

Mosiah 19 — Noah Burned With Fire — Abinadi's Prophecy Fulfilled, the Colony's Tribute Begins, and the Priests Vanish into the Wilderness

Mosiah 19: King Noah's army returns; the colony divides; Gideon rises against Noah; Lamanites attack; Noah commands men to abandon wives and children; some refuse, others flee; the abandoning-fleers turn back to repent; the priests escape into the wilderness; Noah is taken and burned with fire as Abinadi prophesied; Limhi becomes tributary king under Lamanite oppression; c. 145 BC.

Mosiah 19 is the BoM's-master-chapter-of-the-prophet's-prophecy-fulfilled-with-precision and-the-king's-burning-by-his-own-people's-fire. Two-years have passed since the Mormon-baptisms (Mosiah 18:34's flight); the colony is back-to-itself, but-fractured. The chapter opens with the army-of-Noah-that-pursued-Alma returning-empty-handed-and-finding-the-colony-already-dividing-itself. A man named Gideon arises and-pursues-Noah with-the-sword; the colony's-tower-of-pride (Mosiah 11:12) becomes the scaffold-of-the-king's-cowardice (Mosiah 19:5–6). Lamanites attack; Noah orders the abandonment of-wives-and-children; the colony fractures in-three-directions — those-who-stay (the women, children, some-men); those-who-flee-with-Noah; the priests-who-flee-separately. The chapter's-pivot is v. 20 — *they were wroth with him, and caused that he should suffer, even unto death by fire — the exact-fulfillment of-Abinadi's prophecy in-Mosiah 17:18: thou shalt suffer, as I suffer, the pains of death by fire*. The chapter ends with Limhi-as-tributary-king and-the-colony-in-fifty-percent-tribute-bondage-to-the-Lamanites — the precise-bondage Mosiah 7:21–22 already-named-historically.

Load-Bearing Texts

1. vv. 5–6. *and it came to pass that he stood near the tower... O spare me, for the Lamanites are upon us, and they will destroy us* — the chapter's-master cowardice-on-the-tower scene
2. vv. 11–12. *and it came to pass that there were many that loved their wives and their children, that would not leave them, but had rather stay and perish with them* — the chapter's-master loved-wives-and-children-and-stayed contrast
3. v. 14. *the Lamanites had compassion on them, for they were charmed with the beauty of their women* — the chapter's-precise daughters-pleading-and-spared moment
4. v. 20. *and it came to pass that those who had fled with the king were angry with him; and on their way back they met the men of Gideon... they were wroth with him, and caused that he should suffer, even unto death by fire* — the chapter's-master Noah-burned-by-his-own-people fulfillment
5. v. 26. *and it came to pass that Limhi, the son of Noah, was the king of the people; for they would have anointed his son to be a king in his stead* — the chapter's-master Limhi-anointed-king transition

Hebrew Word Studies

shav / *kvenei* / *lex-talionis* (*ma'aseh-be-ma'aseh*) (שָׁב / קָנַי / הָשָׁבָהּ-בְּהָשָׁבָהּ) — **returned, turned back (repented) / like-his (lex-talionis) / measure-for-measure** vv. 19, 20. The chapter's repent-and-talion triad. *Shav* — *returned, turned back, repented* — the verbal-root behind *teshuvah* (*repentance*) and the verb of-the-husbands'-return-to-their-families; *kvenei* — *like-his* — the Hebrew-construction underlying the *lex-talionis* principle; *ma'aseh-be-ma'aseh* — *measure-for-measure, deed-by-deed* — the Hebrew-idiom for-the-talionic-judgment. The doctrine: the husbands *shav* (returned) in-repentance, and-Noah-received *ma'aseh-be-ma'aseh* (the death he-imposed on-Abinadi); the chapter is the BoM's-clearer-text-on the two-Hebrew-Bible-justice-principles-in-one-narrative — *repentance-restoring the repentant, lex-talionis-judging the unrepentant*. Same *shav* + *ma'aseh-be-ma'aseh* pattern as Bavli Sotah 8b's *measure-for-measure* principle — *God measures-to-each-person according-to-the-measure-he-uses*; Mt. 7:2 — *with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again*. The Restoration's D&C 6:33 — *fear not to do good, my sons, for whatsoever ye sow, that shall ye also reap; therefore, if ye sow good ye shall also reap good for your reward* operates by-the-same-logic. The chapter is one of the BoM's clearest articulations of the *shav-or-be-judged-by-the-measure-you-used* doctrine.

From the Chapter's Architecture

The chapter is also the BoM's clearest contrast of two husbands. The husbands who loved their wives and stayed (v. 12) are contrasted with the husbands who fled with the king (vv. 11, 19); the contrast is the chapter's master moral distinction. The colony's righteousness is identified by husband and father fidelity at the moment of extremity.