

Lesson Highlights

- *Alma gives a powerful discourse on the priesthood and foreordination.*
- *Alma, Amulek, and other believers are persecuted for their righteousness.*
- *Zeezrom is healed and baptized.*
- *The words of Alma are fulfilled as the Lamanites destroy Ammonihah.*

A study of this lesson will help us recognize the importance of honoring our foreordained roles, callings, and priesthood responsibilities and to help us understand that following the counsel of prophets helps us enter into the rest of the Lord.

Next Week:

Lesson 25:

"They Taught With Power and Authority of God",

Alma 17-22

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Introduction

HOW?

One of the most important questions we can ask is **"How?"** This question is important when it relates to our personal conduct. To illustrate this, imagine the following:

- a. A young man knows that he needs to be at a certain place at a certain time, but he does not know how to get there.
- b. A woman knows that she needs to be baptized, but she does not know how to go about it.
- c. A man knows that Jesus is the Savior, but he does not know how to come unto Him. (read 1 Nephi 15:14.)

When Alma taught the people in Ammonihah, he talked about one way we can know how to come unto Christ. Rather than using the word *how*, he used the phrase **"in what manner."** Read Alma 13:1-2.

A portion of this lesson discusses how the order of the priesthood helps us *"know in what manner to look forward to [the] Son for redemption"* (Alma 13:2).

Alma gave a powerful discourse on the priesthood and foreordination.

After Alma taught Zeezrom and others in Ammonihah about the plan of redemption, he testified of the priesthood and the doctrine of foreordination. The priests of whom Alma spoke in this discourse were high priests in the Melchizedek Priesthood (Alma 13:10).

Alma 13:3 Men were first "called and prepared" to be ordained to the priesthood from the foundation of the world.

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, *"Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was"* (Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 365).

President Ezra Taft Benson said this about your foreordination: *"God has held you in reserve to make your appearance in the final days before the second coming of the Lord. ...God has saved for the [final days] some of His strongest children, who will help bear off the kingdom triumphantly. That is where you come in, for you are the generation that must be prepared to meet your God. In all ages prophets have looked down through the corridors of time to our day. Billions of the deceased and those yet to be born have their eyes on us. Make no mistake about it...you are a marked generation. There has never been more expected of the faithful in such a short period of time than there is of us"* (The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson [1988], 104-5).



Alma 13:3-5 Men demonstrated by their exceeding faith and good works in premortal life that they were worthy to be foreordained to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood.

Alma 13:8-10 teaches us that men must repent and work righteousness in this life to remain worthy of their foreordination.

Alma's teachings about foreordination should affect the way we sustain those who are called to preside over us because we know that they are called to that position by God. These teachings should affect our response when priesthood leaders extend callings or other assignments to us because they are assisting us in living up to our foreordained callings.

President Spencer W. Kimball taught:

"Before we came here, faithful women were given certain assignments while faithful men were foreordained to certain priesthood tasks. While we do not now remember the particulars, this does not alter the glorious reality of what we once agreed to. You are accountable for those things which long ago were expected of you just as are those we sustain as prophets and apostles!" ("The Role of Righteous Women," Ensign, Nov. 1979, 102).

Alma said that men receive the Melchizedek Priesthood so they can *"teach [God's] commandments unto the children of men, that they also might enter into his rest"* (Alma 13:6; see also verse Alma 13:1). Melchizedek Priesthood holders have opportunities to teach the gospel as missionaries, husbands, and fathers.

To explain what entering into the rest of the Lord is, **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** taught: *"The rest of the Lord, where mortals are concerned, is to gain a perfect knowledge of the divinity of the great latter-day work. [President Joseph F. Smith said,] 'It means entering into the knowledge and love of God, having faith in his purpose and in his plan, to such an extent that we know we are right, and*

John Taylor:

This nation and other nations will be overthrown, not because of their virtue, but because of their corruption and iniquity. The time will come, for the prophecies will be fulfilled, when kingdoms will be destroyed, thrones cast down, and the powers of the earth shaken, and God's wrath will be kindled against the nations of the earth, and it is for us to maintain correct principles, political, religious, and social, and to feel towards all men as God feels.

(The Gospel Kingdom:

Selections from the Writings and Discourses of John Taylor, ed. G. Homer Durham [Salt Lake City: Improvement Era, 1941], 298)

that we are not hunting for something else; we are not disturbed by every wind of doctrine, or by the cunning and craftiness of men who lie in wait to deceive.' It is 'rest from the religious turmoil of the world; from the cry that is going forth, here and there...lo, here is Christ; lo, there is Christ.' (Gospel Doctrine, 5th ed., pp. 58, 125-126.) The rest of the Lord, in eternity, is to inherit eternal life, to gain the fulness of the Lord's glory (D. & C. 84:24.)" (Mormon Doctrine, 2nd ed. [1966], 633).

Alma 13:11-12 We become pure through repentance and the atonement of Christ so that we can be permitted to enter into the rest of the Lord.

Alma 13:12-13, 16, 27-29; 3 Nephi 27:19-20 To live so that we can be sanctified through the blood of the Lamb and by the Holy Ghost, we must abhor sin, humble ourselves, repent, do good works, obey the commandments, look forward to Christ's coming, hearken to the prophets, pray daily, be guided by the Spirit, develop Christian virtues, and have the love of God in our hearts.

Alma 13:2, 16 and review the following verses. Look for some ways in which the order of the priesthood can help us know how to look to the Savior for redemption.

- a. Alma 13:3-4.** Those foreordained to receive the Melchizedek Priesthood were "called and prepared...on account of their exceeding faith and good works."
- b. Alma 13:6.** They were "ordained [foreordained] ...to teach [God's] commandments unto the children of men, that they also might enter into his rest."
- c. Alma 13:8.** In this life, they are "ordained with a holy ordinance."

Alma, Amulek, and other believers were persecuted for their righteousness.

Alma 14:1-5 Many people in Ammonihah believed Alma and Amulek's teachings and began to repent and search the scriptures. The majority of the people, however, became angry and persecuted Alma and Amulek.

1 Nephi 16:1-3 Some people become angry when they are called to repentance because the guilty take the truth to be hard.

Alma 14:6-7 When he saw what "he had caused among the people" Zeezrom confessed his guilt, testified that Alma and Amulek were guiltless, and began to plead with the people for them.

Alma 14:7 The people responded when Zeezrom confessed his guilt and defended Alma and Amulek by reviling him, spitting on him, casting him out, and sending men to stone him.

Alma 14:7-9 The wicked people in Ammonihah took the people who believed in the word of God and cast them and their scriptures into a fire to be consumed in a painful death.

d. Alma 13:10. They show that they are worthy of their foreordination through continued faith and good works and through repentance.

Consider how faith and repentance help us look to Jesus Christ for redemption; how good works and obedience to the commandments help us look to Him; and how priesthood ordinances help us look to Him.

Alma 13:14-15 Alma spoke of Melchizedek as an example of a great high priest.

Alma 13:17-18; see also Joseph Smith Translation, Genesis 14:25-40 We learn from Melchizedek's example that having exceeding faith is necessary to accomplish God's purposes in leading others to Him.

From Alma 13:27 we note that Alma's love for the people of Ammonihah was so sincere that he was anxious to the point of pain that they heed his words and repent quickly.

Alma 13:27-29 records Alma's plea to the people.

Alma 34:32-36 Obviously, it is important not to procrastinate repentance because if we continue in sin, we become subject to the devil and we may lose the opportunity and/or the ability to repent during our lifetime.

Alma 13:28 One blessing we receive as we "watch and pray continually" is the promise that we will not be tempted beyond our ability to resist.

Alma 13:29; Moroni 7:41 We can have "a hope that [we] shall receive eternal life" if we exercise faith in the Lord's promises.

Alma 14:10-11; Alma 60:13 The Lord allowed this to happen so that the martyrs could come to him in glory and the wicked could receive just punishment.

Alma 14:12-13 It was the will of the Lord that the lives of Alma and Amulek be spared because their work was not yet finished.

Alma 14:26-29; Ether 12:12-13 After being persecuted in prison for many days, Alma and Amulek were finally delivered by the power of God, who brought about an earthquake to destroy the prison and the prophets' persecutors. They were given strength and power "according to their faith which was in Christ."

Mosiah 3:17; Moroni 7:33 Our faith must be centered in Christ to lead us to deliverance.

Zeezrom was healed and baptized.

After the Lord delivered them from prison, Alma and Amulek went to the land of Sidom. There they met the men who had been cast out of Ammonihah and stoned because of their belief in the word of God (Alma 15:1; see also Alma 14:7). Zeezrom was one of these men (Alma 15:3). Zeezrom was suffering both spiritually and physically because of his wickedness, but *"his heart began to take courage"* when he heard that Alma and Amulek were in Sidom (Alma 15:3-4).

Alma 15:5 Zeezrom asked to be healed by Alma and Amulek. This reveals his deep trust and confidence in them.

Alma 15:6-10 Zeezrom needed to place his trust in Christ in order to be healed.

Alma 15:11-12 We learn from Zeezrom's actions after he was healed that those who receive the Lord's blessings need to testify to others of God's mercy and love.

Alma 15:12-15 Unlike the people who remained in Ammonihah, the people in Sidom believed the message taught by Alma and Amulek and were baptized. Alma saw that they *"were checked as to the pride of their hearts"* (Alma 15:17; Note: the word *check* means to slow or stop).

The words of Alma were fulfilled as the Lamanites destroyed Ammonihah.

Alma 16:1-2 About one year after Alma and Amulek preached in Ammonihah, the Lamanites invaded Nephite lands.

Alma 16:2-3, 9-11 The Nephites in Ammonihah were slain--every living soul of that great city--and their carcasses were torn asunder by wild animals.

Alma 9:4-5, 12, 18 This one-day desolation as a judgment of God was a fulfillment of Alma's prophecies.

Alma 16:4-8 Zoram and his followers were able to scatter the Lamanites and rescue their brethren who had been taken captive because they requested and followed the guidance of the Lord's chosen prophet.

Alma 15:17 As they became more humble, the people gathered to worship God and pray to Him for protection and deliverance. It is necessary to humble ourselves before God in order to truly worship Him.

Alma 15:16 By choosing to live the gospel and serve as a missionary, Amulek gave up great material wealth and the affection of his family and friends.

Alma 8:30; Alma 34:1, 8; Ether 12:12-13 Amulek gained the companionship of the Holy Ghost, a testimony of Christ and his mission, and an abiding faith in the Lord.

Consider the sacrifices you have made in choosing to live and teach the gospel and how you have been blessed for this choice.

Alma 15:18 Once the Church was established in Sidom, Alma took Amulek into his home and cared for his temporal and spiritual needs. This act reveals how charitable and humble Alma was. Consider how you personally can administer to others and strengthen them in the Lord.

Compare Alma 9:1-8 and Alma 15:15 with Alma 16:4-6; see also 2 Nephi 4:34 By comparing the destruction of Ammonihah to the success of Zoram's armies, we should learn to trust in God and His prophets rather than in worldly knowledge, power, or possessions.

Alma 16:13-21 After the destruction of Ammonihah, the Lord prepared people's hearts to receive the word preached by Alma, Amulek, and others who were chosen for the work.

Alma 16:16 The Lord prepares people's hearts to receive His word by giving them His Spirit to teach and guide them.

Alma 16:21; see also Mosiah 18:18-20; D&C 52:9 We ensure that we preach the word of God *"in its purity"* by teaching only doctrine that is taught by the prophet and by teaching repentance and faith in Christ.

Conclusion

Read **Matthew 11:28-30** and **Alma 13:27-29**. In a world filled with doubt and confusion, it is comforting to know that through the priesthood we can *"know in what manner to look forward to [the] Son for redemption"* (Alma 13:2). As we look to the Lord, trust in Him, and follow the counsel of His prophets, we can enter into His rest.

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

- Record your thoughts on the teachings and experiences of Alma and Amulek.
- What lessons have you learned that can be applied to your life?