

THERE IS NO DEATH AFTER THE RESURRECTION

(Alma 8:97-108)

Amulek makes clear the various aspects of the mission of the Atoning Messiah. One of the aspects is to atone for temporal death. Amulek defines temporal death as the death of the body. The Atonement will rectify this problem, and death will be defeated.

This exact reversal of elements is intentional. Paul is emphasizing both the resurrection and the universality of the resurrection. This breaking of the bands of death is given to all men. There are no conditions attached, just as there were no options out of death from Adam to Jesus.

Amulek calls the death of the body the temporal (related to time) death. He also recognizes that there is a complete and unconditional Atonement for this death. However, he also recognizes that there is another problem. In addition to the bands of death, there is the problem of sin. What Amulek declares in verses 97-98 is that those sins may remain even though the body may live again. The resurrection of the body does not in and of itself have any effect on the sins of the soul accumulated while in that body.

Amulek continues with his explanation. This resurrection, this coming back to life, will bring together the spirit and the body, with the body "restored" to the way it is now. Even with this complete restoration of body and soul, with nothing missing in the body, we will still come before God with a "bright recollection of all our guilt." Amulek is continuing to mark the difference between the temporal (physical) death and the problem of salvation. (v.100-101)

Verses 102-104 are a functional duplication of verses 100-101. There are two elements in each of the two verses. The first element is the universality of the resurrection, and the second is the inapplicability of the resurrection to the atonement from sin. The duplication of the two verses is an intentional repetition for emphasis.

Verses 105-107, Amulek shares the contrasting themes between death and resurrection, with similar vocabularies, but there is an important difference in the vocabularies used that show that what Joseph is translating is no simple restating of Paul. Both Paul and Amulek use contrasting terms natural/spiritual (Paul) and temporal/spiritual (Amulek). The difference is that those contrasts refer to completely different concepts. For Amulek the temporal/spiritual contrast deals with the difference between resurrection and the atonement for sin. For Paul, the natural/spiritual refers to the two states of the body, the mortal and the resurrected. While the language may be similar, the concepts encoded by that language are very different.

We don't know how much longer it might have gone on, although Amulek does appear to have answered most of Zeezrom's questions. Nevertheless, it is not without cause that Mormon notes that "this is all that I have written." (v.109)