
Alma 10 — By the Prayers of the Righteous — Amulek's Testimony, the Manasseh Genealogy, and the Lawyer Class Introduced

Alma 10: still the tenth year of the reign of the judges (c. 82 BC), and still inside Ammonihah. Amulek has just stood forth at the end of Alma 9 and now delivers the Book of Mormon's most developed second-witness testimony. He opens with his genealogy — Nephi → Lehi → Manasseh — confirming the Lehite tribal identity through Joseph's elder son. He recounts his pre-conversion state (known of the people, of no small reputation, called many times and would not hear) and the angel who appeared on the road back to his own house, telling him to receive Alma. He then delivers the prayers-of-the-righteous preservation doctrine — Ammonihah is being spared not for its own sake but for the sake of the few. The chapter closes with the formal introduction of the lawyer class and the naming of Zeezrom as one expert in the devices of the devil.

Alma 10 is the Book of Mormon's master second-witness chapter and the foundational text on the doctrine that a wicked city is preserved not by its own merit but by the presence of the few righteous within it. The chapter takes the Genesis 18 pattern — Abraham's intercession for Sodom, where the Lord agreed to spare the city for the sake of ten righteous — and applies it directly to Ammonihah. The chapter is the cleanest pre-Pauline articulation of the doctrine of *a remnant according to the election of grace* (Rom. 11:5), and one of the strongest scriptural texts on the principle that the faithful are the world's stay against judgment.

Hebrew Word Studies

Menasseh / kohanim / etzba (מְנַסֵּה / כֹּהֲנִים / אֶצְבָּא) — **forgetting, causing to forget / priests / finger vv. 2–3.** The chapter's three Hebrew anchors of tribe and temple. *Menasseh* — *forgetting, causing to forget* — is the name Joseph gave his firstborn (Gen. 41:51 — *for God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil*). The Nephite irony is unmistakable: a tribe whose very name means *causing to forget* is the tribe most in danger of forgetting. Alma 9 has just spent fourteen verses indicting Ammonihah for forgetting the fathers, and Alma 10 follows it by reciting a genealogy whose head bears the name of forgetting. The chapter is one of the Book of Mormon's clearest etymological ironies. *Kohanim* — *priests* — is the plural of *kohen*, the standard Hebrew Bible noun for the Aaronic priesthood. When v. 27 names *the lawyers and the judges, and the high priests* as the foundation-layers of destruction, the underlying noun is *kohanim*. Corrupt priests have always been a covenant people's most efficient way to collapse. *Etzba* — *finger* — is the noun in *written with the finger of God* (Ex. 31:18) and in Christ's *if I with the finger of God cast out devils* (Lk. 11:20). The *etzba Elohim* is the instrument of direct divine action, and Aminadi's temple-wall vision belongs to that tradition.

From the Chapter's Architecture

Finally, the chapter is the formal introduction of organized opposition. The lawyer class, named in passing in Alma 1 and Alma 4, here emerges as the cohort that will drive the Ammonihah collapse. Zeezrom enters the narrative as the foremost of them. The chapter sets up the great Alma 11–14 sequence — bribe, trap, conviction, conversion, prison, deliverance — that turns the most expert accuser into one of the most ardent disciples and the city of Ammonihah into a heap of bones.