

Lesson Highlights

- Alma teaches the humble Zoramites to exercise faith and give place in their hearts for the word of God.
- Alma teaches the people to nourish the word of God in their hearts.
- Alma cites prophets' testimonies of Jesus Christ and exhorts the people to plant the word of God in their hearts.
- Amulek testifies of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. He commands the people to pray and exercise faith unto repentance.

A study of this lesson will help us understand that the word of God will lead us to Jesus Christ and encourage us to "nourish the word" in our hearts (Alma 32:40).

Next Week:

Lesson 29:

"Give Ear to My Words",

Alma 36-39

Green Mountain 1st Ward

Lakewood, Colorado

Doug Simpson

Introduction



The Word is a Seed – Laurel Nichols, 2006

Imagine that someone has given you a seed and told you that it will grow into a tree that will bear delicious fruit. What would you do to find out if the seed will really produce delicious fruit? This lesson begins with a discussion of Alma 32, the chapter that contains Alma's discourse in which the word of God is compared to a seed. Alma exhorts a group of humble Zoramites to "give place, that [this] seed may be planted" in their hearts (Alma 32:28). He promises that if they nourish this seed, it will grow until it becomes the tree of life, whose fruit is "most precious" and "sweet above all that is sweet" (Alma 32:40-42).

Alma taught the humble Zoramites to exercise faith and give place in their hearts for the word of God.

Alma, Amulek, and their brethren had entered one of the Zoramites' synagogues. There they heard the Zoramites declare that "there [would] be no Christ" (Alma 31:16-17). After hearing this false teaching, Alma, Amulek, and their brethren separated to preach the word of God and testify of Christ (Alma 31:36-37; Alma 32:1).

As Alma was preaching, a great multitude of Zoramites approached him.

Alma 32:6-8 Alma had great joy when these Zoramites came to him because he saw that they were humbled by their afflictions and were prepared to be taught the gospel.

Alma 32:2-5 To prepare these people to hear the word of God, they had been cast out of the synagogues and treated poorly by society because of their poverty.

Alma 32:12-13 It was a blessing to these Zoramites that they had been compelled to be humble because the humility led to repentance, repentance to mercy, and mercy to enduring to the end, which leads to salvation.

Alma 32:14-16 It is better to humble ourselves because we desire to believe and to

be obedient than to be compelled to be humble. The word of God can lead us to humble ourselves if we seek the Spirit and acknowledge our dependence on God.

Alma 32:17-18, 21 Alma taught the Zoramites that to have faith is not to have a perfect knowledge, but to have hope of things which are not seen, but are true.

Alma 32:22 Alma said that the first thing we need to do to develop faith in God is to believe on his word.

Alma 17:2; Alma 32:23; D&C 1:38; D&C 18:33-36 We may receive God's word from the scriptures, angels, other mortals, the prophets and Church leaders, and from the Spirit.

Alma 32:26-27 Alma encouraged his listeners to awake and arouse their faculties to an experiment so they could know that his words were true. Ponder what it means to "awake and arouse [your] faculties".

John 7:17 We "experiment" on the word of God by doing what the word tells us to do--by living the word.

Alma taught the people to nourish the word of God in their hearts

Comparing the word of God to a seed, Alma counseled the Zoramites to "give place, that a seed may be planted" in their hearts (Alma 32:28). Think about what you must do to "give place" in your heart for the word of God. What must be removed to have room for the word of God?

Alma 32:28-31, 33-35 According to Alma, people begin to experience a good feeling when the word of God has been planted in their hearts and it starts to swell within them.

Think about what it means to feel the word "swell within [your] breast".

Alma 37:8-9 The scriptures enlarge our souls, enlighten our understanding, and expand our minds by bringing us to a knowledge of the Savior and his plan of salvation, including the need for repentance.

Alma 32:37 As the word of God begins to grow in our hearts, we must nourish it with great care.

The purpose of planting a fruit tree is to be able to partake of its fruit. When we "give place, that [the word] may be planted" in our hearts, we can "[look] forward to the fruit thereof" (Alma 32:28, 41).

Read Alma's description of this fruit in Alma 32:41-42. The fruit is eternal life and that it is only through the Atonement of Jesus Christ that we can partake of this fruit (Alma 34:14-16).

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on teachings of Alma and Amulek as recorded in this lesson.

- How can you strengthen your faith?

Alma 32:41 We "nourish [the word] with great care" by developing and maintaining faith, diligence, patience, and hope for the future.

Alma 32:37 For the word to "get root" in our hearts and grow means that we let it become a part of us and that it begins to bear fruit by causing us to do good works.

Alma 32:38-40 If we neglect the word and do not nourish it after it has begun to grow in our hearts, it will wither and die because our hearts were barren and hardened. Ponder what you might do that would cause your ground, or your heart, to be barren.

Alma 32:37 Toward the end of his discourse, Alma compared the word to a tree that has grown from a seed. The tree he referred to in Alma 32:40-42 is the tree of life.

Alma cited prophets' testimonies of Jesus Christ and exhorted the people to plant the word of God in their hearts.

Alma 33:1 After hearing Alma's discourse, the people desired to know "in what manner they should begin to exercise their faith". Alma responded by citing teachings of the prophets Zenos, Zenock, and Moses concerning Jesus Christ.

Alma 33:3-11 Alma related the teaching of Zenos about prayer to the Zoramites.

Alma 33:11-14 Alma's purpose in citing Zenos's teaching about prayer was to teach the Zoramites to exercise faith in the Son of God. Note that it is "because of [His] Son" that Heavenly Father hears our prayers and turns His judgments away from us.

Alma 33:15 Alma told the Zoramites that the prophet Zenock had also testified of Christ.

Alma 33:16 Zenock taught that God was angry because the people refused to

Amulek testified of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. He commanded the people to pray and exercise faith unto repentance.

After Alma had spoken, Amulek stood and began to teach the people.

Alma 34:2-5 Alma and Amulek perceived that the people still questioned whether they should believe in Christ.

Alma 34:6-8 Amulek answered the question with a personal witness of both Christ and the prophets who had foretold his coming. Think seriously about how you can receive a strong testimony of Christ and how the scriptures, prophets, and other witnesses of Christ have strengthened your testimony of Him.

Alma 34:8-9; see also **Alma 22:14** Without the Atonement of Jesus Christ, "all mankind...perish" because man cannot overcome his fallen state without an infinite redemption.

Alma 34:10-12 Jesus was the only one who could atone for the sins of the world and save us from the effects of the Fall because no

Recall the vision of the tree of life seen by Lehi and Nephi. In that vision, the tree of life is a symbol of Jesus Christ. The word of God, represented by the rod of iron in that vision and by the seed in Alma's discourse, leads to the Savior, represented by the tree of life.

Referring to Alma 32, **Elder Jeffrey R.**

Holland taught, "*In this brilliant discourse, Alma moves the reader from a general commentary on faith in the seedlike word of God to a focused discourse on faith in Christ as the Word of God*" (Christ and the New Covenant [1997], 169).

Alma 32:41; Alma 33:23; 1 Nephi 15:36; D&C 14:7 The fruit of the tree of life is Everlasting life.

understand that His mercy was bestowed on them through the Savior.

Alma 31:12, 16-17 This was an important teaching to relate to the Zoramites because they professed not to believe in Christ--that there would not be a Savior.

Alma spoke of a brass serpent that Moses made and raised in the wilderness (Alma 33:19; see also Numbers 21:9).

Alma 33:19; see also **John 3:14-16; Helaman 8:13-15** The serpent was a type, or symbol, of Jesus Christ because he was the instrument of their salvation.

Alma 33:20-23; see also **Alma 37:46** Alma's account of the brass serpent teaches that exercising faith in Jesus Christ is simple, but one must be humble and believing.

other sacrifice could be infinite and eternal.

Alma 34:14-16 Amulek's teaches that the Atonement is an "infinite and eternal sacrifice".

Alma 34:17-29 Consider how Amulek's counsel helped the Zoramites, who had believed that they could worship only in synagogues and only once a week.

Alma 34:30-31; see also **Alma 34:15-17** After they had received so many witnesses of the Savior, Amulek commanded the people to come forth and bring fruits of repentance. His counsel stresses the phrase "faith unto repentance", repeating it four times.

Alma 34:31-36 Amulek warned against procrastinating, or delaying, the day of our repentance. Did you ever think about why people sometimes procrastinate repentance? The counsel in Alma 34:32 should remind us that we only have today for repentance.