

May 13–19: Mosiah 11–17, “A Light... That Can Never Be Darkened”

Review

- Zeniff leads a group from Zarahemla to possess the land of Nephi
- The Lamanite king permits them to settle with the intent to enslave them
- After 13 years the Lamanites attack the people of Zeniff but they drive them back
- They had peace for 10 years before the Lamanites attacked again
- Zeniff spends the next 10 years built defenses and prepared his people for war
- Again the Lamanites attack and again they are defeated
- Zeniff conferred the kingdom on his son, Noah

King Noah: Pride

While king Benjamin fought for his people and caused them to repent, king Noah caused his people to commit sin and taxed them to support him and those around him in their wicked lifestyle

Mosiah 11:1-6

1 And now it came to pass that Zeniff conferred the kingdom upon Noah, one of his sons; therefore Noah began to reign in his stead; and he did not walk in the ways of his father.

2 For behold, he did not keep the commandments of God, but he did walk after the desires of his own heart. And he had many wives and concubines. And he did cause his people to commit sin, and do that which was abominable in the sight of the Lord. Yea, and they did commit whoredoms and all manner of wickedness.

3 And he laid a tax of one fifth part of all they possessed, a fifth part of their gold and of their silver, and a fifth part of their ziff, and of their copper, and of their brass and their iron; and a fifth part of their fatlings; and also a fifth part of all their grain.

4 And all this did he take to support himself, and his wives and his concubines; and also his priests, and their wives and their concubines; thus he had changed the affairs of the kingdom.

5 For he put down all the priests that had been consecrated by his father, and consecrated new ones in their stead, such as were lifted up in the pride of their hearts.

6 Yea, and thus they were supported in their laziness, and in their idolatry, and in their whoredoms, by the taxes which king Noah had put upon his people; thus did the people labor exceedingly to support iniquity.

What did king Noah do that corrupted the doctrine and authority of the church?

(he put down all the priests that had been consecrated by his father, and consecrated new ones [that] were lifted up in the pride of their hearts thus did the people labor exceedingly to support iniquity)

Apparently the king had authority to ordain priests (Mosiah 26:8). We will read where Alma, one of the prideful priests consecrated by king Noah, had the authority to baptize

Mormon tells us more about their wickedness.

Mosiah 11:7-11,14-15

7 Yea, and they also became idolatrous, because they were deceived by the vain and flattering words of the king and priests; for they did speak flattering things unto them.

8 And it came to pass that king Noah built many elegant and spacious buildings; and he ornamented them with fine work of wood, and of all manner of precious things, of gold, and of silver, and of iron, and of brass, and of ziff, and of copper;

9 And he also built him a spacious palace, and a throne in the midst thereof, all of which was of fine wood and was ornamented with gold and silver and with precious things.

10 And he also caused that his workmen should work all manner of fine work within the walls of the temple, of fine wood, and of copper, and of brass.

11 And the seats which were set apart for the high priests, which were above all the other seats, he did ornament with pure gold; and he caused a breastwork to be built before them, that they might rest their bodies and their arms upon while they should speak lying and vain words to his people.

14 And it came to pass that he placed his heart upon his riches, and he spent his time in riotous living with his wives and his concubines; and so did also his priests spend their time with harlots.

15 And it came to pass that he planted vineyards round about in the land; and he built wine-presses, and made wine in abundance; and therefore he became a wine-bibber, and also his people.

Where king Zeniff taught his people to humble themselves before the Lord, king Noah lifted them up in pride with vain flattering words.

What do you think it means to speak “vain flattering words”?

Nephi's warning in 2 Nephi 28:21

And others will he pacify, and lull them away into carnal security, that they will say: All is well in Zion; yea, Zion prospereth, all is well -- and thus the devil cheateth their souls, and leadeth them away carefully down to hell.

Ezra Taft Benson

“Seeking the applause of the world, we like to be honored by the men the world honors. But therein lies real danger, for oftentimes, in order to receive those honors, we must join forces with and follow those same devilish influences and policies which brought some of those men to positions of prominence.... Today we are being plagued within by the flattery of prominent men in the world.” (CR, Oct. 1964)

While Noah is king, the Lamanites again come against the people living in the land of Nephi

Mosiah 11:18-19

18 And it came to pass that king Noah sent his armies against them, and they were driven back, or they drove them back for a time; therefore, they returned rejoicing in their spoil.

19 And now, because of this great victory they were lifted up in the pride of their hearts; they did boast in their own strength, saying that their fifty could stand against thousands of the Lamanites; and thus they did boast, and did delight in blood, and the shedding of the blood of their brethren, and this because of the wickedness of their king and priests.

What evidence do we see that the people were led to commit great sins because of their leader's "vain flattering words"?

(rejoicing in their spoil
they were lifted up in the pride of their hearts
they did boast in their own strength
did delight in blood)

Commentary

Zeniff and his people were examples of those who seek happiness and security in the things of heaven. They learned that to prosper in the land, they would have to obey the commandments of the Lord. King Noah and his priests, only one generation later, were examples of those who seek happiness and security in the things of the world. They tried to gratify their vanity with the construction of luxurious buildings and to find security without the protection of God.... True happiness and security can come only from Christ, through whom alone is salvation. (Kent P. Jackson & Morgan W. Turner, "Studies in Scripture", 7:239)

Under king Zeniff the people prayed to the Lord for deliverance. Now, "because of the wickedness of their king and priests", "they were lifted up in the pride of their hearts... and did delight in blood."

Abinadi Teaches and Warns the People

A great prophet Abinadi comes to warn them that they are on the road to destruction

Mosiah 11:20,23-25

20 And it came to pass that there was a man among them whose name was Abinadi; and he went forth among them, and began to prophesy, saying: Behold, thus saith the Lord, and thus hath he commanded me, saying, Go forth, and say unto this people, thus saith the Lord—Wo be unto this people, for I have seen their abominations, and their wickedness, and their whoredoms; and except they repent I will visit them in mine anger.

23 And it shall come to pass that except this people repent and turn unto the Lord

their God, they shall be brought into bondage; and none shall deliver them, except it be the Lord the Almighty God.

24 Yea, and it shall come to pass that when they shall cry unto me I will be slow to hear their cries; yea, and I will suffer them that they be smitten by their enemies.

25 And except they repent in sackcloth and ashes, and cry mightily to the Lord their God, I will not hear their prayers, neither will I deliver them out of their afflictions; and thus saith the Lord, and thus hath he commanded me.

What does Abinadi warn them will happen if they do not “repent and turn unto the Lord”?

(they shall be brought into bondage; and none shall deliver them, except it be the Lord the Almighty God)

What is Abinadi’s warning about how the Lord will respond if they wait for this destruction before they repent?

(when they shall cry unto me I will be slow to hear their cries except they repent... mightily... I will not hear their prayers, neither will I deliver them out of their afflictions)

D&C 101:7-8

7) They were slow to hearken unto the voice of the Lord their God; therefore, the Lord their God is slow to hearken unto their prayers, to answer them in the day of their trouble.

8) In the day of their peace they esteemed lightly my counsel; but, in the day of their trouble, of necessity they feel after me.

King Noah and his people will serve as an example to everyone of how badly things will turn out for those who turn away the Lord and oppose his work after once being so greatly blessed

Mosiah 12:7-8

[7] And they shall be smitten with a great pestilence -- and all this will I do because of their iniquities and abominations.

[8] And it shall come to pass that except they repent I will utterly destroy them from off the face of the earth; yet they shall leave a record behind them, and I will preserve them for other nations which shall possess the land; yea, even this will I do that I may discover the abominations of this people to other nations. And many things did Abinadi prophesy against this people.

In verse 8 he prophesied of the coming of the Book of Mormon
What will those who study the Book of Mormon learn from reading about the wickedness of king Noah and his followers?

(that I may discover the abominations of this people to other nations)

This is fulfilled later in the book of Mosiah when king Benjamin reminds his people of the wickedness of king Noah and his people

Mosiah 29:18

Yea, remember king Noah, his wickedness and his abominations, and also the wickedness and abominations of his people. Behold what great destruction did come upon them; and also because of their iniquities they were brought into bondage.

King Noah's people refuse to believe that they committed sin

Mosiah 12:9,13-15

[9] And it came to pass that they were angry with him; and they took him and carried him bound before the king, and said unto the king: Behold, we have brought a man before thee who has prophesied evil concerning thy people, and saith that God will destroy them.

[13] And now, O king, what great evil hast thou done, or what great sins have thy people committed, that we should be condemned of God or judged of this man?

[14] And now, O king, behold, we are guiltless, and thou, O king, hast not sinned; therefore, this man has lied concerning you, and he has prophesied in vain.

[15] And behold, thou hast prospered in the land, and thou shalt also prosper we are strong, we shall not come into bondage, or be taken captive by our enemies; yea, and thou hast prospered in the land, and thou shalt also prosper.

What can we learn from how these people rationalized that they did not need to repent?

(what great evil hast thou done
we are strong
thou hast prospered in the land)

But it seems that they really are aware of their wickedness and Abinadi accuses them of perverting the commandments

Mosiah 12:28-30

[26] I say unto you, wo be unto you for perverting the ways of the Lord! For if ye understand these things ye have not taught them; therefore, ye have perverted the ways of the Lord.

[27] Ye have not applied your hearts to understanding; therefore, ye have not been wise. Therefore, what teach ye this people?

[28] And they said: We teach the law of Moses.

[29] And again he said unto them: If ye teach the law of Moses why do ye not keep it? Why do ye set your hearts upon riches? Why do ye commit whoredoms and spend your strength with harlots, yea, and cause this people to commit sin, that the Lord has cause to send me to prophesy against this people, yea, even a great evil against this people?

[30] Know ye not that I speak the truth? Yea, ye know that I speak the truth; and you ought to tremble before God.

Why do you think the people knowing embraced the wicked and corrupt priests?

Priestcrafts

Abinadi Teaches and Testifies of Christ

One of the priests ask him to explain Isaiah.

Mosiah 12:20-24

[20] And it came to pass that one of them said unto him: What meaneth the words which are written, and which have been taught by our fathers, saying:
[21] How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings; that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good; that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth;
[22] Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing; for they shall see eye to eye when the Lord shall bring again Zion;
[23] Break forth into joy; sing together ye waste places of Jerusalem; for the Lord hath comforted his people, he hath redeemed Jerusalem;
[24] The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God?

Can we answer the priest's question -
Who's feet are "beautiful upon the mountains?"
Who are the "watchmen?"

Mark E. Petersen

"Have you ever asked yourselves who these people are, who preach the gospel of peace and whose feet are so beautiful upon the mountains? Abinadi, in the Book of Mormon, gives us the explanation. These people are the prophets of God—they who preach the gospel of the Prince of Peace, the Lord Jesus Christ....

"The prophets, then, are the servants of Jesus Christ and have been from the beginning of time. And because they are his servants and preach his gospel of peace, behold, how beautiful upon the mountains are their feet. We honor them. We shall follow them, and through them we shall work out our salvation here on earth in the Lord's own way." (CR, Oct. 1972)

Abinadi explains how we can gain an understanding of the scriptures

Mosiah 12:25-27

[25] And now Abinadi said unto them: Are you priests, and pretend to teach this people, and to understand the spirit of prophesying, and yet desire to know of me what these things mean?

[26] I say unto you, wo be unto you for perverting the ways of the Lord! For if ye understand these things ye have not taught them; therefore, ye have perverted the ways of the Lord.

[27] Ye have not applied your hearts to understanding; therefore, ye have not been wise. Therefore, what teach ye this people?

What reason does Abiniadi give for the priests not being able to understand the scriptures?

(Ye have not applied your hearts to understanding)

How can we apply our hearts to understanding when studying the scriptures?

Alma 12:10

And therefore, he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word; and he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full.

D&C 8:2-3

Yea, behold, I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart. Now, behold, this is the spirit of revelation...

At this point King Noah ordered that Abiniadi be taken and executed
But Abiniadi commanded them not to touch him because he had not delivered his message

Mosiah 13:4-8

[4] But I must fulfil the commandments wherewith God has commanded me; and because I have told you the truth ye are angry with me. And again, because I have spoken the word of God ye have judged me that I am mad.

[5] Now it came to pass after Abinadi had spoken these words that the people of king Noah durst not lay their hands on him, for the Spirit of the Lord was upon him; and his face shone with exceeding luster, even as Moses' did while in the mount of Sinai, while speaking with the Lord.

[6] And he spake with power and authority from God; and he continued his words, saying:

[7] Ye see that ye have not power to slay me, therefore I finish my message. Yea, and I perceive that it cuts you to your hearts because I tell you the truth concerning your iniquities.

[8] Yea, and my words fill you with wonder and amazement, and with anger.

I can see why his teachings filled them with wonder and amazement, but -
Why do you think that the truth of Abinadi's words filled the priests with anger?

(because I have told you the truth ye are angry with me)

Alma 35:3

The Zoramites... were angry because of the word, for it did destroy their craft...

Just like the pharisees and sadducees were angry with Christ because his teachings could destroyed their source of power and wealth

Abinadi reads the Ten Commandments. Then he explains the need for the Law of Moses

Mosiah 13:29-31

[29] And now I say unto you that it was expedient that there should be a law given to the children of Israel, yea, even a very strict law; for they were a stiffnecked people, quick to do iniquity, and slow to remember the Lord their God;

[30] Therefore there was a law given them, yea, a law of performances and of ordinances, a law which they were to observe strictly from day to day, to keep them in remembrance of God and their duty towards him.

[31] But behold, I say unto you, that all these things were types of things to come.

Why did the Israelites need a very strict law?

(they were a stiffnecked people, quick to do iniquity, and slow to remember the Lord their God

they were to observe strictly from day to day, to keep them in remembrance of God and their duty towards him)

In order to remember God everyday they were given a law of out-ward performances and ordinances that needed to be strictly observed everyday

How has the Law of Christ changed the way the we strive to always remember Him?

Personal and private worship instead of outword ordinances

In Mosiah 14 Abinadi quotes Isaiah's prophecy of Christ (Isaiah 53). He teaches:

The Savior lived meekly and humbly (14:2)

Many people rejected Him (14:3)

He carried our grief's and sorrows (14:4)

He took upon Himself the sins of all people (4:5-6,8,10-12)

He willingly subjected Himself to persecution and death (14:7-9)

He was without sin (14:9)

Mosiah 15:1-4

[1] And now Abinadi said unto them: I would that ye should understand that God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people.

[2] And because he dwelleth in flesh he shall be called the Son of God, and having

subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son --
[3] The Father, because he was conceived by the power of God; and the Son, because of the flesh; thus becoming the Father and Son --
[4] And they are one God, yea, the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth.

Why do you think that Abinadi refers Christ as our father in these verses?

([He] shall redeem his people)

Abinadi explains later in this chapter

Mosh 15:11-12

[11] Behold I say unto you, that whosoever has heard the words of the prophets, yea, all the holy prophets who have prophesied concerning the coming of the Lord -- I say unto you, that all those who have hearkened unto their words, and believed that the Lord would redeem his people, and have looked forward to that day for a remission of their sins, I say unto you, that these are his seed, or they are heirs of the kingdom of God.

[12] For these are they whose sins he has borne; these are they for whom he has died, to redeem them from their transgressions. And now, are they not his seed?

Who is referred to as being Christ's seed?

(these are they whose sins he has borne... are they not his seed)

Joseph Fielding Smith

"What is a father? One who begets or gives life. What did our Savior do? He begot us, or gave us life from death... If it had not been for the death of our Savior, Jesus Christ, the spirit and body would never have been united again. Death would have been inevitable and... if there had been no redemption from death our spirits would have been taken captive by Satan, and we would have become subject to Satan's will forever.

"What did our Savior do? He begot us in that sense. He became a father to us because he gave us immortality or eternal life through his death and sacrifice upon the cross. I think we have a perfect right to speak of him as Father." (CR, Oct. 1962)

Abinadi teaches that Christ has redeemed those who seek Him and apply His atonement

Mosiah 16:4-5,12-13

[4] Thus all mankind were lost; and behold, they would have been endlessly lost were it not that God redeemed his people from their lost and fallen state.

[5] But remember that he that persists in his own carnal nature, and goes on in the ways of sin and rebellion against God, remaineth in his fallen state and the devil hath all power over him. Therefore, he is as though there was no redemption made, being

an enemy to God; and also is the devil an enemy to God.

[12] Having gone according to their own carnal wills and desires; having never called upon the Lord while the arms of mercy were extended towards them; for the arms of mercy were extended towards them, and they would not; they being warned of their iniquities and yet they would not depart from them; and they were commanded to repent and yet they would not repent.

[13] And now, ought ye not to tremble and repent of your sins, and remember that only in and through Christ ye can be saved?

If we “[persist] in [our] own carnal nature,” why will it be for us “as though there was no redemption made”?

(the arms of mercy were extended towards them... yet they would not repent)

Matthew L. Carpenter

"Through Jesus Christ and His atoning sacrifice, we can be redeemed from our sins and brought back to the presence of God the Father if we repent. Spiritual healing is not one-sided—it requires the Savior’s redemptive power and sincere repentance on the part of the sinner. For those who choose not to repent, they are rejecting the healing Christ offers. For them, it is as though no redemption was made." (CR, Oct. 2018)

Abinidi teaches about a first resurrection which will happen right after the resurrection of Christ

Mosiah 15:20-23

[20] But behold, the bands of death shall be broken, and the Son reigneth, and hath power over the dead; therefore, he bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead.

[21] And there cometh a resurrection, even a first resurrection; yea, even a resurrection of those that have been, and who are, and who shall be, even until the resurrection of Christ -- for so shall he be called.

[22] And now, the resurrection of all the prophets, and all those that have believed in their words, or all those that have kept the commandments of God, shall come forth in the first resurrection; therefore, they are the first resurrection.

[23] They are raised to dwell with God who has redeemed them; thus they have eternal life through Christ, who has broken the bands of death.

Note that Abinidi refers to this as “a” first resurrection.
What is the resurrection that is described in these verses?

(a resurrection of those that have been, and who are, and who shall be, even until the resurrection of Christ)

Bruce R. McConkie

“To those who lived before the resurrection of Christ, the day of his coming

forth from the dead was known as the first resurrection. Abinadi and Alma, for instance, so considered it. To those who have lived since that day, the first resurrection is yet future and will take place at the time of the Second Coming.” (Mormon Doctrine, pg. 639)

Technically there is another “first” resurrection: “those who have lived since [Christ’s resurrection]... will take place at the time of the Second Coming”

Mosiah 16:7-11

[7] And if Christ had not risen from the dead, or have broken the bands of death that the grave should have no victory, and that death should have no sting, there could have been no resurrection.

[8] But there is a resurrection, therefore the grave hath no victory, and the sting of death is swallowed up in Christ.

[9] He is the light and the life of the world; yea, a light that is endless, that can never be darkened; yea, and also a life which is endless, that there can be no more death.

[10] Even this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruption shall put on incorruption, and shall be brought to stand before the bar of God, to be judged of him according to their works whether they be good or whether they be evil --

[11] If they be good, to the resurrection of endless life and happiness; and if they be evil, to the resurrection of endless damnation, being delivered up to the devil, who hath subjected them, which is damnation –

What do you think Abinadi meant by “the sting of death is swallowed up in Christ”?

(this mortal shall put on immortality
If they be good, to the resurrection of endless life and happiness)

Dallin H. Oaks

"The possibility that a mortal who has died will be brought forth and live again in a resurrected body has awakened hope and stirred controversy through much of recorded history. Relying on clear scriptural teachings, Latter-day Saints join in affirming that Christ has 'broken the bands of death' and that 'death is swallowed up in victory.' Because we believe the Bible and Book of Mormon descriptions of the literal Resurrection of Jesus Christ, we also readily accept the numerous scriptural teachings that a similar resurrection will come to all mortals who have ever lived upon this earth. As Jesus taught, 'Because I live, ye shall live also' (John 14:19)." (CR, April 2000)

Abinadi’s Martyrdom

It seems that Abinadi's only convert is Alma and Alma plead for Abinadi's life. The king ordered Alma taken and killed but he got away and hid for many days and recorded the words of Abinadi.

Noah condemned Abinadi to death by fire because of his statement that “God himself should come down among the children of men.” But Abinadi would be set free if he would “recall all the words which thou hast spoken evil concerning me and my people”

Mosiah 17:9-10,11-12

[9] Now Abinadi said unto him: I say unto you, I will not recall the words which I have spoken unto you concerning this people, for they are true; and that ye may know of their surety I have suffered myself that I have fallen into your hands.

[10] Yea, and I will suffer even until death, and I will not recall my words, and they shall stand as a testimony against you. And if ye slay me ye will shed innocent blood, and this shall also stand as a testimony against you at the last day.

[11] And now king Noah was about to release him, for he feared his word; for he feared that the judgments of God would come upon him.

[12] But the priests lifted up their voices against him, and began to accuse him, saying: He has reviled the king. Therefore the king was stirred up in anger against him, and he delivered him up that he might be slain.

What does Abinadi teach us about the importance of never wavering from our testimony?

(I will not recall the words which I have spoken... for they are true
I will not recall my words, and they shall stand as a testimony against you)

Ezra Taft Benson

“Christ changes men, and changed men can change the world. Men changed for Christ will be captained by Christ.... Men captained by Christ will be consumed in Christ.... Their will is swallowed up in His will. They do always those things that please the Lord. Not only would they die for the Lord, but more important they want to live for Him.” (CR, Oct. 1985)

As Abinadi was being put to death he prophesied many things concerning the King, his priests, the people and their posterity. The Book of Mormon records that they were all fulfilled.

Compare this example of king Benjamin with another king over some Nephites

living at about the same time but in a different part of the land, king Noah.

Mosiah 11:1-7

1 And now it came to pass that Zeniff conferred the kingdom upon Noah, one of his sons; therefore Noah began to reign in his stead; and he did not walk in the ways of his father.

2 For behold, he did not keep the commandments of God, but he did walk after the desires of his own heart. And he had many wives and concubines. And he did cause his people to commit sin, and do that which was abominable in the sight of the Lord. Yea, and they did commit whoredoms and all manner of wickedness.

3 And he laid a tax of one fifth part of all they possessed, a fifth part of their gold and of their silver, and a fifth part of their ziff, and of their copper, and of their brass and their iron; and a fifth part of their fatlings; and also a fifth part of all their grain.

4 And all this did he take to support himself, and his wives and his concubines; and also his priests, and their wives and their concubines; thus he had changed the affairs of the kingdom.

5 For he put down all the priests that had been consecrated by his father, and consecrated new ones in their stead, such as were lifted up in the pride of their hearts.

6 Yea, and thus they were supported in their laziness, and in their idolatry, and in their whoredoms, by the taxes which king Noah had put upon his people; thus did the people labor exceedingly to support iniquity.

7 Yea, and they also became idolatrous, because they were deceived by the vain and flattering words of the king and priests; for they did speak flattering things unto them.

Where do you see a direct contrast in the way king Noah lead his people verses the way king Benjamin lead his people?

Where Benjamin taught his people to repent, Noah caused his people to commit sin.

Where Benjamin labored himself to avoid unnecessary taxation, Noah taxed his people to support his iniquity.

Where Benjamin taught his people to be industrious, Noah set an example of laziness.

Where Benjamin didn't "trifle with words" but taught his people the doctrine of Christ, Noah spoke "flattering things" to his people

Where king Benjamin personal fought to keep his people free, king Noah's people were captured by the Lamanites.