

May 13-19, 2024

Mosiah 11–17

“A LIGHT . . . THAT CAN NEVER BE DARKENED”

Summary: *Mosiah 11. King Noah rules in wickedness—He revels in riotous living with his wives and concubines—Abinadi prophesies that the people will be taken into bondage—His life is sought by King Noah. About [160–150 B.C.]*

Mosiah 12. Abinadi is imprisoned for prophesying the destruction of the people and the death of King Noah—The false priests quote the scriptures and pretend to keep the law of Moses—Abinadi begins to teach them the Ten Commandments. About 148 B.C.

Mosiah 13. Abinadi is protected by divine power—He teaches the Ten Commandments—Salvation does not come by the law of Moses alone—God himself shall make an atonement and redeem his people. [About 148 B.C.]

Mosiah 14. Isaiah speaks Messianically—Messiah’s humiliation and sufferings are set forth—He makes his soul an offering for sin and makes intercession for transgressors—Compare Isaiah 53. About 148 B.C.

Mosiah 15. How Christ is both the Father and the Son—He shall make intercession and bear the transgressions of his people—They and all the holy prophets are his seed—He bringeth to pass the resurrection—Little children have eternal life. [About 148 B.C.]

Mosiah 16. God redeems men from their lost and fallen state—Those who are carnal remain as though there was no redemption—Christ brings to pass a resurrection to endless life or to endless damnation. [About 148 B.C.]

Mosiah 17. Alma believes and writes the words of Abinadi—Abinadi suffers death by fire—He prophesies disease and death by fire upon his murderers. [About 148 B.C.]

Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

How does God let His will be known?

One of the first things that came to my mind in reading

about Abinadi is the parallel with other prophets. One is Biblical Jonah who went to Ninevah and told the king and the people to repent. In Jonah’s case, the king and his nobles heeded the words of God’s chosen prophet. Jonah tells his account in a way that humbly acknowledges that God himself is the Redeemer and that the prophet speaks for Him, not himself. However, in the Book of Mormon account, King Noah and his

nobles did not repent when the prophet Abinadi spoke to them. A Jewish quote is noteworthy; “The phenomenon of prophecy is founded on the basic belief that God makes His Will known to chosen individuals in successive generations. A prophet is a charismatic individual endowed with the divine gift of both receiving and imparting the message of revelation. A prophet does not choose his profession but is chosen, often against his own will, as in the case of Jonah, to convey the word of God to the people regardless of whether they wish to hear it. The prophet, although conscious of being overwhelmed by the divine word and of

being involved in an encounter with God, is still capable of reacting and responding, and may even engage God in dialogue.” “The individuality of the prophet is never affected. No two prophets prophesied in the same style. God speaks to the prophet and the prophet in turn speaks out.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

What is the most important thing a Prophet does?

He testifies of Christ! When the Book of Mormon Prophet, Abinadi, spoke, it was like a resonance of **Isaiah 53** with his messianic prophecy of the Son of God. To recognize that belief, the profound gift of the Holy Ghost was given at Jesus’ time so that witness could be acknowledged of the Savior’s atonement. Being “set at liberty from our bruises” and happy to share our new-found freedom, we need the gifts of the Holy Ghost to be a witness. Fifty days after the *Passover* when Jesus was crucified and resurrected there was a “Day of *Pentecost*.” To this day it is a holy day for religious Jews, called *Shavuot*. The most significant thing celebrated at *Shavuot* is the receiving of the *Torah*, the written “Law of Moses.” Jews explain; “*Shavuot* (Hebrew for ‘weeks’), is the name of the festival which also celebrates the end of the spring barley harvest and the beginning of the summer wheat and fruit harvests. According to rabbinic tradition, *Shavuot* is also the day on which the *Torah* was revealed to the Jewish people on Mount Sinai.” “The biblical text (**Leviticus 23:4**) states that *Passover* should be celebrated on the fifteenth of the first month (*Nisan*). It then says ‘From the day after the Sabbath . . . you shall keep count [until] seven full weeks have elapsed . . . you shall count fifty days . . . then you shall bring an offering of new grain to the Lord.’ What is the meaning of ‘the day after the Sabbath?’ Does the word ‘Sabbath’ mean ‘Saturday’ or does it mean ‘the day of rest’ which can also apply to the festival? The rabbis of the

Talmud understood it in the latter sense and so *Shavuot* always falls 50 days after the second day of *Passover*. These 50 days represent the period of the counting of the *Omer*. (a measure) In English, the festival is often known as *Pentecost*, from the Greek word which means ‘the fiftieth day.’” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) It is the precise day the gift of the Holy Ghost was given to the believers after Jesus’ resurrection. “And when the day of *Pentecost* was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind (same Hebrew word as spirit), and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.” (**Acts 2:1-4**) On the holiday celebrating the Law written on stone, the Law was inscribed in our hearts!

How did these Messianic verses go missing?

Jewish worship practices include reading the *Torah* (the Law) and *Haftorah* (the Prophets). Anciently, this was done once a week on the Sabbath. In modern times there are three readings each week: Monday, Thursday, and Saturdays (Sabbaths). The entire Bible text (Old Testament) is covered in one year. “The custom of reading the *Torah* publicly is very, very ancient --- originating with Ezra in the fifth-fourth centuries B.C.E. At some later date a reading from the *Nevi'im* (Prophets) was added; this corresponding passage from the Prophets is known as the *Haftorah*.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) By the way, the verses of **Isaiah 53** are not read in Synagogue *Haftorah* readings any more. The imagery of receiving the *Torah* from above on *Shavuot* (Jewish *Pentecost*), leads to understanding the “New Testament” day of *Pentecost*, when

the Holy Ghost came down. The Holy Ghost came down so that the Savior could go up. Likewise, we must have the Holy Ghost come down on us so that we can go up to our Savior, who will bring us to His and our Father in Heaven. “Seven weeks after the Exodus from Egypt a horde of slaves stood before Mount Sinai and freely accepted the spiritual and moral teachings which gave meaning and depth to their newfound freedom.”

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) As Moses came down from Mount Sinai, he did shine. “And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him.” **(Exodus 34:30)** From his manner of preaching, one may get a glimpse of Abinadi’s countenance as he rebuked the wickedness of the people listening to him. The Children of Israel did not reject the Lord completely. They accepted a “lesser law,” one with strict rules and regulations rather than accept the spirit-guided “higher law.” The people of Nineveh repented. Yet, the people of King Noah rebelled even more, resulting in the martyrdom of the Prophet Abinadi.

What makes the Son – the Father?

Jesus is the Heavenly Father’s son. Through His atonement for us he adopts us. The adoption is His fatherly undertaking. **(James E. Talmage, The Articles of Faith 49th ed. (1968), 467–68)**

Martyrdom, yes, no?

Let me add some Jewish thought on martyrdom. It may have some significance. “Martyrdom is permitted only in the most exceptional circumstances; to lay down one’s life, even for the fulfillment of divine laws, when such sacrifice is not required by law, is regarded as a mortal offense.” “The willingness to sacrifice life rather than faith, is one of the most significant concepts of Judaism, and has paradoxically been a factor in Jewish survival, where other oppressed groups

have assimilated and disappeared. The laws of martyrdom were first formulated at the rabbinic council of Lydda in the second century C.E. when *kiddush ha-Shem* (‘Sanctification of the Name [of God]’) was declared obligatory with regard to three situations: idolatry, unchastity, and murder. Rather than worship idols, commit an unchaste act, or murder, the Jew is commanded to choose death. All other commandments may be violated rather than suffer death. But should a Jew be forced into breaking any commandment in the presence of ten Jews (or more) in order to demonstrate his apostasy (abandonment of faith) he is obliged to sanctify God’s name by choosing death. If ten Jews are not present, he should transgress rather than be killed. These rules were to apply in ‘normal’ times. In periods of persecution of the whole community, however, death was to be chosen even if no other Jews were present. The rabbis understood the first verse of the *Shema* (“hear” – first Hebrew word of the most important daily prayer in Judaism.) ‘And you shall love the Lord your God . . . with all your soul,’ as meaning even if He demands your soul from you, and, indeed, the proclamation of the *Shema*, ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One,’ was the phrase with which martyrs went to their death.” **(Deuteronomy 6:4), (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)**

Is true martyrdom a self-infliction?

“Martyrdom when sacrifice was not obligatory became a matter of dispute. Maimonides held that one who chose death when the law decided for life was guilty of an offense. Others, like the *Tosafists* (12th to mid-15th century rabbis of France and Germany), and most medieval Jews of Germany, considered such voluntary death praiseworthy. The sages of the *Talmud* were divided as to whether gentiles are required to sanctify

God's name by martyrdom. Rava maintained that rather than break one of the Noachide laws, the gentile should choose death." "Jewish history is replete with examples of those willing to die for their faith from *Shadrach, Meshach* and *Abednigo*, who in the Book of Daniel refused to worship an idol and thus endangered their lives, up to the present generation of Soviet Jews who suffer indescribable hardships rather than give up their Jewishness." "In modern times, the lessening of religious fanaticism, and growing secularization of Jewish life, accompanied by trends toward assimilation and emancipation, have led to the disintegration of Jewish values; as the necessity for self-sacrifice diminished, so the idea of *kiddush ha-Shem* appeared to lose its significance. However, renewed persecution under the Nazis revived the ancient tradition in the ghettos and concentration camps of Europe and very many cases of honorable death among the six million who perished must have gone unrecorded." (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

When do Prophets speak against the people?

An example of the Lord's prophet speaking out against the people - at the peril of his own life - was Jeremiah. He, like Abinadi, prophesied against the government and the people who followed their wickedness. "Therefore, the princes said unto the king, We beseech thee, let this man be put to death: for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people, in speaking such words unto them: for this man seeketh not the welfare of this people, but the hurt. Then Zedekiah the king said, Behold, he is in your hand: for the king is not he that can do anything against you. Then took they Jeremiah and cast him into the dungeon

of Malchiah the son of Hammelech, that was in the court of the prison: and they let down Jeremiah with cords. And in the dungeon there was no water, but mire: so Jeremiah sunk in the mire." (*Jeremiah 38:4-6*)

When does martyrdom become holy?

These prophets were models of their Master, the Savior, who would prophesy against the corrupt part of the Jewish and other governments and the people who followed their wickedness. "And after all this, after working many mighty miracles among the children of men, he shall be led, yea, even as Isaiah said, as a sheep before the shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. Yea, even so he shall be led, crucified, and slain, the flesh becoming subject even unto death, the will of the Son being swallowed up in the will of the Father." (*Mosiah 15:6-7*) Abinadi knew that those who listen with their hearts and their spirits, would be redeemed and become his seed. "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? Yea, and are not the prophets, every one that has opened his mouth to prophesy, that has not fallen into transgression, I mean all the holy prophets ever since the world began? I say unto you that they are his seed. And these are they who have published peace, who have brought good tidings of good, who have published salvation; and said unto Zion: Thy God reigneth!" (*Mosiah 15:12-14*) As Abinadi gave his life, he succeeded in reaching through the crowd of wickedness to one soul. One Alma hears the voice of the prophet. More importantly, he feels the spirit of the Lord and he ultimately becomes a prophet to speak to the people for God.