
Alma 25 — Thus the Words of Abinadi Were Brought to Pass — The Priests of Noah's Seed, Death by Fire, and the Converts Who Came in From the Wilderness

Alma 25: c. 80 BC, the months after the slaughter at Alma 24. The Lamanite armies, unable to destroy the prostrate Anti-Nephi-Lehies, turn their rage outward — first against the Nephites at Ammonihah, then against each other. Almost the whole seed of Amulon and the priests of Noah falls in battle with the Nephites; the survivors flee into the east wilderness, seize power over the Lamanites there, and begin burning their own converts alive. Mormon stops the narrative to make a single point: every stroke of this is the slow, exact fulfillment of a prophecy Abinadi made from the middle of a fire two generations earlier. The chapter closes with a quiet, almost unnoticed harvest — Lamanites who heard Aaron preach, broken by their losses, coming over to bury their weapons and keep the law of Moses while they wait for the Christ it points to.

Alma 25 is Mormon the historian standing over a battlefield with a prophecy in his hand, showing us that the two match. The chapter has very little speech in it and a great deal of death, and its whole burden is to make us see that the death is not random. The men dying in it are the seed of the priests of Noah — the same priestly order that condemned Abinadi to death by fire in Mosiah 17 — and they are dying in the precise manner, and to the precise pattern, that Abinadi told them their children would die.

Hebrew Word Studies

davar / *qđatar* / *ed* (דָּבָר / קָטַר / עֵד) — word / to burn as smoke, to make a sacrifice ascend in fire / witness vv. 9, 11, 12.

Three Hebrew words sit beneath this chapter's account of fulfilled prophecy and death by fire. *Davar* — word — is more than speech in Hebrew; it is a word that *does* something, an utterance with the force of an event. When the prophets say *the word of the Lord came to pass*, the noun is *davar*, and the verb is one of accomplishment, not merely of speaking. Mormon's *thus the words of Abinadi were brought to pass* (v. 9) is exactly this Hebrew theology of the prophetic *davar*: a true prophecy is not a prediction that happens to come true but a word released into history that then works its way to completion. Abinadi's *davar* did not expire when he died; it kept working for two generations until it found the priests' seed in the wilderness. *Qatar* — to send up in smoke — is the priestly verb for offering; incense or sacrifice burned so that it ascends to God. Its terrible irony hangs over this chapter. The priests of Noah's order, whose ancestral office was to *qatar*, to make offerings rise in fire, are here both the agents and the victims of fire — burning believers and then being consumed themselves. The fire that was meant for worship has become the instrument of murder and then of judgment; the men of the altar die by the element of the altar. *Ed* — witness — names what Abinadi became. He told Noah's priests, *what ye shall do unto me shall be a type of things to come* (v. 10); the Hebrew sense of *ed* is one whose testimony stands in court, and Abinadi's burning became standing testimony against the order that lit it. His death was not the end of his witness; it was the form his witness took.

From the Chapter's Architecture

``cross-references Lev. 1:9 (the burnt offering that ascends — qatar substrate); Deut. 18:21–22 (the test of a true prophet: his word come to pass — direct frame for v. 9); 1 Kgs. 18:38; 2 Kgs. 1:10–12 (prophetic fire — Elijah typology behind Abinadi); Ps. 79:1–3 (the bodies of God's servants given to the beasts — substrate for v. 12's slain... by wild beasts); Isa. 53:6–7 (all we like sheep have gone astray; as a sheep before her shearers is dumb — the shepherdless-sheep image inverted at v. 12); Jer. 23:1–4 (woe to the shepherds who scatter the flock — the false-shepherd judgment behind the priests' fate); Ezek. 34:5 (the sheep scattered, because there is no shepherd... they became meat to all the beasts — closest verbal parallel to v. 12); Matt. 9:36 (the multitude as sheep having no shepherd); Gal. 3:24 (the law a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ — direct parallel to vv. 15–16); Rom. 3:20; 10:4 (Christ the end of the law for righteousness — direct parallel to v. 16's salvation came not by the law); Heb. 10:1 (the law a shadow of good things to come — direct parallel to v. 15's a type of his coming); 2 Ne. 25:24–27 (Nephite theology of keeping the law while looking to Christ — the master statement vv. 15–16 echo); Mosiah 12:1–8 (Abinadi's original prophecy against Noah and his priests — the *davar* fulfilled here); Mosiah 13:10 (what ye do with me shall be a type and a shadow of things which are to come — directly quoted at v. 10); Mosiah 17:15–20 (Abinadi's death by fire and his prophecy of the priests' seed — the prophecy v. 9 declares fulfilled); Mosiah 23–24 (Amulon, the priests of Noah among the Lamanites — the seed destroyed here); Alma 16:9–11 (Ammonihah left desolate — the city destroyed again at v. 2); Alma 21–22 (Aaron's preaching among the Lamanites — the seed that germinates at v. 6); Alma 24:20–27 (the slaughter of the Anti-Nephi-Lehies — the event whose converts gather in here); Alma 27 (the people of Ammon led to Jershon — the sequel this chapter sets up); 3 Ne. 1:4–9; 23:1–3 (the Lord's insistence that all prophetic words be fulfilled — Mormon's theology of v. 9); D&C 1:37–38 (whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same — the doctrine of the prophetic word that does not fail). ``