
Mosiah 7 — Ammon Finds the Lost Colony — The Bondage Pattern, the Slain Prophet, and the First Pre-Christian Christology Outside Benjamin

Mosiah 7: King Mosiah II sends Ammon and sixteen strong men to search for the colony Zeniff led back to the land of Nephi; they find Limhi's people in Lamanite bondage; Limhi gathers his people at the temple and explains how their condition came to be; the chapter's master doctrine is the deliverance pattern — afflict, cry, remember, return, deliver; c. 121 BC.

Three generations back, a man named Zeniff led a group of Nephites back to the land of Nephi — the same territory Mosiah I had abandoned in Omni 1:13 under divine warning, fleeing north to Zarahemla. Since then, nothing. No word. Three generations of silence.

Hebrew Word Studies

arba'im / midbar / shuv (אַרְבָּעִים / מִדְבָּר / שׁוּב) — **forty / wilderness, uninhabited / to turn, to return vv. 4, 33.** Three words worth holding together here. *Arba'im* is forty, the Exodus and testing number. *Midbar* is wilderness — the noun behind every covenant renewal site in the Hebrew Bible, from Sinai to Kadesh to the Judean wilderness. And *shuv*, to turn or return, is the root behind teshuvah, repentance, and it covers both spiritual turning and physical homecoming. Put them together and Ammon's forty-day journey through the midbar becomes its own small teshuvah — a return by walking, undertaken to recover what was lost by walking away. Hosea uses the same wilderness-as-recovery logic: "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her" (Hos. 2:14); so does Jeremiah — "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth... when thou wentest after me in the wilderness" (Jer. 2:2). Ammon's expedition is already an act of covenant return before a single word of "return" is preached to the colony.

tselem / demut / kavod (תְּסֵלֶם / דְּמוּת / כָּבוֹד) — **image, form / likeness, similitude / glory, weight v. 27.** Three Hebrew words sit behind this verse's logic. *Tselem* is image, form, statue — the word behind Genesis 1:26's "let us make man in our image." *Demut* is likeness, similitude — the parallel term in "after our likeness." And *kavod*, glory or weight, stands behind the Greek *morphē* the Septuagint uses in Philippians 2:6. Put together, they suggest that Christ's pre-incarnate *tselem* is the original pattern man was made after, and that the incarnation is Christ stepping into his own *tselem* in human flesh — emptying the *kavod*, as Philippians 2:7 puts it, while retaining the *tselem* itself. Paul develops the same thread in Colossians 1:15 ("the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature") and Hebrews 1:3 ("the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person"). The clearest Book of Mormon cross-reference is Ether 3:14–16, where the Brother of Jared sees the pre-incarnate Christ's spirit body directly: "this body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and man have I created after the body of my spirit." That vision makes explicit what Mosiah 7:27 only implies.

From the Chapter's Architecture

``cross-references Gen. 1:26–27 (image and likeness — direct parallel v. 27); Gen. 12:1–3 (Abrahamic covenant); Ex. 3:7–8 (I have surely seen the affliction); Ex. 5:1 (let my people go — direct parallel v. 16); Ex. 12:40–42 (Exodus night); Ex. 14:21–22 (Red Sea — direct parallel v. 19); Ex. 16:14–15 (manna — direct parallel v. 19); Num. 14:33 (forty years); Deut. 1:8 (go in and possess — direct parallel v. 9); Deut. 4:25–31 (covenant bondage then return — direct parallel vv. 20–33); Deut. 4:29 (seek him with all your heart — direct parallel v. 33); Deut. 6:20–25 (Shema recital); Deut. 28:36–48 (covenant curse of foreign tribute — direct parallel vv. 21–22); Deut. 30:1–6 (return to the Lord — direct parallel v. 33); 1 Sam. 8:14–17 (king takes a tenth — direct background vv. 21–22); 2 Kgs. 17:7–18 (Israel's captivity because of prophet rejection — direct parallel vv. 25–26); 2 Kgs. 21 (Manasseh's wickedness and the prophet killing); 2 Chr. 24:20–22 (Zechariah slain — direct parallel v. 26); Neh. 9 (Levitical recital); Job 4:8 (plow iniquity — direct parallel v. 30); Ps. 24:7 (lift up your heads — direct parallel v. 18); Ps. 78 (historical recital of the Exodus); Ps. 105 (historical recital); Ps. 106 (historical recital with confession); Ps. 137 (in captivity we remember); Eccl. 3:4 (a time to mourn — direct parallel v. 23); Isa. 6:9–10 (prophet sent to a people that will not hear); Isa. 30:15 (in returning and rest shall ye be saved); Isa. 55:6–7 (seek ye the Lord while he may be found); Isa. 61:1 (preach deliverance to the captives); Jer. 1:12 (I will hasten my word to perform it — direct parallel v. 32); Jer. 29:13 (search for me with all your heart — direct parallel v. 33); Lam. 2:17 (the Lord hath fulfilled his word — direct parallel v. 32); Lam. 3:38 (out of the mouth proceedeth not evil and good — direct parallel v. 20); Lam. 4:11–13 (poured out wrath because of prophet blood — direct parallel vv. 24–26); Lam. 5:8 (servants have ruled over us — direct parallel v. 15); Ezek. 19:12 (east wind dried up — direct parallel v. 31); Ezek. 37:16–22 (two sticks one in thine hand — direct background v. 3); Hos. 2:6 (hedge up thy way — direct parallel v. 29); Hos. 2:14 (allure her into the wilderness); Hos. 8:7 (sow the wind reap the whirlwind — direct parallel v. 30); Hos. 13:15 (east wind from the wilderness — direct parallel v. 31); Joel 2:12 (turn ye even to me with all your heart — direct parallel v. 33); Mic. 3:10 (Zion built with blood); Hab. 2:3 (the vision is yet for an appointed time — direct parallel v. 33); Mal. 3:7 (return unto me, and I will return unto you); Matt. 4:2 (forty days fasted — direct parallel v. 4); Matt. 17:1 (three plus the leader — direct parallel v. 6); Matt. 23:4 (grievous to be borne — direct parallel vv. 15, 23); Matt. 23:35 (blood of righteous Abel — direct parallel v. 26); Lk. 15:8–10 (woman with lost coin — direct parallel v. 13); Lk. 21:28 (lift up your heads — direct parallel v. 18); Lk. 23:9 (Herod questioned with many words); Acts 1:7 (not for you to know the times — direct parallel v. 33); Acts 4:13 (boldness of Peter and John — direct parallel v. 12); Acts 7:1–53 (Stephen's recital); Acts 7:52 (which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted — direct parallel v. 26); Acts 12:11 (now I know of a surety — direct parallel v. 14); Acts 15:10 (grievous yoke — direct parallel v. 15); Acts 16:23–34 (Paul and Silas in prison two days); Acts 26:1 (permitted to speak — direct parallel v. 11); Rom. 8:20 (creature subject to vanity in hope — direct parallel v. 18); 2 Cor. 4:4 (image of God — direct parallel v. 27); Gal. 6:7 (whatsoever a man soweth — direct parallel v. 30); Eph. 4:24 (new man); Phil. 2:6–8 (form of God... form of a servant — direct parallel v. 27); Col. 1:15 (image of the invisible God — direct parallel v. 27); Heb. 1:3 (express image of his person — direct parallel v. 27); Heb. 2:7 (a little lower than the angels); Heb. 2:14–18 (took part of flesh and blood that he might deliver them — direct parallel v. 7); 1 Pet. 5:6 (humble yourselves under the mighty hand); Omni 1:13 (Mosiah I's exodus from the land of Nephi); Omni 1:14–16 (Mulek discovered); WoM 1:13 (Benjamin's sword-of-Laban victory); Mosiah 2:5 (Benjamin temple gathering — direct parallel v. 17); Mosiah 2:14 (laboring king); Mosiah 3:5–8 (angel Christology — direct parallel v. 27); Mosiah 5:8 (no other name); Mosiah 6:7 (three years' peace — direct parallel v. 1); Mosiah 8 (next chapter — twenty-four plates); Mosiah 9:3 (Zeniff over-zealous); Mosiah 11–17 (Abinadi cycle proper — direct fulfillment v. 26); Mosiah 17:14–20 (Abinadi's death by fire); Mosiah 21:5–15 (bondage deepens before deliverance); Mosiah 22 (deliverance accomplished — direct fulfillment v. 33); Alma 5:6–7 (have ye sufficiently retained in remembrance the captivity of your fathers); Alma 7:11–13 (Christ takes on flesh); Alma 22:14 (death of Christ); Alma 36 (Alma the Younger's deliverance from sin's bondage); Hel. 5:9–12 (rock of the Redeemer); 3 Ne. 9:17 (in me shall all my creation be lifted up); Eth. 3:14–16 (this body is the body of my spirit — direct parallel v. 27); Moro. 10:32 (come unto Christ); D&C 1:16 (every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god); D&C 19:18 (bleed at every pore); D&C 38:1 (the same which was from the beginning); D&C 38:14–16 (be of good cheer, I will lead you along); D&C 88:6 (he that ascended up on high); D&C 93:1–17 (Christ's progression and the Father-Son relationship); D&C 132:20 (shall be gods); Moses 1:6 (Only Begotten); Moses 6:8–10 (image of God created he them — direct parallel v. 27); Abr. 3:24–27 (we will make an earth whereon these may dwell); Abr. 4:26–27 (let us make man in our image); Articles of Faith 1 (we believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in his Son, Jesus Christ). ``