
Mosiah 17 — Abinadi Sealed by Fire — Alma Believes, the Word Is Hidden Away, the Prophet Dies as the Type He Named Himself to Be

Mosiah 17: One among the priests — a young man named Alma — believes Abinadi's words; pleads for his life; is cast out; flees and hides and writes Abinadi's words; Abinadi is cast into prison three days; brought before Noah's tribunal; refuses to recant; prophesies the king's death by fire and the colony's bondage; is bound and burned; seals the truth of his words by his death; c. 148 BC.

Mosiah 17 is the BoM's-master-chapter of the prophet's-martyrdom and-of-the-single-listener-who-believed.

Abinadi's-sermon has-ended (Mosiah 16:15's Amen); the chapter opens with one of the priests who-heard-the-sermon believing-it. That priest is Alma — a young man, and was a descendant of Nephi — the founder of the Nephite-church-of-Christ, the father of Alma-the-younger, and the ancestor of-the-priesthood-line-that-will-administer the

BoM's-most-pastoral-and-doctrinal-ministries-for-the-next-four-centuries. The chapter's-narrative-arc is simple but world-historical: (1) Alma-believes; (2) Alma-flees and-writes-down the prophet's-words; (3) Abinadi-is-bound, brought-to-tribunal, refuses-to-recant, prophesies-Noah's-fire-death, and-is-burned. The chapter ends with *thus did Abinadi receive the martyr's crown, because he would not deny the commandments of God, having sealed the truth of his words by his death* — the BoM's-clearest-text on-martyrdom-as-seal.

Load-Bearing Texts

1. v. 2. *but there was one among them whose name was Alma, he also being a descendant of Nephi. And he was a young man, and he believed the words which Abinadi had spoken, for he knew concerning the iniquity which Abinadi had testified against them; therefore he began to plead with the king that he would not be angry with Abinadi, but suffer that he might depart in peace* — the chapter's-master one-believer-among-many-rejecters statement
2. v. 4. *but he fled from before them and hid himself that they found him not. And he being concealed for many days did write all the words which Abinadi had spoken* — the chapter's-master fled-and-wrote statement, the providence of-the-Abinadi-sermon-preserved
3. v. 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* — the chapter's-master will-not-recall statement
4. v. 13. *and they took him and bound him, and scourged his skin with faggots, yea, even unto death* — the chapter's-master scourged-and-burned martyrdom-statement
5. v. 15. *and now I, Abinadi, say unto you... that the life of king Noah shall be valued even as a garment in a hot furnace; for he shall know that I am the Lord. And it shall come to pass that thou shalt be afflicted with all manner of diseases because of thine iniquities. Yea, and thou shalt be smitten on every hand, and shalt be driven and scattered to and fro, even as a wild flock is driven by wild and ferocious beasts. And in that day thou shalt be hunted, and thou shalt be taken by the hand of thine enemies, and then thou shalt suffer, as I suffer, the pains of death by fire* — the chapter's-master Noah-death-by-fire prophecy
6. v. 20. *and now, when Abinadi had said these words, he fell, having suffered death by fire; yea, having been put to death because he would not deny the commandments of God, having sealed the truth of his words by his death* — the chapter's-master sealed-by-his-death close

Hebrew Word Studies

katav / *nistar* / *shamar* (כָּתַב / נִסְתָּר / שָׁמַר) — **to write, inscribe, register / to be hidden, concealed / to keep, guard, watch over v. 4.** The chapter's flight-and-record triad. *Katav* — *to write, inscribe, register* — the verb of-prophetic-record-keeping; *nistar* — *to be hidden, concealed* — the verb behind Ex. 2:2's Moses-hid-three-months and Josh. 2:6's Rahab-hid-the-spies; *shamar* — *to keep, guard, watch over* — the verb of-preservation. The doctrine: Alma *nistar* to *katav*; the act-of-concealment was the means-of-the-preservation; he was-hidden so-he-could-keep — and-the-product is the Abinadi-sermon-shamar across-six-centuries. Same hidden-to-preserve grammar as Ex. 2:2 (Moses-hidden) → Ex. 14:21 (the Lord uses the hidden-then-revealed one to part-the-sea); Heb. 11:23 — by faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents. The Restoration's D&C 1:14, 30 — and the arm of the Lord shall be revealed; and the day cometh that they who will not hear the voice of the Lord... shall be cut off from among the people; and... this church, which is the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth — operates on the same logic — what God-hides-and-then-reveals through-the-prophet's-record becomes the foundation-of-the-Church. The chapter is one of the BoM's clearest articulations of the *nistar-to-katav-to-shamar* providence — the hiding-of-the-witness preserves the testimony-that-becomes the Church.

From the Chapter's Architecture

The chapter is also the founding-chapter of the Nephite-Church-of-Christ. Alma's-conversion (v. 2) and his-fleeing-with-the-record (v. 4) are the genesis of-the-Nephite-Church; Mosiah 18 will-narrate the founding-at-the-Waters-of-Mormon. The chapter is therefore one-of-the-most-load-bearing-historical-chapters in-the-BoM — a martyrdom-chapter that-is-also-a-founding-chapter.