

Mosiah 16 — The Light That Cannot Be Darkened — Abinadi's Closing Sermon on Carnal Death, the Light of Endless Life, and the Law That Points Beyond Itself

Mosiah 16: Abinadi finishes his sermon — every knee shall bow, every tongue shall confess; the natural man is carnal, sensual, devilish; Christ has overcome the sting of death; he is the light and life of the world that can never be darkened; the law of Moses is to be kept but remembered as type and shadow; c. 148 BC.

Mosiah 16 is Abinadi's-closing chapter, the doctrinal-coda-of-the-sermon. Having delivered the Decalogue (Mosiah 13:12–24), the Christology (Mosiah 13:25–35), the Suffering-Servant (Mosiah 14), and the Father-Son-resurrection (Mosiah 15), the prophet closes-with-four-condensed-themes: (1) the universal-knowing-and-confessing-of-the-Lord at the resurrection; (2) the carnal-sensual-devilish-state-of-the-fallen-man; (3)

Christ-as-the-light-and-life-and-redeemer-from-the-sting-of-death; (4) the proper-keeping-of-the-law-of-Moses as a-type-pointing-forward. The chapter is shorter and tighter than the preceding-three; it tightens-the-loop and delivers the chapter's-most-memorable-line — *he is the light and the life of the world; yea, a light that is endless, that can never be darkened* (v. 9). At the chapter's-close Abinadi delivers his-final-formal-line — *teach them that redemption cometh through Christ the Lord, who is the very Eternal Father* — and the sermon ends; Mosiah 17 will-narrate the martyrdom.

Load-Bearing Texts

1. **v. 1.** *the time shall come that all shall see the salvation of the Lord; when every nation, kindred, tongue, and people shall see eye to eye and shall confess before God that his judgments are just* — the chapter's-master universal-confession statement
2. **v. 3.** *for they are carnal and devilish, and the devil has power over them; yea, even that old serpent that did beguile our first parents... and 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* — the chapter's-master carnal-devilish-old-serpent statement
3. **v. 8.** *but there is a resurrection, therefore the grave hath no victory, and the sting of death is swallowed up in Christ* — the chapter's-master sting-of-death-swallowed statement
4. **v. 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* — the chapter's-master light-that-cannot-be-darkened statement
5. **v. 15.** *teach them that redemption cometh through Christ the Lord, who is the very Eternal Father* — the chapter's-master closing-charge-to-the-priests

Hebrew Word Studies

or olam / chayyim olam / lo yekkeh (אֵל / סְלוֹעַ פִּיחַ / סְלוֹעַ רוּא) — **everlasting light, eternal light / everlasting life, eternal life / it shall not be dim (the light that does not dim)** **v. 9.** The chapter's light-and-life triad. *Or olam* — everlasting light, eternal light — the noun-phrase behind Isa. 60:19–20's *the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down...* for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light; *chayyim olam* — everlasting life, eternal life — the noun-phrase behind Dan. 12:2's *some to everlasting life (lechayyei olam)*; the same *chayyim olam* New-Testament-Greek-will-render as *zōōn* / *aiōnios*; *lo yekkeh* — it shall not be dim, it shall not grow faint — the verb of fading-light, used in Isa. 42:4 — *he shall not fail nor be discouraged* — and-the-negation here is the can-never-be-darkened-of-the-chapter. The doctrine: *Christ is the or-olam-and-chayyim-olam that lo-yekkeh; the eternal-light-and-eternal-life that does-not-dim. Same or-olam-lo-yekkeh grammar as Isa. 60:19–20; Isa. 42:4; Dan. 12:2.* The chapter is one of the BoM's clearest pre-Johannine articulations of the *or-olam-chayyim-olam* doctrine — *Christ as-the-eternal-light-that-cannot-be-darkened. The Restoration's D&C 88:7–13 — and the light which shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings — is the chapter's-clearest cross-reference, the light-of-Christ doctrine that-the-Restoration will-elaborate.*

From the Chapter's Architecture

The chapter is also the BoM's-most-direct verbal-parallel to-Paul's-1-Corinthians-15. The two-texts share-the-vocabulary of corruption-puts-on-incorruption (Mosiah 16:10 = 1 Cor. 15:53), sting-of-death-swallowed (Mosiah 16:8 = 1 Cor. 15:54–55), and the doctrine-of-Christ's-resurrection-as-prerequisite-for-ours (Mosiah 16:7 = 1 Cor. 15:13–20). The chapter is one of the BoM's-most-Pauline texts, written by-a-Nephite-prophet six-centuries-before-Paul.