

Mosiah 22 — Gideon's Stratagem of Deliverance — Wine to the Guards, Departure by the Back Pass, the Lamanite Pursuit Lost in the Wilderness, and the Joining of Limhi's People to Mosiah-II in Zarahemla

Mosiah 22: Limhi, Ammon, and the colony gather in council to plan deliverance; Gideon, who once confronted Noah, proposes a stratagem — pay tribute of wine to the Lamanite guards; the colony departs by the back pass with their flocks, herds, and possessions; the Lamanites pursue but are lost in the wilderness; Limhi's people arrive safely in Zarahemla and become subject to Mosiah-II; c. 121 BC.

Mosiah 22 is the BoM's-master-chapter-of-the-stratagem-of-deliverance-and-the-departure-by-the-back-pass. The chapter brings to its end the twenty-five-year-bondage that began in Mosiah-19 with Noah's-death and the tribute-treaty. The chapter has Gideon — the same Gideon who confronted Noah in Mosiah 19:4-8 — proposing the deliverance-stratagem; the king-of-the-Lamanites is pacified-with-wine-tribute-through-the-back-pass; the colony departs-by-night with their-flocks-and-herds-and-everything-they-can-carry; the Lamanites pursue but-are-lost-in-the-wilderness; the colony arrives in-Zarahemla and-Limhi becomes subject-to-Mosiah-II.

Load-Bearing Texts

1. v. 2. *and there was no way to deliver themselves out of their hands, except it were to deliver up their women, and their children, and their flocks, and their herds, and their tents, and depart into the wilderness; for they were more numerous than the people of Limhi was, except it were to divide* — the chapter's-master no-way-except-by-stratagem statement
2. v. 3. *now Gideon went forth and stood before the king, and said unto him: Now O king, thou hast hitherto hearkened unto my words many times when we have been contending with our brethren the Lamanites. And now O king, if thou hast not found me to be an unprofitable servant, or if thou hast hitherto listened to my words in any degree, and they have been of service to thee, even so I desire that thou wouldst listen to my words at this time, and I will be thy servant and deliver this people out of bondage* — the chapter's-master if-I-have-been-useful-let-me-now-deliver statement
3. v. 7. *behold, if it were possible we could go up by night with our flocks and our herds, and we will pay them the last tribute of wine which they have required* — the chapter's-master last-tribute-of-wine statement
4. v. 16. *and they were not long in the wilderness before they arrived in the land of Zarahemla, and joined Mosiah's people, and became his subjects. And it came to pass that Mosiah received them with joy* — the chapter's-master received-with-joy reunion-statement

Hebrew Word Studies

shikkor / shakar / mish'mar (שִׁכּוֹר / שָׁכַר / מִשְׁמָר) — **drunken / to be drunk / watch, guard** v. 6. The chapter's intelligence-vocabulary triad. *Shikkor* — *drunken* — the adjective behind every Hebrew-Bible-drunken-watchman text; *shakar* — *to be drunk* — the same root as the noun *shekar*, strong-drink; *mish'mar* — *watch, guard* — the noun behind the Hebrew-Bible's-fortified-city watches. The doctrine: the chapter's-deliverance-stratagem rests-on the failure-of-the-mish'mar by-shikkor; the watchmen-who-should-have-been-sober are-drunk, and-the-watch-fails. Same shikkor-watchman grammar as Joel 1:5 — *awake, ye drunkards, and weep*; Hab. 2:5 — *yea also, because he transgresseth by wine, he is a proud man*; 1 Thess. 5:6-8 — *let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night*. The Pauline-doctrine-of-watch-and-be-sober has-its-narrative-anchor in-the-very-pattern Gideon-here-exploits. The chapter is one of the BoM's clearest articulations of the watch-and-be-sober inverse providence — the drunk-watchman as-the-Lord's-instrument-of-deliverance-for-the-sober.

From the Chapter's Architecture

The chapter is also the BoM's-clearest-text-on the deliverance-by-human-wisdom-and-divine-providence-together pattern. Gideon's-stratagem is human-wisdom; the lost-pursuit is divine-providence; the chapter has-them-working-together. The chapter is therefore one-of-the-BoM's-most-balanced-texts on the providence-and-human-agency partnership doctrine — neither all-human (the stratagem alone could not-have-deflected the pursuit), nor all-divine (the stratagem was-required to-position-the-colony where-the-providence could-operate).