In these chapters we have two magnificent sermons by Alma the Younger, more than enough material for several Sunday School lessons. These study questions will focus on chapter 5, with a few things also from chapter 7.

Alma 5

To whom is the address in chapter 5 given? How is it particularly relevant to their situation? To whom is the sermon in chapter 7 given? How is it particularly relevant to their situation?

In this sermon Alma asks forty-five questions. Why do you think he uses questions to structure what he says?

Verses 1–7: Alma begins as he seems to begin each of his sermons, with a reference to the type of bondage and deliverance. (Verse 6 captures both parts of the type: have you remembered the captivity of your fathers and their deliverance?) Sometimes the specific instance of that type is Moses and Israel in Egypt. In this case it is Noah and the people of Nephi. Why do you think the type, bondage and deliverance, has such power for Alma the Younger? Is it or ought it to be an important type for us?

Verse 10: Alma announces his theme, the conditions of salvation. Compare this sermon to King Benjamin’s sermon.
in Mosiah 4. How are they different? How are they the same?

**Verses 10–12:** To what cause of salvation does Alma first refer? Why is that particular cause so important? What does it mean to him? To us?

**Verse 12:** Verse 11 tells us that Alma the Elder heard and believed the words of Abinadi. What does this verse describe as the result? Why does Alma the Younger say that the mighty change was something that happened to his father rather than something that he did?

**Verse 13:** Why is it enough to say that the people “humbled themselves and put their trust in the true and living God” and “were faithful until the end” to explain their salvation?

Why doesn’t Alma include such things as baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost, or keeping the commandments, in his description of salvation?

**Verses 14 and 19:** What does “receive his image in your countenances” mean? Does it have anything to do with Genesis 1:27: “God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them”?

If we have already been created in the image of God, how can Alma ask whether those in Zarahemla have received that image?

How is Alma’s teaching related to the teaching of 1 John 3:2: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is”?
Just how close the connection is between Hebrew and the language of the Nephites is a matter of nothing but conjecture. Normally we would expect a good deal of language change in the five hundred years since Lehi’s family arrived in the New World. However, if Hebrew is the priestly language of the plates rather than the everyday language of the Nephites, it may not have changed very much. If so, we can draw some tentative conclusions about Book of Mormon language from what we know about Hebrew.

Perhaps the first thing to notice is that in Hebrew the word for face (pannim) is plural rather than singular. What implications might that have for how Hebrews and perhaps Nephites too understood the face?

Another important thing about the Hebrew word for face is that it often stands for the person as a whole. (See, for example, Deuteronomy 28:50; Job 29:24; Proverbs 7:13; and Jeremiah 5:3.) Does that suggest anything about what Alma is saying here?

**Verses 14–15:** Are the questions that Alma asks in these verses different questions, or are they different ways of asking the same question?

**Verse 16:** What would it take for us to imagine that we hear God calling us blessed and calling us to him? If every person sins, what does it take for our works to be the works of righteousness?

**Verse 21:** Compare what Alma says here about salvation with what he said about it in verses 10–13. Here he says that to be saved we must have our garments washed white in the blood of the Redeemer. Earlier he says that we must
have our hearts changed, humble ourselves, trust God, and remain faithful. How are those two descriptions of salvation related?

**Verse 23:** Alma seems to use murder as the type of all sin. Why is it appropriate to do so?

**Verse 26:** Why is experiencing the change of heart described as singing “the song of redeeming love”? What does the question of this verse suggest is Alma’s concern for the people of Zarahemla? How is it an appropriate question for us?

**Verses 27–30:** Does it make sense to understand these questions as tests we can use to answer the question “Am I clean?”

**Verse 27:** Is Alma using humility and having one’s garments washed clean as parallel concepts in this verse? If not, why does he particularly mention humility?

**Verse 28:** What does it mean to be stripped of pride? Why are we unprepared to meet God if we are not stripped of pride?

**Verse 29:** What might Alma mean here by *envy*? How does envy prevent us from being in the presence of God?

**Verse 30:** What mockery or persecution within the church might Alma have in mind? (Compare Alma 1:22–24; how did the contention with those outside the church lead to excommunications?)

**Verse 32:** Who are the workers of iniquity? Is iniquity different from sin?

Why does the verse end with “for the Lord God hath spoken it”?
Verse 33: Is it significant that the Lord doesn’t demand but offers an invitation? Why do we have to repent in order for him to receive us?

Verses 34–36: From where do the images that Alma uses in these verses come? What do those scriptures have to do with Alma’s message?

Verses 40–41: What does it mean to be a child of the devil? Does that tell us anything about what it means to be a child of God and the Good Shepherd?

Verse 42: The scriptures sometimes speak, as Alma does here, of the wages of sin. (See, for example, Romans 6:23.) Why don’t they speak of the wages of righteousness?

Verses 43–44: Does verse 44 tell us what it means to speak plainly—to testify—or does Alma speak plainly because he has been called to testify?

Verse 46: To what does the phrase “these things” here and in verse 45 refer? Is its antecedent in verse 44?

How does Alma’s testimony that he has fasted and prayed many days to know these things square with the story of conversion, in which he seems to have gained a testimony quickly and without fasting and prayer?

Verse 47: What particular words of the fathers does Alma have in mind? Does the context answer that question?

Verses 53–55: What are the sins of the people of Zarahemla? Are our sins today the same, or do we have different problems?
Verse 57: How do we come out from the wicked? How do we avoid touching their unclean things? Does coming out from among them and not touching their unclean things mean that we dissociate ourselves from them? If so, how can we do missionary work among them? Indeed, how can we even live in any society where it is possible to come in contact with wicked persons as well as good ones? If coming out from the wicked doesn’t require us to dissociate ourselves from them, how do we separate ourselves?

What is the result of Alma’s sermon? (See Alma 6:1–4.)

Alma 7

Verses 3–6: In these verses Alma makes it clear that he hopes the Gideonites are different than the people in Zarahemla were. Are they?

Verses 7, 9–12: Does Alma’s message to the Gideonites differ from his message to those of Zarahemla?

Verse 12 teaches a doctrine that is hidden from most of the rest of the world, that Christ suffered so he will know how to succor his people. What does succor mean? How does Christ succor us?

Verse 14: This verse commands the Gideonites to be baptized not only so they may be washed of their sins, but also so they may have faith in Christ. How does baptism make faith in Christ possible?

Verse 22: If the Gideonites were living righteously, why did they have to be awakened to a sense of their duty to God?
As Alma uses the phrase here, what is “the holy order of God”? Is that different from “the order of the church” in Alma 8:1? Is he using the word *order* here in the same way he used it in Alma 5:49?

**Verse 23:** How does what Alma says here correlate with what he told those of Zarahemla in Alma 5:6, 13–15, 27–30, and 53–55? How does it correlate with Mosiah 4? What themes recur in each of these sermons about salvation?

**Verse 24:** Alma says, “If you have faith, hope, and charity, then you will always do good works.” Do faith, hope, and charity guarantee good works? If so, how? Can we do good works without them? If not, why not?