
Alma 15 — Believest Thou in the Power of Christ unto Salvation — Zeezrom Healed, Amulek Forsakes All, and the Quiet Restoration at Sidom

Alma 15: the tenth year of the reign of the judges (c. 82 BC), in the days immediately following the prison-walls deliverance of Alma 14. Alma and Amulek depart Ammonihah and are sent of the Lord to Sidom, where the believers who fled the persecution have gathered. Zeezrom — the former anti-Christ lawyer — is there too, lying sick with a burning fever brought on by the guilt of his conscience. Alma and Amulek visit him; Alma asks the diagnostic question — Believest thou in the power of Christ unto salvation? — Zeezrom confesses, Alma heals him, he leaps to his feet, and is baptized that same day. Alma and Amulek then establish a church in Sidom and ordain priests and teachers. Amulek, having forsaken all his gold and silver and his precious things, and rejected by his father and his kindred, goes to dwell with Alma in Zarahemla. The chapter ends quietly: the church grows, Alma is grieved over what was lost at Ammonihah, and the tenth year of the judges closes.

Alma 15 is the quiet aftermath of one of the most violent chapters in the Book of Mormon. The fire and the prison-collapse of Alma 14 are over. The believers who fled Ammonihah have gathered at Sidom, and Alma and Amulek are sent there to find them. The chapter has the feel of a long exhale.

Hebrew Word Studies

***emunah* / *yeshuah* / *rapha* / *chayah* (אֱמוּנָה / יְשׁוּעָה / רָפָא / חַיָּה) — faith, faithfulness, fidelity / salvation, deliverance / to heal, restore / to live, to be revived vv. 6–11.** Four Hebrew words sit underneath the healing here. *Emunah* — faith, faithfulness, fidelity — comes from the root *aman* (to be firm, established, faithful) and is the exact word in Habakkuk 2:4, *the just shall live by his faith*. Paul will cite that verse three times in the New Testament (Rom. 1:17, Gal. 3:11, Heb. 10:38) as a foundational formula. Alma 15 is one of the Book of Mormon's clearest applications of it: Zeezrom is dying of his wickedness and is raised by his *emunah*. *Yeshuah* — salvation, deliverance — comes from *yasha* (to save). It is the root of the name *Yeshua* / Jesus (Matt. 1:21, *for he shall save his people from their sins*). When Alma says *the power of Christ unto salvation*, the Hebrew underneath is *yeshuah*, and the name of Christ is embedded in the very question. *Rapha* — to heal, restore — is the verb in Exodus 15:26 (*I am the Lord that healeth thee*, Yahweh-Rophe) and Isaiah 53:5 (*with his stripes we are healed*). Alma's request takes the same form as Isaiah's prophecy: the petitioner is healed by the wounds of the One he had once mocked. *Chayah* — to live, to be revived — is the verb of Genesis 2:7 (*man became a living soul, nephesh chayah*) and of Ezekiel 37:5 (*ye shall live*, when the dry bones rise). When Zeezrom leaps to his feet, the Hebrew underneath is *chayah* — the dead man stood up.

From the Chapter's Architecture

The chapter is the pastoral pendant to Alma 14's violence. Alma 14 was the fire and the prison. Alma 15 is the bedside, the small house at Sidom, the home in Zarahemla. The Lord works both ways — by judgment and by quiet rebuilding — and a faithful reading of the Book of Mormon needs both registers. This is the second one.