

TALES OF THE PROMISED LAND

◆ THE ILLUSTRATED SCRIPTURE COMPANION ◆

—→ *Discover the Book of Mormon Stories* ←—
Your Teacher Didn't Tell You



SCRIPTURE



STORY



PEOPLE



PLACES



LESSONS



FAITH

A READER COMPANION TO THE BOOK BY

Michael D. Young

FIVE REMARKABLE STORIES. ONE PROMISED LAND.

Read with two lenses

First, return to the Book of Mormon. Then notice what the novel adds between the verses. The goal is not to blur scripture and fiction, but to let imaginative storytelling send you back to the scriptural record with sharper questions.



LENS 1 - SCRIPTURAL RECORD

These pages summarize only what the Book of Mormon itself establishes: named people, actions, settings, prophecies, deliverances, and consequences. Scripture references are supplied so you can check the account directly.

LENS 2 - STORY IMAGINATION

The manuscript names unnamed figures, supplies relationships, dialogue, motives, private grief, and scene-level detail. Those additions are treated here as literary expansion, not as additional scripture.

A GOOD READING RHYTHM

- Read the listed scripture passage before or after the story section.
- Underline one detail in the scripture that the novel made you notice for the first time.
- Mark one element the novel clearly invents. Ask why that particular invention helps the theme.
- Use the discussion questions for personal study, family conversation, a class, or a book club.
- End by reading beyond the named verses. Context often changes the way a short episode feels.

The collection ranges across more than a century of Book of Mormon history. Each story takes a place where the scriptural record is brief, compressed, or focused on public events and imagines what those events might have felt like to individuals living inside them.

I

Esther's Choice

MOSIAH 20; 23-24

One of the twenty-four Lamanite daughters receives a name, a conscience, and a conversion story.

2

Through the Fire

MOSIAH 17; ALMA 25

A descendant of Noah's priests tries to choose a different legacy while Abinadi's prophecy closes in.

3

The Fall of Jacobugath

3 NEPHI 7-11, 17

A one-verse destroyed city becomes a lived-in world, and two brothers escape its fall.

4

The Mission of Alma and Amulek

ALMA 8-15

Amulek's public call is reframed through home, wealth, family, loss, and forgiveness.

5

With a New Voice

3 NEPHI 3-4

The gathered Nephites' deliverance is seen through a singer who loses - and rediscovers - his voice.

Reader note: This guide follows the manuscript as written. Where the novel fills silence with invented names, dialogue, relationships, or motives, the companion says so explicitly rather than treating those details as part of the scriptural account.

Esther's Choice



SCRIPTURE CONNECTION

Mosiah 20:1-5; Mosiah 23:30-39; Mosiah 24:8-25

The scriptures give us twenty-four unnamed daughters. The story asks what captivity, divided loyalties, and conversion might have looked like through the eyes of one of them.

THE STORY IN ONE PAGE

Esther, a young Lamanite woman of royal blood, slips away to dance with the other maidens and is among the twenty-four women seized by the priests of King Noah. Amulon claims her and forces her into a life she never chose. Years later, the wandering company reaches Alma's settlement, where Amulon becomes ruler over the captive Nephites. Esther's sympathy for the oppressed leads her to Helam, secret lessons about God, and eventually a dangerous choice between escape and the safety of the women she still calls her sisters. When deliverance comes, she carries Orpha with her and enters Zarahemla ready to choose baptism for herself.

WHY THIS EPISODE INVITES IMAGINATION

Mosiah records what happened to a group. Fiction can ask what one captive woman might have feared, resisted, believed, and chosen.

What the record says – and what the story adds

What the Book of Mormon tells us

- Twenty-four daughters of the Lamanites gather to sing and dance, and the priests of Noah seize them and carry them into the wilderness (Mosiah 20:1-5).
- The priests remain with the Lamanite women as wives. Later, those wives plead with Lamanite soldiers and prevent the priests from being destroyed (Mosiah 23:31-35).
- The priests and Lamanites discover the land of Helam. Amulon is made ruler over Alma and his people (Mosiah 23:35-39).
- Amulon persecutes Alma's people and forbids spoken prayer. The Lord strengthens them under their burdens (Mosiah 24:8-15).
- The Lord causes a deep sleep to come upon the guards, Alma leads the people away, and after twelve days they reach Zarahemla (Mosiah 24:16-25).

What the novel imagines beyond the verses

- Names one of the twenty-four women Esther and makes her a member of a Lamanite royal family; Orpha becomes her closest friend.
- Places Esther in Amulon's household and explores the coercion, anger, numbness, and survival that follow her abduction.
- Gives Esther an active moral awakening as she watches Amulon enslave Alma's people and secretly protects an abused Nephite.
- Connects her closely with Helam, who teaches her about Christ and becomes a trusted companion during the escape.
- Lets Esther and Orpha join Alma's flight and ends with Esther asking Helam to baptize her - a conversion arc not recorded in Mosiah.

KEEP THE BOUNDARY CLEAR

A compelling fictional detail can feel "true" because it fits the setting or theme. That is different from being stated in scripture. Use the references above whenever you want to check the boundary.

People and path

Principal characters

E Esther

A fictionalized member of the twenty-four Lamanite daughters. Fierce, skeptical, protective, and gradually drawn toward the God worshiped by Alma's people.

O Orpha

Esther's closest friend. The story gives her a husband and young son at home, making Esther's determination to protect her especially personal.

A Amulon

The scriptural leader of Noah's priests. In the story he is Esther's captor, self-declared king, and later the cruel ruler over Alma's people.

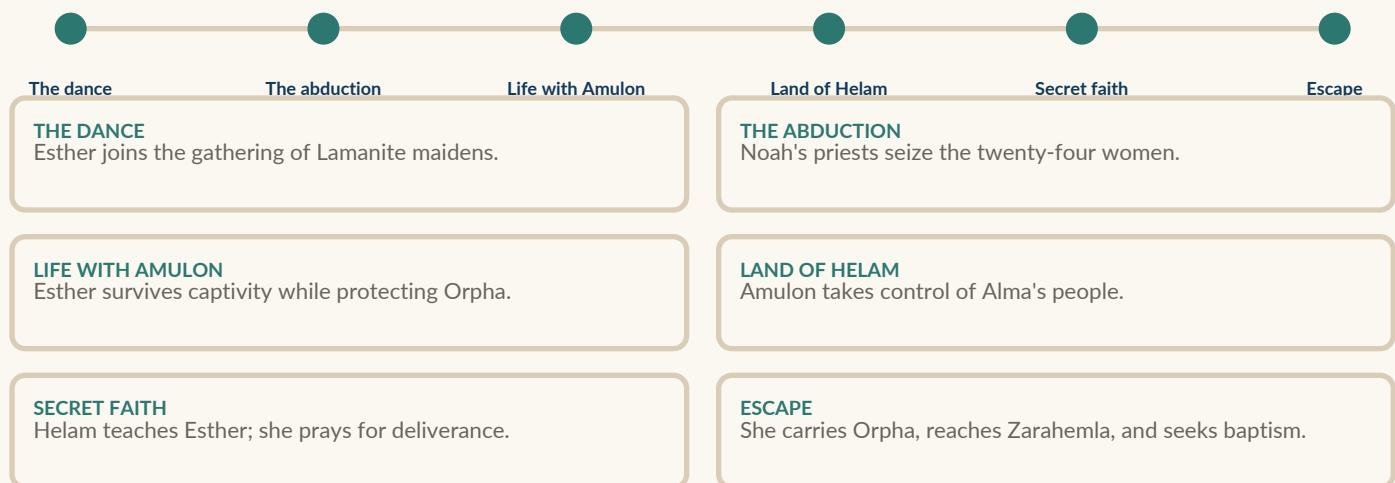
H Helam

A believer among Alma's people. The story makes him Esther's secret teacher, rescuer, and the person she asks to baptize her.

A Alma

The leader of the captive Nephites. Esther first encounters him standing fearlessly against Amulon and later follows him out of bondage.

Short timeline



Return to the scriptures

Questions for deeper reading

1. Read Mosiah 20:1-5. What does the scriptural narrator tell us about the daughters - and what does he leave unsaid?
2. How does giving one of the twenty-four women a name change the way you experience the brief scriptural account?
3. Compare Mosiah 23:33-35 with the story. What different kinds of loyalty might the Lamanite women have felt after years with the priests?
4. Read Mosiah 24:10-15. Where do you see the difference between outward restriction and inward faith?
5. Esther refuses an easy escape when she believes it would endanger her sisters. What does that decision reveal about her?
6. Which parts of Esther's conversion are supported by the larger scriptural setting, and which are clearly the novelist's imaginative bridge?

TRY THIS

Write five sentences from the perspective of one of the other twenty-three daughters. Keep every scriptural fact fixed, but imagine one emotion, one relationship, and one unanswered question.

READ NEXT

Mosiah 18-25, especially the parallel deliverance stories of Limhi's people and Alma's people.

Through the Fire



SCRIPTURE CONNECTION

Mosiah 17:15–18; Alma 25:4–12

A prophecy about the descendants of Noah's priests becomes a story about whether a child can choose a different legacy from the one he inherits.

THE STORY IN ONE PAGE

Helorum has rejected the ways of his father, Amulon, and serves among the Nephites while hoping to build a life with Ephah. Amulon uses Ephah's blue-stone necklace to force Helorum into carrying supposedly valuable Lamanite intelligence to Chief Captain Levi. The mission is a trap: Amulon's men follow Helorum, attack Levi's position, and leave Helorum blamed for the captain's death. Sentenced to die by fire, he is rescued by Ephah and Zimran. The couple disappears into a remote life together. Thirty years later, Helorum's sister Sariah arrives with news that the surviving people of Amulon have finally been hunted and destroyed after persecuting converted Lamanites. Helorum answers the fulfillment of prophecy with mercy rather than revenge.

WHY THIS EPISODE INVITES IMAGINATION

Alma 25 compresses decades of consequence into a few verses. Fiction can slow that prophecy down until it becomes a family problem and a moral choice.

What the record says – and what the story adds

What the Book of Mormon tells us

- Abinadi warns Noah's priests that what they do to him will become a pattern of future suffering, including death by fire (Mosiah 17:15-18; interpreted in Alma 25:9-12).
- Almost all the seed of Amulon and the other priests of Noah are later slain in conflict with the Nephites (Alma 25:4).
- A remnant of those descendants gains authority among the Lamanites and causes believing Lamanites to perish by fire (Alma 25:5-7).
- The Lamanites then turn against the seed of Amulon, hunting and killing them in the wilderness (Alma 25:8-9).
- The record explicitly identifies these events as fulfillment of Abinadi's prophecy (Alma 25:9-12).

What the novel imagines beyond the verses

- Creates Helorum as a son of Amulon who rejects his father's politics and religion and consciously chooses another identity.
- Creates Ephah, Helorum's love interest, and uses her blue-stone necklace as the lever in Amulon's blackmail.
- Invents the intelligence mission, Chief Captain Levi, the ambush, and Helorum's false accusation of treachery.
- Turns the prophecy into a personal test when Helorum himself is sentenced to die by fire before Ephah and Zimran rescue him.
- Adds a thirty-year epilogue in which Sariah reports the destruction of Amulon's people and Helorum chooses to welcome her as family.

KEEP THE BOUNDARY CLEAR

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People and path

Principal characters

H Helorum

A fictional son of Amulon who has defected from his father's world. His story asks whether lineage determines destiny.

E Ephah

Helorum's beloved. Her courage is active rather than symbolic: she helps engineer his rescue and later builds a family with him.

A Amulon

The scriptural priest and ruler becomes a manipulative father who weaponizes family ties and political intrigue.

Z Zimran

Helorum's trusted companion, another descendant of Noah's priests who has rejected their legacy.

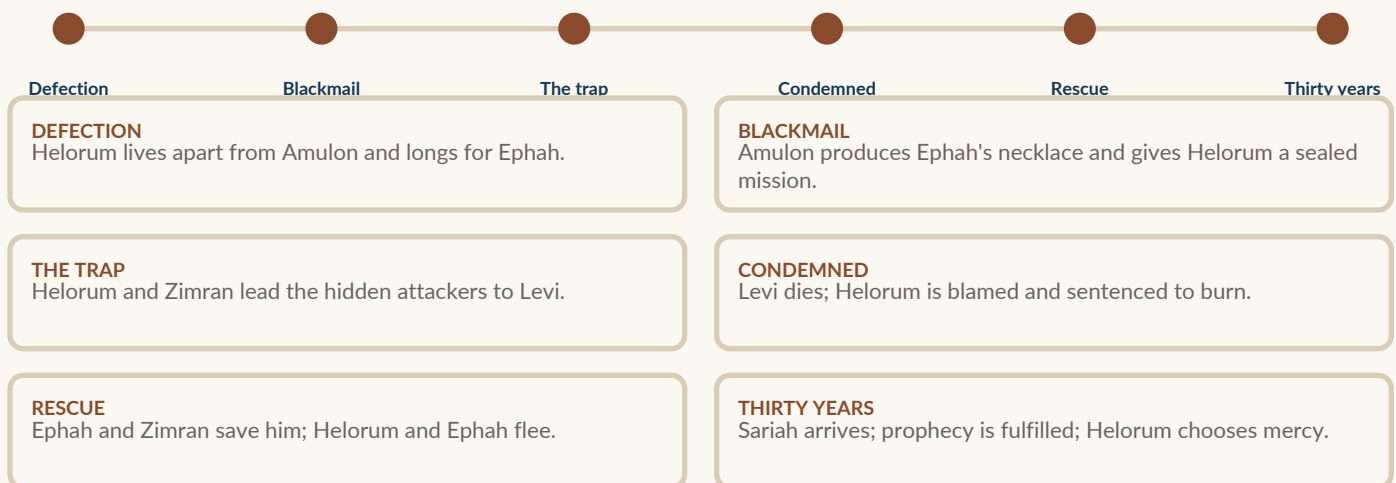
S Sariah

Helorum's sister and eventual bearer of the news that Abinadi's prophecy has reached its terrible fulfillment.

L Levi

The fictional Nephite chief captain who receives the documents and dies defending his people after Amulon's trap is sprung.

Short timeline



Return to the scriptures

Questions for deeper reading

1. Read Alma 25:4-12. What parts of the prophecy concern actions, and what parts concern descendants?
2. Does the story treat prophecy as fate, warning, consequence, or some combination of the three?
3. Helorum fears being judged by his parentage. Where do the scriptures teach that people are accountable for their own choices?
4. Why is Helorum's rescue from a death by fire thematically powerful even though that scene is not in the scriptural record?
5. At the end, what would revenge against Sariah have accomplished? What does forgiveness accomplish instead?
6. How does the thirty-year jump change your understanding of Abinadi's long-range prophecy?

TRY THIS

Make two columns labeled "inherited" and "chosen." Sort Helorum's name, family, enemies, beliefs, loyalties, home, and future into the column that best explains each part of his life.

READ NEXT

Mosiah 11-17 for Abinadi's confrontation with Noah, then Alma 24-25 for the later Lamanite conversions and the fate of the Amulonites.

The Fall of Jacobugath



SCRIPTURE CONNECTION

3 Nephi 7:9-13; 3 Nephi 8-10; 3 Nephi 9:9; 3 Nephi 11 and 17

One verse says a wicked city burned. The story walks its streets before the fire and follows two brothers out of the ashes toward Christ.

THE STORY IN ONE PAGE

Limhi survives the destruction of his village after his older brother Jershon gives himself up to the attackers. Determined to find him, Limhi hides in a treasure caravan bound for Jacobugath and enters a dazzling city of gold-tiled walls, masks, gardens, ritual, wealth, and violence. During a sun festival he recognizes Jershon among the performers and discovers the cost of surviving under King Jacob's regime. When destruction engulfs the city, Limhi escapes with Jershon and Jershon's wife, Milhah, but his brother is terribly burned and blinded. After three days of darkness, a traveler announces that the risen Messiah has appeared. Limhi brings Jershon to the gathered multitude, where the story imagines Christ lifting, forgiving, and healing him.

WHY THIS EPISODE INVITES IMAGINATION

Jacobugath receives only a handful of scriptural facts. That scarcity creates room to imagine the culture behind the city without changing its recorded fate.

What the record says – and what the story adds

What the Book of Mormon tells us

- A secret combination helps destroy the Nephite government and places a man named Jacob at its head as king (3 Nephi 7:1-10).
- Jacob leads his followers into the northernmost part of the land to establish a kingdom and gather more dissenters (3 Nephi 7:11-13).
- At the death of Christ, the land experiences storms, earthquakes, fires, upheaval, and three days of darkness (3 Nephi 8-10).
- The Lord later names Jacobugath among the destroyed cities and says it was burned because of its extreme wickedness, secret murders, and combinations (3 Nephi 9:9).
- The risen Christ appears to the Nephites, teaches them, and later invites the sick and afflicted to come forward to be healed (3 Nephi 11; 17:7-10).

What the novel imagines beyond the verses

- Creates Limhi, Jershon, and Milhah as ordinary people caught inside the consequences of King Jacob's secret-combination kingdom.
- Builds Jacobugath as a sensory city: gold-tiled walls, gemstone mosaics, markets, heated pools, masks, a tiered pyramid, and a sun festival.
- Invents the ritual culture and human sacrifices that Limhi witnesses while searching for his brother.
- Turns the city's destruction into a close-range escape story in which Limhi must save a wounded Jershon and Milhah.
- Carries the brothers beyond 3 Nephi 9 into the appearance of Christ and imagines Jershon receiving both forgiveness and physical healing.

KEEP THE BOUNDARY CLEAR

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People and path

Principal characters

L Limhi

The younger brother and point-of-view survivor. His loyalty drives him from a burned village into Jacobugath and finally toward Christ.

J Jershon

Limhi's older brother. He trades his freedom for Limhi's life, becomes entangled in Jacobugath, and carries deep shame after escaping.

M Milhah

Jershon's wife, who escapes the city with the brothers and uses her knowledge of plants to tend his wounds.

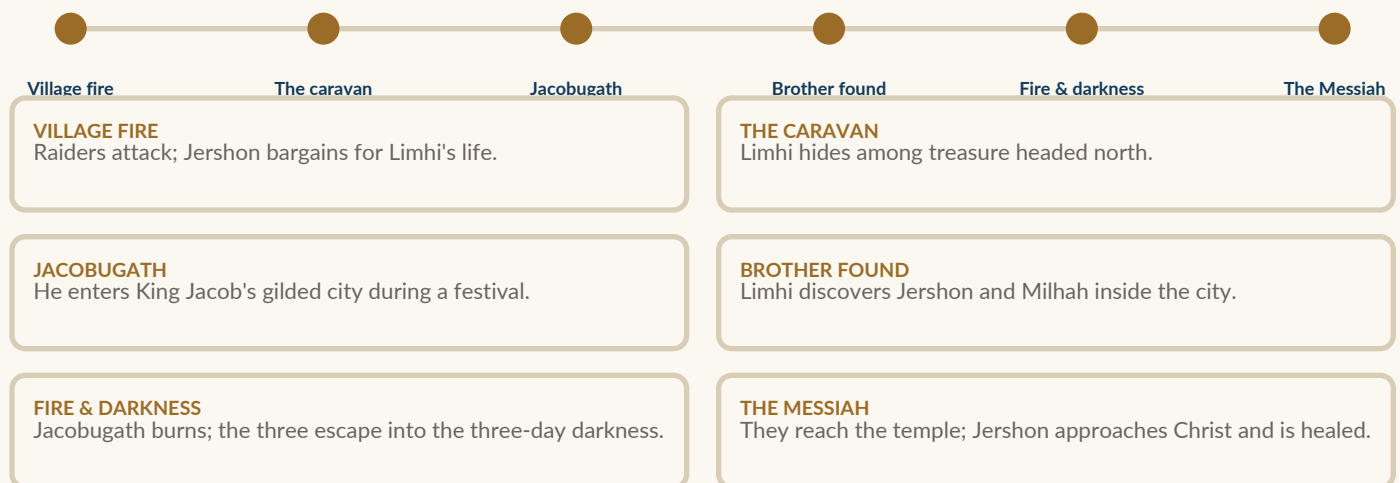
K King Jacob

A scriptural figure - leader of a secret combination and self-made king - expanded into the visible ruler of a lavish, violent city.

T The Messiah

The risen Christ is part of the scriptural setting. The story places Jershon among those who come forward seeking mercy and healing.

Short timeline



Return to the scriptures

Questions for deeper reading

1. Read 3 Nephi 7:9-13. What does the record actually reveal about Jacob before Jacobugath is ever named?
2. Read 3 Nephi 9:9. Which details in the verse became seeds for the novel's city culture and plot?
3. Why might a writer choose beauty, wealth, ritual, and celebration - not only ugliness - when imagining a deeply corrupt city?
4. How do secret combinations harm people who are not themselves leaders of the combination?
5. Compare the crowds at Jacobugath's festival with the crowd gathered around Christ. What contrasts does the novel create?
6. Jershon believes he is unworthy to approach Christ. What do 3 Nephi 9:13-14 and 17:7-10 suggest about Christ's invitation to the wounded?

TRY THIS

Read 3 Nephi 9:3-12 and choose another destroyed city. List only the facts the verse provides, then brainstorm three possible human stories that could fit without changing those facts.

READ NEXT

3 Nephi 6-11 to follow the collapse of government, the destruction, the voice in the darkness, and the appearance of Christ.

The Mission of Alma and Amulek



SCRIPTURE CONNECTION

Alma 8–15

The scriptural account tells us what Amulek gave up. The story imagines what those losses may have felt like inside his home, his business, and his family.

THE STORY IN ONE PAGE

Amulek begins as a prosperous landowner whose faith has gone quiet beneath wealth, obligations, and status. An angel sends him to meet Alma, and hospitality becomes a turning point: Alma enters his home, blesses his sick son Aaron, and awakens Amulek's old belief. Amulek then stands beside Alma in Ammonihah, faces Zeezrom's famous offer of six onties of silver, and watches public opposition become personal retaliation. His fields are burned, his home is wrecked, and he and Alma are imprisoned. The story makes the martyrdom of the believers devastatingly intimate by placing Amulek's wife Bilhah and son Aaron among the victims. After the prison falls, grief follows him to Sidom, where he must decide whether he can forgive the repentant Zeezrom. He joins Alma in healing him and agrees to baptize the man who once tried to destroy them.

WHY THIS EPISODE INVITES IMAGINATION

Alma tells us Amulek lost wealth, friends, and family ties. A novel can make those abstractions concrete by giving the losses rooms, names, faces, and memories.

What the record says – and what the story adds

What the Book of Mormon tells us

- Alma is rejected in Ammonihah, leaves, and is commanded by an angel to return. Amulek receives him into his house (Alma 8).
- Alma and Amulek preach together. Zeezrom offers Amulek six onties of silver if he will deny God, but Amulek exposes the trap (Alma 10-11).
- Some people believe, while opponents bind Alma and Amulek. Believing women and children and their records are burned as the missionaries are forced to watch (Alma 14:1-14).
- Alma and Amulek are beaten and imprisoned; after Alma prays, their bands break and the prison walls fall, killing their persecutors while the missionaries escape (Alma 14:17-29).
- In Sidom, Zeezrom is sick with guilt. Alma heals him according to his faith; he is baptized. Amulek has been rejected by former friends and family and has lost his wealth (Alma 15).

What the novel imagines beyond the verses

- Gives Amulek a detailed estate, servants, tenants, debts, and daily economic responsibilities to make his prosperity concrete.
- Creates Bilhah and Aaron as Amulek's wife and son and gives Aaron an illness that Alma heals soon after entering the household.
- Makes the persecution increasingly personal by burning Amulek's fields and wrecking his home before his arrest.
- Places Bilhah and Aaron among the believers killed by fire, turning the scriptural phrase "women and children" into Amulek's immediate family tragedy.
- Dwells on Amulek's struggle to forgive Zeezrom, giving emotional steps to the scriptural movement from opposition to healing and baptism.

KEEP THE BOUNDARY CLEAR

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People and path

Principal characters

A Amulek

The scriptural companion of Alma, imagined here first as a successful but spiritually distant landowner and later as a grieving disciple.

A Alma

The returning prophet whose arrival disrupts Amulek's comfortable life and opens a path back to faith.

B Bilhah

Amulek's fictional wife. Her fear for her home and child gives the cost of the mission a domestic voice.

A Aaron

Amulek's fictional son. His early healing makes the later fire especially painful within the novel's emotional design.

Z Zeezrom

The scriptural lawyer whose attempt to trap Amulek collapses into remorse, illness, healing, and baptism.

A Antionah

A scriptural chief ruler who becomes a central face of organized opposition in the novel's dramatization of Ammonihah.

Short timeline



Return to the scriptures

Questions for deeper reading

1. Read Alma 8:18-27. What does the scripture tell us about Amulek before he begins preaching, and what remains open for imagination?
2. Why does the novel begin with money, land, tenants, and family rather than with Amulek already acting as a missionary?
3. Read Alma 11:21-25. What makes Zeezrom's six onties more than a simple bribe?
4. How does personalizing the unnamed women and children of Alma 14 change the emotional weight of the martyrdom scene?
5. Read Alma 15:16-18. What losses does the scriptural record explicitly name for Amulek?
6. What does the story suggest about forgiveness when the person asking for mercy contributed to consequences that cannot be undone?

TRY THIS

Make a before-and-after inventory for Amulek. On one side list what gives him security at the beginning; on the other list what remains by the time he leaves Ammonihah. Then circle anything that cannot be measured materially.

READ NEXT

Alma 8-15 in one sitting. Notice how often the narrative moves between public preaching and private transformation.

With a New Voice



SCRIPTURE CONNECTION

3 Nephi 3-4 (with the story framed by the wider world of 3 Nephi)

The national deliverance from the Gadianton robbers becomes the intimate story of a singer who believes he has lost the gift that defined him.

THE STORY IN ONE PAGE

Zenephi is a farmer and gifted storyteller whose grandfather teaches him an inspired song and insists that music can carry the strength of God. He hopes to become a temple singer and quietly loves Jezerel, but a proclamation from Lachoneus turns singers into soldiers as the people gather against the Gadianton robbers. During an ambush, a sling stone crushes Zenephi's throat. He survives in a cave with the help of an elderly Lamanite woman but cannot sing and nearly gives up on returning home. Ishmael finds him and brings him back as the Nephites gather inside their defenses. Zenephi watches Giddianhi fall and the robber armies break. Unable to join the people's praise, he is drawn toward the temple, remembers a spiritual promise to write and open his mouth, and discovers his voice restored as he sings his grandfather's song over the rejoicing crowd. The story closes with Zenephi and Jezerel finally speaking the words they had withheld.

WHY THIS EPISODE INVITES IMAGINATION

The scripture focuses on leaders, armies, and collective deliverance. Fiction can ask what the same crisis meant to an ordinary person with an ordinary dream.

What the record says – and what the story adds

What the Book of Mormon tells us

- Giddianhi sends Lachoneus a threatening letter demanding surrender and alliance with the Gadianton society (3 Nephi 3:1-10).
- Lachoneus refuses to yield. He calls the people to repent, gather families, flocks, herds, and possessions into one place, and build strong fortifications (3 Nephi 3:11-17).
- Gidgiddoni is appointed chief captain. The people prepare spiritually and militarily rather than attacking the robbers in their strongholds (3 Nephi 3:18-26).
- The robbers attack in terrifying battle dress, but the gathered Nephites cry to God for protection and withstand them (3 Nephi 4:7-14).
- Giddianhi is slain; later Zemnariyah is hanged and the tree is felled. The people praise God for their deliverance (3 Nephi 4:14, 28-33).

What the novel imagines beyond the verses

- Creates Zenephi, Jezerel, Ishmael, and Zenephi's grandfather as ordinary people living inside the national crisis of 3 Nephi 3-4.
- Builds a tradition of musical storytelling in which sacred history is sung around fires and by temple singers.
- Turns the military gathering into a personal vocation crisis when Zenephi, a musician rather than a warrior, is called to fight.
- Invents the ambush, throat injury, cave recovery, and period of isolation in which Zenephi believes his identity as a singer has ended.
- Places Zenephi on the temple at the moment of victory and imagines his restored voice becoming a communal song of gratitude.

KEEP THE BOUNDARY CLEAR

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People and path

Principal characters

Z Zenephi

The fictional singer-soldier at the center of the story. His arc moves from gift, to loss, to a new understanding of what his voice is for.

J Jezerel

Zenephi's longtime love. Her concern before the battle and reunion after the victory give the story its quiet romantic thread.

I Ishmael

Zenephi's close friend and fellow soldier, practical and loyal enough to find him in hiding and push him back toward life.

G Grandfather

The keeper of sung stories who teaches Zenephi the new melody and frames music as a gift that can carry divine strength.

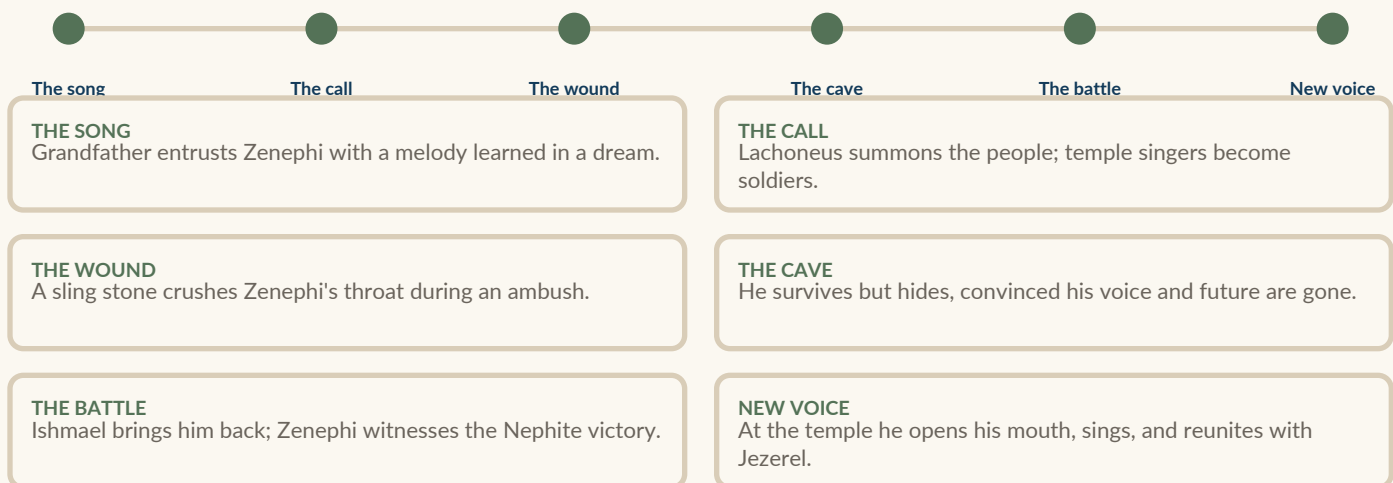
G Giddianhi

The scriptural Gadianton leader, imagined here as a visible battlefield threat watched from the walls by Zenephi.

G Gidgiddoni

The scriptural chief captain whose victory becomes the public backdrop for Zenephi's private restoration.

Short timeline



Return to the scriptures

Questions for deeper reading

1. Read 3 Nephi 3:11-17. What kinds of preparation does Lachoneus require besides weapons?
2. Why is a musician a useful fictional viewpoint for a story about war, gathering, and deliverance?
3. Zenephi thinks losing his voice means losing himself. What gifts or roles do people sometimes mistake for their whole identity?
4. Compare the Nephites' cries to God in 3 Nephi 4:8-10 with Zenephi's inability to join them aloud. What does the contrast add?
5. The novel turns national praise into one singer's restored song. How does that choice personalize 3 Nephi 4:30-33?
6. What does the phrase "new voice" mean by the end - physical healing, spiritual purpose, emotional honesty, or all three?

TRY THIS

Choose one Book of Mormon event and imagine how it might be remembered as a song fifty years later. Write only the chorus: four lines that preserve the event's core spiritual meaning.

READ NEXT

3 Nephi 1-5 for the full arc from the sign of Christ's birth through the Gadianton crisis and the people's deliverance.

Keep the scriptures open

This companion was prepared from *Tales of the Promised Land* by Michael D. Young and from the Book of Mormon passages listed below. Scriptural summaries were checked against the current English text published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The companion paraphrases rather than reproduces long passages.

Esther's Choice

Mosiah 20:1-5; 23:30-39; 24:8-25

Through the Fire

Mosiah 17:15-18; Alma 25:4-12

The Fall of Jacobugath

3 Nephi 7:1-13; 8-10; 9:9; 11; 17:7-10

The Mission of Alma and Amulek

Alma 8-15

With a New Voice

3 Nephi 3-4

A final invitation

Let the novel make you curious. Let the companion help you sort record from imagination. Then return to the Book of Mormon and notice the people, decisions, warnings, deliverances, and unanswered human questions waiting between the lines.

Open the scriptures. Discover the stories. Return with new questions.