

# The 50 Questions of Alma 5

A rhetorical question is one asked solely to produce an effect, rather than to get a reply. In one of Alma the Younger's major discourses to the people of Zarahemla, he asks the people 50 rhetorical questions. This chart is an overview of the general issues Alma discusses in Alma 5, such as being personally converted and imagining the judgment day. His 50 searching questions are useful to all people who wish to assess their own personal conversion and standing before God.

**Alma 5:6–15** - First, Alma asks if they have remembered their heritage and God's deliverance of their ancestors. This can have personal application to Latter-day Saints: just as the Nephites were admonished to remember God's deliverance of their ancestors, so should Latter-day Saints remember the sacrifices of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the pioneers— and the Lord's providing them the promised land of Zion. Second, he invites people to ponder the conditions of salvation and the need to believe the prophets of God. Third, he asks penetrating questions about each listener's repentance, change, faith, and hope. Still today, most of these questions invite a clear yes or no answer.

#	Verse	Remembering God's Acts for His People
1	6	Have you sufficiently retained in remembrance the captivity of your fathers?
2	6	Have you sufficiently retained in remembrance God's mercy and long-suffering towards your fathers?
3	6	Have you sufficiently retained in remembrance that he has delivered their souls from hell?
4	8	Were your fathers destroyed?
5	9	Were the bands of death broken, and the chains of hell which encircled your fathers about, were they loosed?

#	Verse	Knowing the Essential Logic of the Gospel
6	10	On what conditions were your fathers saved?
7	10	On what grounds had they to hope for salvation?
8	10	What is the cause of your fathers' being loosed from the bands of death, yea, and also the chains of hell?
9	11	Did not my father Alma believe in the words which were delivered by the mouth of Abinadi?
10	11	Was Abinadi not a holy prophet?
11	11	Did Abinadi not speak the words of God?
12	11	Did my father Alma believe them?

#	Verse	Being Personally Converted
13	14	Have you spiritually been born of God?
14	14	Have you received his image in your countenance?
15	14	Have you experienced this mighty change in your heart?
16	15	Do you exercise faith in the redemption of him who created you?
17	15	Do you look forward with an eye of faith?

**Alma 5:15–24** - These dozen questions concern the state of the individual's soul at the final judgment day. Alma wishes to impress upon his audience that there are ultimately only two possible outcomes at the final judgment: eternal joy or eternal remorse. Those who are righteous will have the image of God upon their countenances and will be found spotless and pure; others will be stained and unfit for the presence of God. This dualistic conception, or the doctrine of the Two Ways, is discussed in detail in charts 66–76. The vivid belief that all people will someday stand before God to give an accounting and to be judged is a powerful motivator of moral behavior.

#	Verse	Imagining the Judgment Day
18	15	Do you view this mortal body raised in immortality, and this corruption raised in incorruption, to stand before God to be judged according to the deeds which have been done in the mortal body?
19	16	Can you imagine to yourself that you hear the voice of the Lord, saying unto you, in that day: Come unto me you blessed, for behold your works have been works of righteousness upon the face of the earth?
20	17	Or do you imagine to yourself that you can lie unto the Lord in that day, and say—Lord, my works have been righteous works upon the face of the earth—and that he will save you?
21	18	Or otherwise, can you imagine yourself brought before the tribunal of God with your soul filled with guilt and remorse, having a remembrance of all your guilt, yea, a perfect remembrance of all your wickedness, yea, a remembrance that you have set at defiance the commandments of God?
22	19	Can you look up to God at that day with a pure heart and clean hands?
23	19	Can you look up, having the image of God engraven upon your countenance?
24	20	Can you think of being saved when you have yielded yourself to become subject to the devil?

#	Verse	Imagining the Judgment Day (continued)
25	22	How will you feel if you shall stand before the bar of God, having your garments stained with blood and all manner of filthiness?
26	22	What will these things testify against you?
27	23	Will they not testify that you are a murderer?
28	23	Will they not also testify that you are guilty of all manner of wickedness?
29	24	Do you suppose that such an one can have a place to sit down in the kingdom of God, with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, and also all the holy prophets, whose garments are cleansed and are spotless, pure and white?

**Alma 5:26–46** - In this next series of questions directed to the people of Zarahemla, Alma states that experiencing a change of heart can be temporary and that one must continually strive to be blameless before God. His dualistic view is apparent: those who are blameless are of the fold of God, and all others are of the fold of the devil. In this part of his speech, he guides the spiritual progress of his listeners by directing them in assessing their own spiritual condition, identifying with a community that believes in Jesus Christ, and personally obtaining spiritual knowledge.

#	Verse	Assessing One's Spiritual Condition
30	26	If you have experienced a change of heart, and if you have felt to sing the song of redeeming love, can you feel so now?
31	27	Have you walked, keeping yourself blameless before God?
32	27	Could you say, if you were called to die at this time, within yourself, that you have been sufficiently humble?
33	27	Could you say that your garments have been cleansed and made white through the blood of Christ?
34	28	Are you stripped of pride?
35	29	Is there one among you who is not stripped of envy?
36	30	Is there one among you that doth make a mock of his brother, or that heapeth upon him persecutions?

#	Verse	Identifying with a "Fold"
37	39	If you are not the sheep of the good shepherd, of what fold are you?
38	39	The devil is your shepherd, and you are of his fold; and now who can deny this?

#	Verse	Obtaining Spiritual Knowledge
39	45	Do you not suppose that I know of these things myself?
40	45	How do you suppose that I know of their surety?

**Alma 5:53–59** - The last ten rhetorical questions that Alma asks the people of Zarahemla are listed in this chart. These questions concern refusing to repent of sins. Alma's phrase "trample the Holy One under your feet" (Alma 5:53) poignantly illustrates that individuals blatantly mock God when they know the source of salvation and yet refuse to repent and partake of that free gift. By ending his speech with these ten questions, Alma places the burden of repentance directly on the shoulders of each person who seeks to live a life pleasing to God.

#	Verse	Refusing to Repent
41	53	Can you withstand these sayings?
42	53	Can you lay aside these things and trample the Holy One under your feet?
43	53	Can you be puffed up in the pride of your heart?
44	53	Will you still persist in the wearing of costly apparel and setting your heart upon the vain things of the world, upon your riches?
45	54	Will you persist in supposing that you are better than another?
46	54	Will you persist in the persecution of your brethren, who humble themselves and do walk after the holy order of God, wherewith they have been brought into this church having been sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and they do bring forth works which are meet for repentance?
47	55	Will you persist in turning your back upon the poor and the needy, and in withholding your substance from them?
48	58	The names of the righteous shall be written in the book of life, and unto them will I grant an inheritance at my right hand. What have you to say against this?
49	59	What shepherd is there having many sheep doth not watch over them, that the wolves enter not and devour his flock?
50	59	If a wolf enter his flock doth the shepherd not drive him out?