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Stories from the Book of Mormon: Lesson 5— Deliverance of Alma and Amulek from Prison

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Abstract: This lesson's objective was to show that “the Lord gives us strength according to our faith which is in Christ, even unto deliverance.”

Gospel gives to mankind the doctrine of Jesus Christ, as He Himself taught it. It is the divine plan for the redemption and salvation of man. It is with reverent thought and deep feeling that one writes about the Prophet Joseph Smith and the restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through the Prophet Joseph, man's relationship to his Heavenly Father became known. There was a new vision of the Kingdom of God in which the purpose of God was to culminate in the reign of righteousness upon the earth. God reigns in heaven and in earth. He is the rightful King of nations and the source of supreme good to mankind. The fact that the restoration was reserved for our day, fills us with a deepening sense of our responsibility and duty; and the knowledge that a new *standard of success* has been revealed from the throne of God. How true are these words:

Not what we have but what we use;
Not what we see, but what we choose—
These are the things that mar or bless
The sum of human happiness.

Not as we take but as we give;
Not as we pray but as we live—
These are the things that make for peace,
Both now and after time shall cease.

Questions and Topics of Discussion

1. What is meant by the quotation at the beginning of this lesson?
2. What do you think have been the causes of Americans being a progressive people?
3. What is meant by the word "success"? Discuss this question and express freely your ideas.
4. Name some successful people in history, and tell why you consider them successful.
5. What, according to President Eliot, have been America's five contributions to the world?
6. Why and how does the Restored Gospel set up new standards of life?
7. Discuss the parts of this lesson that appeal to you.

Stories from the Book of Mormon

Lesson 5—Deliverance of Alma and Amulek from Prison

For optional use of Relief Societies in stakes and missions in countries other than the United States, in lieu of social science lessons.

Tuesday, March 28, 1944

Note: For the full effect of this lesson it is imperative that the teacher and the class have at hand the Book of Mormon.

Lesson objective: To show that "the Lord gives us strength according to our faith which is in Christ, even unto deliverance."

One of the many great and powerful prophets who cried repentance unto the people of America was Alma the Younger. His conversion to the cause of Christ was similar to that of the ancient Apostle Paul.

Alma, too, was visited by an angel who reproved him for his acts against the Lord and then brought him to a true repentance that set him face forward on the path that leads to eternal life. Knowing the anguish

of soul for wrongdoing and also the joy found in the deliverance from sin, Alma spoke with words of fervor the call of repentance: "O that I were an angel, and could have the wish of mine heart, that I might go forth and speak with the trump of God, with a voice to shake the earth, and cry repentance unto every people!" (Alma 29:1).

Many of Alma's missionary experiences are among the most dramatic to be found recorded in the Book of Mormon. Such is the case in his warnings to the wicked city of Ammonihah, at which time he was accompanied by another servant of the Lord, named Amulek. This story illustrates beautifully the strength the Lord gives to one having unwavering faith in Christ—a strength even unto the deliverance from enemies.

The moving story to be used as a background for this lesson can best be gained by an oral class reading of the events that provide the setting as well as the actual dramatic happenings of Alma's visit to Ammonihah. Elder George Reynolds in his book, *The Story of the Book of Mormon*, lays a colorful setting, describing the missionary activities that lead up to the imprisonment of Alma and Amulek. The Reynold's account follows. It is suggested that this be read, followed immediately by a complete reading of chapter 14 of the Book of Alma. The questions for active reading and discussion given below will provide opportunity to seek more of the plain and precious truths of the Gospel which appear in the spirited words of Alma and Amulek.

"The next year (B.C. 82), Alma turned his face westward. He visited the land of Melek, where his labors

were crowned with abundant blessings. Having satisfied himself with the good that he had accomplished, he traveled three days' journey on the north of the land of Melek, to a great and corrupt city called Ammonihah. There he found a godless people, filled with the falsehoods of Nehor, and committing all manner of abominations without repentance, because they cherished the flattering lie, as the foundation of their creed, that all men would be saved. This city was in the hands of a corrupt clique of judges and lawyers, who stirred up sedition, tumult and rioting, that they might make money out of the suits that followed such disturbances. Further than this, they were secretly plotting to overthrow the government, and rob the people of their highly prized liberties. Among such a people Alma labored in vain; none would listen, none would obey, none offered him rest and food. Scorn and mockery were his reward; and he was spat upon, maltreated and cast out of the city.

"Weary in body and sick at heart because of the iniquity of the people after many fruitless efforts, fervent prayers and long fastings, Alma sought some other people more worthy of salvation's priceless gifts. He bent his way toward the city of Aaron; but as he journeyed, an angel of the Lord (that same angel that beforetime had been the agent in his conversion to God) stood before him and blessed him. He told him to lift up his heart and rejoice, for because of his faithfulness he had great cause to do so. The angel then directed Alma to return to the sin-cursed city he had just left, and proclaim unto its citizens the awful message that

except they repented the Lord would destroy them.

“Speedily the prophet obeyed the angel’s words. By another road he drew near the doomed city, which he entered by its south gate. As he passed in, he hungered, and asked a man whom he met, Will you give to an humble servant of God something to eat? With joy the man (and, strange though it appear, he was a rich man) took him to his home and fed, clothed and lodged him. Furthermore, Amulek, for such was his name, told Alma that he also had received a visit from a holy angel who had informed him of the high priest’s coming, and directed him to receive him into his house. Then Alma blessed Amulek and all his household, and tarried with them and recruited his strength under the generous hospitality which Amulek’s home afforded. But his rest was not to be a lengthened one; the people waxed stronger in sin; the cup of their iniquity was nearly full. Go, came the word of the Lord, Go forth, and take with thee my servant Amulek, and prophesy unto this people, saying, Repent ye, for thus saith the Lord, Except ye repent, I will visit this people in mine anger; yea, I will not turn my fierce anger away. Filled with the Holy Ghost, these servants of God went forth and valiantly delivered their terrible message.

“One of those who most bitterly opposed Alma and Amulek was a lawyer named Zeezrom No matter what Alma and his companion said, Zeezrom could twist it from its proper meaning; find blasphemy and heresy in the sublime truths of the Gospel, and extract treason from the simplest of God’s laws. He questioned and cross-questioned, he

promised and threatened, he twisted and turned, he abused and vilified, but all to no purpose, he was caught in his own trap. His heaven-inspired opponents made manifest his thoughts and intentions, they exposed his lying, they overthrew his sophistries and, with a power more than human, they exhibited the blackness of his heart. As they proceeded, the power of God increased upon them, their words grew yet more forcible until Zeezrom himself felt their power. As his corruptions were laid bare he began to tremble, first with rage, then with fear. Bad as he was, he was not the worst among that people, and when once he realized the power he was combatting, his heart began to acknowledge its guilt.” *Story of the Book of Mormon*, pp. 152-154, 1888 edition.

Questions for Active Reading and Discussion

With the help of the suggested readings given below have the class carry on the discussion as follows: first, answer the question; second, read the passage given to discover plain and precious truths of the Gospel brought to light in the Book of Mormon. If time permits, have each member of the class add a passage of her own selection from within the Book of Mormon (Alma, chapters 4 to 16)—a passage that has brought new meaning to a Gospel truth.

1. How is it that with a portion of the Gospel as understood by the churches of the world today men can so easily be led away to destruction? Read Alma 12:1-12.
2. What is the true significance of the fall of Adam and the probationary state of man? Read Alma 12:12-37.

The next question may be used if needed for class activity, or it may be assigned for home study.

3. How did a faith in Christ unto salvation deliver Zeezrom? Read Alma 15:1-12.