

Episode 23

Scripture Stories

CHAPTER 38

Murder of the Chief Judge, Book of Mormon Stories

[BEGIN MUSIC: Scripture Power]

Because I want to be like the Savior, and I can,
I'm reading His instructions, I'm following His plan.
Because I want the power His word will give to me,
I'm changing how I live, I'm changing what I'll be.

Scripture power keeps me safe from sin.
Scripture power is the power to win.
Scripture power! Ev'ry day I need
The power that I get each time I read.

[END MUSIC]

CHILDREN: Welcome to Scripture Stories!

[BEGIN MUSIC: Scripture Power]

I'll find the sword of truth in each scripture that I learn.
I'll take the shield of faith from these pages that I turn.
I'll wear each vital part of the armor of the Lord,
And fight my daily battles, and win a great reward.

Scripture power keeps me safe from sin.
Scripture power is the power to win.
Scripture power! Ev'ry day I need
The power that I get each time I read.

[END MUSIC]

HOST: Welcome to Scripture Stories. Scripture Stories is a program for you—the children. As you listen, remember that these stories are about real people who lived long ago. Read along with us. You'll find these stories in the Scripture Stories books published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Have your mother, father, teacher or a friend help you find the story and invite them to read along with you, too.

[BEGIN MUSIC: Seek the Lord Early]

I'll seek the Lord early while in my youth,
And He will help me to know the truth.
I'll search the scriptures and find Him there,

Then go to our Father in fervent prayer.
I'll seek the Lord early, and I'll obey
His living prophets in all they say.
I'll keep His commandments, His love will abound.
I will seek the Lord early, and He will be found.

[END MUSIC]

HOST:

If you remember, last week we read the story of Hagoth as well as Nephi and Lehi in Prison. About 55 years before the birth of Jesus Christ, thousands of Nephite men, women, and children left Zarahemla and traveled north. One of them, a man named Hagoth, built a large ship and launched it into the west sea. Many Nephites took food and supplies and sailed north in his ship. Hagoth then built other ships that carried people to a land northward. The first ship returned and picked up even more people. One other ship set sail. None of the ships returned, and the Nephites never knew what happened to the people. Nephi and Lehi in Prison. Nephi and Lehi were Helaman's sons. Helaman wanted them to be righteous like the Lehi and Nephi who left Jerusalem. Helaman taught his sons to believe in Jesus Christ. They learned that forgiveness comes through faith and repentance. Nephi and Lehi went to teach the word of God to the Nephites and Lamanites. Thousands of people were baptized. When Nephi and Lehi went to the land of Nephi, a Lamanite army threw them into prison and did not give them food for many days. The Lamanites went to the prison to kill Nephi and Lehi but could not because they were protected by a ring of fire that would have burned anyone who tried to touch them. Nephi and Lehi were not burned by the fire. They told the Lamanites that God's power was protecting them. The ground and the prison walls began to shake. A dark cloud surrounded the people in the prison, and they were afraid. A voice from above the darkness spoke. It was quiet like a whisper, but everyone could hear it. The voice told the people to repent and stop trying to kill Nephi and Lehi. The voice spoke three times, and the ground and prison walls continued to shake. The Lamanites could not run away because it was too dark and they were too scared. A Nephite who had been a Church member saw that Nephi's and Lehi's faces were shining through the darkness. Nephi and Lehi were looking toward heaven and talking. The man told the Lamanites to look. They wondered whom Nephi and Lehi were talking to. The man, who was named Aminadab, told the Lamanites that Nephi and Lehi were talking to angels. The Lamanites asked Aminadab how to get rid of the dark cloud. He told them to repent and pray until they had faith in Jesus Christ. The Lamanites prayed until the dark cloud was gone. When the darkness left, the people saw a pillar of fire all around them. The fire did not burn them or the prison walls. The Lamanites felt great joy, and the Spirit of God filled their hearts. A voice whispered, saying they would be comforted because of their faith in Jesus Christ. The Lamanites looked up to see where the voice had come from. They saw angels coming down from heaven. About 300 people saw and heard what happened in the prison. They went and told others. Most of the Lamanites believed them and put away their weapons. The Lamanites stopped hating the Nephites and gave back the land they had taken. The Lamanites became more righteous than the Nephites. Many Lamanites went with Nephi and Lehi and taught both Nephites and Lamanites.

[BEGIN MUSIC: Follow the Prophet]

Adam was a prophet; first one that we know.
In a place called Eden, he helped things to grow.
Adam served the Lord by following his ways.
We are his descendants in the latter days.

Follow the prophet, follow the prophet,
Follow the prophet; don't go astray.
Follow the prophet, follow the prophet,
Follow the prophet; he knows the way.

Now we have a world where people are confused,
If you don't believe it, go and watch the news.
We can get direction all along our way,
If we heed the prophets—follow what they say.

Follow the prophet, follow the prophet,
Follow the prophet; don't go astray.
Follow the prophet, follow the prophet,
Follow the prophet; he knows the way.

[END MUSIC]

- HOST: Children at home, please read along with us the story of the murder of the chief judge in Chapter 38 of Book of Mormon Stories.
- CHILD: Wicked men had become judges over the Nephites. They punished the righteous people but not the wicked people.
- CHILD: Nephi was sad to see so much wickedness among the people.
- CHILD: One day he was praying on a tower in his garden. His garden was by the highway that led to a marketplace in Zarahemla.
- CHILD: People passing by on the highway heard Nephi praying.
- CHILD: A large group gathered, wondering why he was so sad.
- CHILD: When Nephi saw the people, he told them he was sad because of their wickedness. He told them to repent.
- CHILD: He warned them that if they did not repent, their enemies would take their homes and cities and the Lord would not help them fight their enemies.
- CHILD: Nephi said the Nephites were more wicked than the Lamanites because the Nephites had been taught the commandments but were not obeying them.
- CHILD: He said that if the Nephites did not repent, they would be destroyed.
- CHILD: Some of the wicked judges were there. They wanted the people to punish Nephi for speaking against them and their law.

CHILD: Some of the people agreed with the wicked judges. Others believed Nephi; they knew he was a prophet and spoke the truth.

CHILD: Nephi told the people that they had rebelled against God and would soon be punished if they did not repent.

HOST: Let's stop and talk about what we've read so far. What did Nephi do because of the wickedness of the people? Gabe.

GABE: He prayed.

HOST: He did pray. Sydney.

SYDNEY: He cried.

HOST: He cried. Yes. Andrus.

ANDRUS: He went to tell them that they had to repent because if they didn't, they would be destroyed.

HOST: Okay. So where was he when he decided to pray for the people? Andrus.

ANDRUS: He was up in a tower.

HOST: He sure was. And what did the people do when they saw him on the tower? Gabe.

GABE: They gathered around.

HOST: They did. What did Nephi tell the people? Daniel.

DANIEL: He told them that they needed to repent.

HOST: Why do you think he talked about repentance? Mason.

MASON: Because they were being wicked, because they had been taught the commandments but they still weren't obeying them.

HOST: That's right. They were rejecting the commandments. What must we do to repent? Sydney.

SYDNEY: We need to change.

HOST: We do. That is a big part of repentance. What did Nephi say would happen to the people if they didn't repent? Rebecca.

REBECCA: They would get destroyed.

HOST: Unfortunately yes. That is exactly true. How did Nephi know these things would happen? Sydney.

SYDNEY: Because he was a prophet.

HOST: Uh-huh. He had the spirit of prophecy, didn't he? Gabe, go ahead.

GABE: Because he was a prophet and talked to Heavenly Father.

HOST: Uh-huh. That's right. Who's the living prophet today? Daniel.

DANIEL: Thomas S. Monson.

HOST: Yes. He is the living prophet today. And does he also speak for Heavenly Father and speak to Heavenly Father for us? Andrus.

ANDRUS: Yes.

HOST: Yes, he does. How can listening to the living prophet help us in our lives today? Sydney.

SYDNEY: It'll help strengthen our testimony.

HOST: Absolutely. What else will it help? Gabe.

GABE: Help us not to do bad things.

HOST: Uh-huh. Yup. And you know how Nephi told the Nephites what would happen to them if they didn't repent, right? And he was giving them a lot of advice about how, you know, how they should be acting and what was gonna happen if they weren't gonna change their ways. Do you think the same thing can happen now? What can we learn from the prophet that's very practical in our lives?

CHILD: To repent.

HOST: To repent. And what do we know will happen if we repent?

CHILD: That God will bless us.

HOST: Yes. He will bless us and He will also what? If there's a danger, or if things are going badly? Sydney.

SYDNEY: Sometimes He can forgive us.

HOST: Yes. And He will protect us. Because remember, Nephi said that the Nephites were gonna be destroyed and things were gonna go very badly for them because they weren't repenting, and so we know that if we follow the prophet today, we can be protected. How did the judges respond to Nephi's teachings? Sydney.

SYDNEY: They were very angry and they wanted to punish him because he was speaking of their law.

HOST: Do you remember who the judges were? They were standing in the crowd and Nephi was telling the people about secret robbers and secret combinations and murderers and things like that and then these judges piped up and they were like, "He's lying, he's bad." Why were they so mad at what he was saying?

CHILD: They were evil and they were the ones causing the murders and that stuff.

HOST: That's exactly right. They were part of the secret band of Gadianton. And they didn't want Nephi telling the secrets out in public and revealing their secret works of evil. So they really wanted everyone to be mad at Nephi. They wanted to get rid of Nephi because he was telling their secrets in public. So how did the judges respond to Nephi's teachings?

CHILD: They got kind of mad and they were kind of like shaking, like—what if he tells them we were the ones doing it?

HOST: Yeah. So what did they try to get the people to do about Nephi? Andrus.

ANDRUS: To kill him and get them really mad at him.

HOST: Uh-huh. Exactly.

[BEGIN MUSIC: Search, Ponder, and Pray)

I love to read the holy scriptures,
And ev'ry time I do,
I feel the Spirit start to grow within my heart
A testimony that they're true.

Search, ponder, and pray
Are the things that I must do.
The Spirit will guide, and, deep inside,
I'll know the scriptures are true.

So, prayerfully I'll read the scriptures
Each day my whole life through.
I'll come to understand. I'll heed the Lord's command
And live as He would have me do.

Search, ponder, and pray
Are the things that I must do.
The Spirit will guide, and, deep inside,
I'll know the scriptures are true.

[END MUSIC]

HOST: You're listening to Scripture Stories. Today we're reading Chapter 38: The Murder of the Chief Judge. Let's continue the story on page 105 and see what else Nephi tells the people.

CHILD: Nephi told the people to go find their chief judge. He would be lying in his own blood, murdered by a brother who wanted his position.

CHILD: Five men from the crowd ran to see the chief judge. They did not believe that Nephi was a prophet of God.

CHILD: When they saw Seezoram, the chief judge, lying in his blood, they fell to the ground in fear. Now they knew that Nephi was a prophet.

CHILD: Seezoram's servants had already found the chief judge and had run to tell the people. They returned and found the five men lying there.

CHILD: The people thought the five men had murdered Seezoram.

CHILD: They threw the five men into prison and then sent word throughout the city that the chief judge had been killed and that the murderers were in prison.

CHILD: The next day the people went to where the chief judge would be buried. The judges who had been at Nephi's garden asked where the five men were.

CHILD: The judges asked to see the accused murderers.

CHILD: The accused murderers were the five men who had run from Nephi's garden to the chief judge.

CHILD: The five men said they had found the chief judge lying in blood, just as Nephi had said. Then the judges accused Nephi of sending someone to murder Seezoram.

CHILD: Knowing that Nephi was a prophet, the five men argued with the judges, but they would not listen. They had Nephi tied up.

CHILD: The judges offered Nephi money and his life if he would say he had plotted to kill the chief judge.

CHILD: Nephi told the judges to repent of their wickedness. Then he told them to go to Seantum, Seezoram's brother.

CHILD: Nephi told them to ask Seantum if he and Nephi had plotted to murder Seezoram. Nephi said Seantum would say "no."

CHILD: Then the judges were to ask Seantum if he had killed his brother. Seantum would again say "no," but the judges would find blood on his cloak.

CHILD: Nephi said Seantum would then shake and turn pale and finally confess to killing his brother.

CHILD: The judges went to Seantum's house, and everything happened as Nephi said it would. Nephi and the five men were set free.

CHILD: As the people walked away from Nephi, some said he was a prophet; others said he was a god. Nephi went home, still sad about their wickedness.

HOST: Okay. This is the most fascinating story, isn't it? What did Nephi tell the people about their chief judge? Sydney.

SYDNEY: That the five men did not kill the chief judge but his brother did.

HOST: Well, originally, what did he say because remember, the judges in the audience that were listening to him on the tower, they're like, "You're not a prophet. Prove it." Blablabla. And so what did he say? He's like, "Even now, what's happening?" Mason.

MASON: If they went to go see the chief judge, they would find him lying in his blood.

HOST: Yes. What happened to the five men who ran to see if what Nephi said about the chief judge was actually true? Daniel.

DANIEL: They felt that Nephi was a prophet so they fell down and then Seezoram's servants had run to tell the people that he was dead but when they came back, they saw the five men so they thought they had murdered him.

HOST: Uh-huh. Gabe.

GABE: They saw him dead and fell to the ground.

HOST: How did the five men come to know that Nephi was a prophet? Those five men who found the chief judge lying in his blood, how did they know? Sydney.

SYDNEY: Because he told them that that was gonna happen and no one else could have done that, telling them that.

HOST: Right. Unless they were a prophet of God and could see it. So what exactly did he tell them would happen? Sydney.

SYDNEY: That he would be killed. They would find him lying in lots of blood.

HOST: And is that how they found him?

SYDNEY: Uh-huh.

HOST: Yes. So they realized that he was telling the truth and that he knew. And also what else did they kind of feel at the time? When they discovered it, they also felt ...

CHILD: They felt the Spirit.

HOST: Uh-huh. They felt the Spirit witness to them that it was true. The five men who went to go see if what Nephi said was true, what was on their clothes? Andrus.

ANDRUS: Blood.

HOST: Uh-huh. What did Seezoram's servants think when they found the five men on the ground? Daniel.

DANIEL: They thought that they had killed Seezoram.

HOST: Exactly. And why would they think that? Sydney.

SYDNEY: Because they had blood on their cloak.

HOST: And how did they find them, too? Andrus.

ANDRUS: Lying on the ground.

HOST: Exactly. Lying on the ground. What did they do with the five men? Mason.

MASON: They threw them in prison.

HOST: Uh-huh. And what did the judges accuse Nephi of doing? Gabe.

GABE: Planning to murder the chief judge Seezoram.

HOST: Right. The evil judges wanted to make it look like Nephi set it all up to pretend he was a prophet. It's a big trick. He planned to kill the chief judge so that he could look like he was prophesying. After the judges accused Nephi, what did the five men do? Gabe.

GABE: They said that Nephi really was a prophet.

HOST: That's right. They defended him, didn't they? Andrus.

ANDRUS: They argued with the judges, trying to say that Nephi was a prophet, but the judges wouldn't listen to them.

HOST: That's right. Thank you, Andrus. How can we stand up for the prophet today? Just like those five men? Gabe.

GABE: Do what he tells us.

HOST: Uh-huh. Sydney.

SYDNEY: Being an example of what he teaches us.

HOST: Absolutely. Rebecca.

REBECCA: Read the scriptures and obey the commandments.

HOST: Uh-huh. What else can we do? What if somebody at school's saying, "I don't believe in a prophet. He's just an old man." What can we say about that? Daniel.

DANIEL: No, he isn't. He's a prophet and he knows the word of God.

HOST: That's wonderful. What did Nephi tell them to do to find out what really happened?

CHILD: He told them to go to Seezoram's brother and ask Seezoram's brother if he killed Seezoram.

HOST: Uh-huh. Exactly. He told them to go and say, "Are you the one who killed your brother?" And then, remember what was gonna happen? What did Nephi say was gonna happen after they asked him that? Andrus.

ANDRUS: He would say no.

HOST: Uh-huh. And then what would happen, Sydney?

SYDNEY: That they would ask him again and he would still say no.

HOST: And then what would he do? Daniel, do you remember?

DANIEL: They would find blood on his cloak and then he turned pale and started shaking and finally confessed to killing his brother.

HOST: Exactly. What effect did Nephi's revelation have on some of the people? Gabe.

GABE: They thought he was a prophet or a god.

HOST: Yes. Some of them thought he was a prophet and believed. Some of them thought he was a god. Rebecca.

REBECCA: Well, some of the people were still wicked.

HOST: Yes. Some of them thought, "Maybe, oh, it's a trick." They agreed with the judges. They thought, "Oh, somehow somebody gave him information or told him what was gonna happen or something like that." So not everybody believed. That happens even today; when the prophet says something that's true and it happens, everybody is kind of divided. We—because we believe in the prophet and we have faith—we know that it's really true and that he's telling us the truth, right? Some people think, "Wow, that's a pretty neat magic trick," and some people probably think, "Oh, there must be a logical explanation for all that nonsense." Right? So it all depends on if you have faith in Jesus Christ and in His prophet.

[BEGIN MUSIC: Keep the Commandments]

Keep the commandments; keep the commandments!
In this there is safety; in this there is peace.
He will send blessings; He will send blessings,
Words of a prophet: Keep the commandments.
In this there is safety and peace.

We are His children: we are His children,
And we must be tested to show we are true.
Hold to His promises; Hold to His promises,
Heeding the prophets: Keep the commandments.
In this there is safety and peace.

[END MUSIC]

HOST: We've learned so much. I hope we'll all thank Heavenly Father in our prayers for all that He has taught us and I hope we'll keep talking about the things we've learned with our families and other people we love. Next week we'll read Chapter 39: Nephi Receives Great Power. If you'd like to listen to this program again, a grownup can help you get a copy to play on your computer, iPod or other music player at radio.lds.org. You can also sign up to get new episodes as soon as they're ready. If you'd like your own copies of the scripture stories as books or DVDs, you can find them at scripturestories.lds.org or a grownup can buy them at your local Church distribution center.

CHILDREN: See you next week.

[BEGIN MUSIC: Scripture Power]

I'll find the sword of truth in each scripture that I learn.
I'll take the shield of faith from these pages that I turn.
I'll wear each vital part of the armor of the Lord,
And fight my daily battles, and win a great reward.

Scripture power keeps me safe from sin.
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[END MUSIC]