

Mosiah 21 — Limhi's Bondage Deepens — Three Defeats, Humbled to the Dust, the Lord Slow to Hear, and Many Desire Baptism but None Have Authority

Mosiah 21: Twenty-two years of Lamanite bondage; Limhi's people murmur and fight three battles with the Lamanites, all defeats; women widowed and children orphaned; Limhi appoints care-takers for the destitute; the colony humbles itself to the dust; the Lord begins to soften Lamanite hearts; Ammon arrives; Mosiah-II is named as a seer; many desire baptism, but none in the colony has authority; c. 145–121 BC.

Mosiah 21 is the BoM's-master-chapter-of-the-deepening-bondage-and-the-slow-to-hear-the-cry. The chapter covers twenty-two years (from the tribute-treaty of-Mosiah-19 to-the-arrival-of-Ammon in-Mosiah-7, the chapter is the BoM's-out-of-chronological-order back-fill that-explains how-the-colony's-bondage-grew-deep-enough that Mosiah-7's-arrival was-as-dramatic-as-it-was). The chapter has the colony attempting-three-armed-uprisings, all-defeated; the casualties produce a multi-widow-and-multi-orphan colony; Limhi institutionalizes care-for-the-destitute; the colony eventually humbles-itself; the Lord-was-slow-to-hear because of-the-iniquities, but-eventually softens-Lamanite-hearts; Ammon arrives (Mosiah-7's-encounter); the chapter ends with the colony's-desire-for-baptism deferred because no-one-has-authority.

Load-Bearing Texts

1. v. 13. *and they did humble themselves even to the dust, subjecting themselves to the yoke of bondage, submitting themselves to be smitten, and to be driven to and fro, and burdened, according to the desires of their enemies* — the chapter's-master humbled-to-the-dust statement
2. v. 15. *and now the Lord was slow to hear their cry because of their iniquities; nevertheless the Lord did hear their cries, and began to soften the hearts of the Lamanites that they began to ease their burdens* — the chapter's-master slow-to-hear-but-began-to-soften statement
3. v. 17. *now there was a great number of women, more than there was of men; therefore king Limhi commanded that every man should impart to the support of the widows and their children, that they might not perish with hunger; and this they did because of the greatness of their number that had been slain* — the chapter's-master care-for-the-widows-and-orphans statement
4. v. 33. *and now since the coming of Ammon, king Limhi had also entered into a covenant with God, and also many of his people, to serve him and keep his commandments. And it came to pass that king Limhi and many of his people were desirous to be baptized; but there was none in the land that had authority from God* — the chapter's-master desire-for-baptism-but-no-authority statement
5. v. 34. *therefore they did not at that time form themselves into a church, waiting upon the Spirit of the Lord* — the chapter's-master waiting-for-authority doctrine

Hebrew Word Studies

almanah / yatom / pakad (אַלְמָנָה / יָתוֹם / פָּקַד) — **widow / orphan, fatherless / to visit, attend to, muster** v. 17. The chapter's care-of-the-vulnerable triad. *Almanah* — widow — the noun behind every Hebrew-Bible-widow-protection text; *yatom* — orphan, fatherless — the noun-pair with *almanah* throughout the Hebrew-Bible; *pakad* — to visit, attend to, muster — the verb behind James 1:27's pure religion is to visit (*episkeptomai* = *pakad*) the fatherless and widows. The doctrine: the chapter's-discipline is the institutionalized *pakad* of-the-*almanah*-and-*yatom*; the colony's-suffering-because-of-iniquity is-met-with-the-colony's-care for-its-own-vulnerable. Same *almanah-yatom-pakad* grammar as Ex. 22:22; Deut. 10:18 — he doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow; Ps. 68:5 — a father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God; Isa. 1:17 — judge the fatherless, plead for the widow; Jer. 49:11 — leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me; James 1:27 — visit the fatherless and widows. The Restoration's D&C 83:6 — and after that, they have claim upon the church, or in other words upon the Lord's storehouse, if their parents have not wherewith to give them inheritances — institutionalizes the *almanah-yatom-pakad* in-the-LDS-Church-welfare-system. The chapter is one of the BoM's clearest articulations of the *pakad*-of-*almanah*-and-*yatom* doctrine — the discipline-of-visiting-and-providing-for-the-vulnerable.

From the Chapter's Architecture

The chapter is also the BoM's clearest text on the no-baptism-without-authority doctrine. Mosiah 21:33-35 is the doctrinal anchor for the Restoration's priesthood restoration argument — the chapter's text that desire and faith are not enough, authority must be restored. The chapter is therefore one of the most load-bearing Restoration texts in the BoM.