JESUS CHRIST WILL COME TO REDEEM HIS PEOPLE”

Summary: *Alma 8. Alma preaches and baptizes in Melek—He is rejected in Ammonihah and leaves—An angel commands him to return and cry repentance unto the people—He is received by Amulek, and the two of them preach in Ammonihah. [About 82 B.C.]*

The words of Alma, and also the words of Amulek, which were declared unto the people who were in the land of Ammonihah. And also they are cast into prison, and delivered by the miraculous power of God which was in them, according to the record of Alma.

Comprising chapters 9 through 14.

Alma 9. Alma commands the people of Ammonihah to repent—The Lord will be merciful to the Lamanites in the last days—If the Nephites forsake the light, they will be destroyed by the Lamanites—The Son of God will come soon—He will redeem those who repent, are baptized, and have faith in His name. [About 82 B.C.]

Alma 10. Lehi descended from Manasseh—Amulek recounts the angelic command that he care for Alma—The prayers of the righteous cause the people to be spared—Unrighteous lawyers and judges lay the foundation of the destruction of the people. [About 82 B.C.]

Alma 11. The Nephite monetary system is set forth—Amulek contends with Zeezrom—Christ will not save people in their sins—Only those who inherit the kingdom of heaven are saved—All men will rise in immortality—There is no death after the Resurrection. [About 82 B.C.]

Alma 12. Alma speaks to Zeezrom—The mysteries of God can be given only to the faithful—Men are judged by their thoughts, beliefs, words, and works—The wicked will suffer a spiritual death—This mortal life is a probationary state—The plan of redemption brings to pass the Resurrection and, through faith, a remission of sins—The repentant have a claim on mercy through the Only Begotten Son. [About 82 B.C.]

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

chapter eight, refers to the “order of the Church.” The Lord always had a governing order for the affairs of dealings with his children. Modern Judaism struggles with a lack of this kind of religious order. There are many disputations among Jews themselves about the interpretations of Jewish law, yet the State of Israel provides a framework that is supposed to allow religious freedom. “Israel's Declaration of

What religious order is there in modern Israel?

The opening
statement of Alma,

Independence guarantees religious freedom and the safeguarding of Holy Places for all peoples ‘without distinction of creed, race or sex.’ And, in fact, communities from all the major religions of the world live side by side in Israel, attending their own centers of worship and maintaining their own traditions. The Ministry of Religious Affairs works closely with religious leaders of all denominations to ensure religious equality. Each religious community has its own courts with jurisdiction over personal matters, and their own community schools, should parents opt for a religious education.” “Nevertheless, the problem of maintaining

a balance between the religious and the secular has caused problems in Israel and has been the subject of many political disputes. For example, the Orthodox wing believes that all traffic and public works should stop on the Sabbath. The non-religious, however, feel that this is tantamount to forcing religious observance on others. This results in a certain amount of inconsistency in national policy. In Jerusalem, no buses run on Sabbath while in Haifa there is public transport on that day. In the cities, some cafes and places of entertainment, such as movie houses, are open on the Sabbath. Yet, there are certain Orthodox neighborhoods completely blocked off to all vehicles, both public and private.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

How does Israel – with the heritage of biblical law – handle its modern law?

The State of Israel has established a legal system based on Biblical law, yet it is greatly influenced by the British system of Law established during the Mandate period prior to Israel becoming a state. Some modern/biblical considerations of legal terms follow. The first includes information about “witnesses.” That is followed by some insight about lawyers and “pleaders.” “The laws involving witnesses are many. biblically, not all people were qualified to testify before the courts. Among those not admissible were slaves, minors (before *Bar Mitzvah*), lunatics, the deaf and dumb, the blind, criminals who have not repented their crime, relatives of any party involved in the case of the judges, one who stands to gain from his testimony, and, in certain cases, women.” “Any person who has seen the event but does not testify is liable to punishment which will be meted out to him by God. In criminal cases the witness is under obligation to testify of his own accord; in civil cases the duty to testify arises only when the man is summoned to do so.” “The court warns

the witnesses that bearing false witness is a serious crime and each witness is investigated and interrogated separately in order to make sure that he is not lying. If it is established that the witnesses have testified falsely, they are disqualified from ever bearing witness again and, under certain circumstances . . . the same punishment the accused would have received had he been convicted. If one witness should contradict another, or say something contradicted by fact --- the testimony is rejected. The Bible declares that in order to convict, the evidence must be given by at least two witnesses. However, in certain cases such as those requiring an oath, a single witness is valid. A testimony must be given by the witness himself and not by another who says that he heard such a testimony. Acceptable witnesses who sign a document render it valid.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

How is legalism used even in positive life issues?

“*Halakhic* (Jewish legalism) requirements of the marriage ceremony include: the huppah (canopy); the giving of the ring by the groom to the bride in the presence of two valid witnesses;” “Today in courts in most countries, it is common practice to ‘swear in’ all witnesses. Jewish law never adopted this custom, preferring to accept testimony without the administration of an oath, as long as there were at least two witnesses who corroborated each other's testimony, as well as other supportive evidence. Testimony given under oath was, in fact, considered to be a particularly weak form of evidence, and it was only accepted when there was a complete lack of something better. When the judicial oath was administered, it was only used in civil cases and then not to the witnesses but to the defendant, or less often, to the plaintiff. In capital cases, a judicial oath was never administered, since it was assumed that no one charged with a capital crime could be believed,

even under oath.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

What reasons justify “not “swearing-in” a witness?

“In Jewish law, perjury can only be proven by the evidence of two other witnesses who both testify that the perjurer could not have been present at the time and place he claims. These second witnesses must give their evidence in the presence of the first witness. Only in this way can the charge of perjury be leveled: if the second witnesses simply disagree with the first but cannot break his alibi, or if the second witnesses do not offer their refutation in front of the first, this constitutes not perjury, but contradiction in which case all the evidence is disregarded.” “The punishment for perjury is laid down in **Deuteronomy 19:19--21**: ‘You shall do to him as he schemed to do to his fellow (i.e., the accused).’ There was considerable discussion on the death sentence for perjurers, complicated by a debate on whether a perjurer who had intended to kill by his false testimony, but had not in fact succeeded in doing so, was himself liable for execution. The law was interpreted to mean that a perjurer should suffer what he had schemed to do, not what had occurred, but in practice the death sentence was rarely carried out for any offense . . . perjurers were usually fined or flogged . . . never allowed to act as witnesses again . . . convictions for perjury were widely publicized.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

What justifies referring to Jesus in terms of “rabbi” or “lawyer?”

The term “*Rabbi*” used to mean one trained in the law, or in other words, a lawyer. “I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father.” (**Doctrine and Covenants 110:4**); “Jesus Christ is our Advocate with the Father,” (**Moroni 7:28**); “and pleads our cause with Him. Jesus

Christ is our advocate with the Father,” (**1 John. 2:1**); “Jesus shall make intercession for all,” (**2 Nephi. 2:9**); (**Hebrews. 7:25**); “Jesus gained victory over death, giving him power to make intercession for the children of men,” (**Mosiah 15:8**), “I am your advocate with the Father,” (**Doctrine and Covenants 29:5**); “Jesus Christ is pleading your cause,” (**Doctrine and Covenants 45:3--5**). In secular observation, the higher degrees of *Rabbi* would have been the judges and court leaders. “During the 19th century, the functions of the *rabbi* began to change, and many communities demanded that their leaders be versed not only in *Talmud* and Jewish law but also in secular studies. To meet these new conditions, rabbinical seminaries were organized, issuing a variety of ‘rabbinical degrees.’” “The Hebrew word for court is *bet din* (plural: *Battei Din*), which literally means ‘house of judgment’; in rabbinic literature it is the term for a Jewish court of law. We find *Battei Din* which handled the legal problems of the Israelites from the times of Moses. The rule of the law is an important principle of Judaism. The *Torah* stresses that justice must not be meted out by the parties themselves but must be administered by impartial judges.” “The courts would deal with criminal law as well as all cases between two parties such as for damages and inheritance, decide on the status of individuals and objects as far as purity and *kashrut* (health code) were concerned, besides clarifying such laws as those regarding the Sabbath and festivals.”

How did the legacy of biblical law influence all people?

“Rabbinic courts continued to be established even when the Jews went into exile. In those countries of exile where the Jews enjoyed judicial autonomy the rabbinical courts dealt with all matters and also imposed the special regulations made by the community. In some

countries, cases involving both Christians and Jews could be heard by the *bet din* as long as an equal number of Christian and Jewish witnesses, or an equal number of judges were involved. The *Bet Din* followed Jewish Law, except in such matters as taxes or pledges of loans, which were often disposed of according to the law of the land. In some countries the Jewish legal system was under the jurisdiction of an officially appointed chief *rabbi*. In the modern period when such autonomy has disappeared, the function of the *bet din* has been limited to purely religious matters. Nevertheless, throughout the ages Jews have been encouraged to bring their disputes before a *bet din* rather than a secular court, and in the Middle Ages any Jew turning to a secular court to decide a dispute with another Jew was considered a traitor to the Jewish people." "In Israel today, where an elaborate network of *battei din* has been established under the Supreme Rabbinical Court of Israel, the term *bet din* has come to mean the rabbinic court which has, by act of the Knesset, jurisdiction in matters of personal status in addition to its normal religious function." "In a *Bet Din* there were no lawyers either for the defense or the prosecution. The judges themselves questioned the witnesses and the parties involved and arrived at their own conclusions. In the State of Israel, however, there are men who are known as 'pleaders' who represent people appearing before the *Bet Din*." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

How valuable can disputations or polemics be for me?

The history of disputations or polemics is common in Judaism, both biblically and in more recent times. The arguments, proving and disproving, appeared both positively and negatively, for and against, the Jews. It is human nature, yet more so, a characteristic of Jewish culture to have two-sided debates. "Throughout history

Jews have often been called on to defend their faith against non-believers in public debates known as disputations or polemics. Often these disputations were conducted in friendly atmospheres of mutual respect, but all too often these debates took on aspects of bitterness." "The developing rift between Christianity and Judaism and the animosity after their final split in the second century C.E. produced many great disputations. A crucial one occurred about the time of the Bar Kokhba revolt (c. 135 C.E.) between the Christian Justin Martyr and the Jew Tryphon. While the two adversaries expressed friendship toward each other, the argument became bitter."

What changed the attitudes of arguments?

"Christian-Jewish disputation continued and Muslim-Jewish debates, which began in the 10th century, developed as well. Questions concerning the text of the Bible and Jewish way of life were discussed. The Jews questioned the *Koran's* (writing attributed to Mohammed) value and attacked *Muhammad* in the process." "*Nahmanides* defended Judaism at the famous Disputation of Barcelona in 1263. Fearlessly questioning the nature of Christian authority and teaching, Nahmanides asked why, if the Messiah had come, the world was still torn by war. He was declared the victor and given a monetary prize for his efforts." "Disputations still occurred in the 20th century. Franz Rosenzweig corresponded with the Christian philosopher Eugene Rosenstock Huessy, and Martin Buber was in disputation with Karl Ludwig Schmidt as the anti-Jewish laws were being implemented in Germany in 1933. In the face of Nazi Germany, Buber declared: 'We also know, as we know that there exists air that we take into our lungs, that there exists the plane on which we move; nay, deeper, more truly we know that world history has not yet been probed to its roots, that the world is not yet

redeemed.' These disputations have traditionally seen some of history's most elegant and powerful defenses of the Jewish faith." "Within Judaism the polemics, or scholarly arguments, have been almost as bitter. From the *Talmudic* period when the Sadducees and Samaritans were in dispute with traditional Judaism, disputes have been frequent. Purely *Halakhic* (Jewish legalism) and rabbinic disputes were usually dealt within question-and-answer and other literary forms. However, battles over *Kabbalah* (mystical Judaism), ordination of rabbis and Maimonides' Guide of the Perplexed were more substantial. The fiercest controversies in Jewish history were those arising over *Shabbateanism*."

([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

How did the appearance of complete rejectionism fuel extreme dislike?

Shabbetai Zvi, (1626-1676), was one who claimed to be the Messiah and eventually led a failing *Aliyah* (immigration) to the land of Israel. "*Shabbateanism*, the movement which arose around him, was one of the largest of the messianic movements. The extreme zeal of his supporters as well as his detractors nearly tore Judaism apart and the movement continued to be influential for over two centuries." ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

Another noteworthy disputation came from the "*Satmar Rabbi*." He argued that the *Aliyah* to the Land of Israel was an evil trick and thus against God's will. He felt that the establishment of Israel as a modern nation was wrong. "*Satmar* (is the) name of a small, contemporary *Hasidic* sect, distinguished by its fanatical opposition to Zionism and the State of Israel. It takes its name from the hometown of its leader, Joel Teitelbaum of Satmar (1888--1979), and most of its adherents reside in the Williamsburg section of Brooklyn, New York."

"Teitelbaum was an exceedingly sharp polemicist who combined extreme fanaticism with a forceful personality . . . he regarded the Holocaust of European

Jews as a direct punishment for secular Zionism . . . Teitelbaum opposed the use of Hebrew as a spoken language, since he believed that it secularized and profaned the holy tongue. He forbade the *Hasidim* (Jewish religious order) living in his community to cooperate with State institutions and he ordered those living in Israel not to take the oath of loyalty to the State, not to take part in elections, and not to make use of its law courts or legal system." ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

What may be increasing the Messianic movement among Jews of the world?

These kinds of disputations have drawn Jews away from dialogues with believers in Jesus, the Messiah. Disputations require some learning of the other's point of view. Jews know very little about Jesus' restoration of the original order that Father in Heaven gave Adam and his children. However, in these last days, more and more Jews are becoming aware that religious order was restored from time to time throughout history and that there may be a need for a final restoration that has to happen in these latter-days. So, while most Jews do not remember who their Lord Jehovah is (even so, they keep the Sabbath day better than most peoples I know), and they are surrounded by proclaimed enemies, yet they are protected. God is keeping His part of the covenant. They are becoming prosperous and definitely fine in their workmanship (and weaponry). However, may I point out that at the same time, a growing society of "believers" is slowly becoming apparent with an estimated fifty-thousand "Messianic" Jews among the close to eight million inhabitants in Israel. There are already close to a half-million Messianic (believing) Jews among the 17-million on the planet. For both the believers and others, a growing expectance of the Messiah is evident. These restorations consistently review the "beginning to the end," the plan of salvation, the true order of God.