

CHAPTER 21

Mosiah 18–24

Introduction

The people who followed Alma into the wilderness humbled themselves by believing the word of God, repenting, and accepting the covenant of baptism. Even so, they fell captive to the Lamanites for a length of time. In the same period of history, the people of Limhi continued to live under Lamanite domination. They eventually humbled themselves after failing to free themselves by their own strength and were delivered by God. Alma's people and Limhi's people both experienced bondage and oppression, and both groups experienced the blessing of being set free by the hand of the Lord. Look for ways the Lord provides redemption from the difficulties of mortality by strengthening us and assisting us in our troubles. By comparing and contrasting the circumstances of the two societies, we can learn principles to help us deal with our challenges.

Commentary

Mosiah 18:8. Becoming the Lord's People through Baptism

- Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles summarized the expectations that come to those who accept baptism:

“Alma began baptizing all who wished to make a covenant with Christ. He asked that they ‘serve [God] and keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly’ upon them. These new disciples would also demonstrate their faith by:

“Coming into the fold of God.

“Being called his people.

“Bearing one another's burdens.

“Mourning with those that mourn.

“Comforting those who stand in need of comfort.

“Standing as witnesses of God at all times and in all things and in all places.

“Entering into a covenant to serve God and keep his commandments.

“This declaration by Alma at the Waters of Mormon still stands as the most complete scriptural statement on

record as to what the newly baptized commit to do and be” (*Christ and the New Covenant* [1997], 106).

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles described the blessings of accepting the covenants of baptism: “I have noted throughout my life that when people come to fully understand the blessings and the power of their baptismal covenant, whether as new converts or as lifelong members of the Church, great joy comes into their lives and they approach their duties in the kingdom with contagious enthusiasm” (“Alma the Elder: A Role Model for Today,” in *Heroes from the Book of Mormon* [1995], 84).



Mosiah 18:9. “Stand as Witnesses of God at All Times”

- Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles declared that our baptismal covenants require righteousness no matter how difficult the circumstances: “When we covenant in the waters of baptism to ‘stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places,’ we’re not talking solely about fast and testimony meetings. It may not always be easy, convenient, or politically correct to stand for truth and right, but it is always the right thing to do—always” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 51; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 37).

Mosiah 18:10. “Ye Have Entered into a Covenant with Him”

- Sister Bonnie D. Parkin, as Relief Society general president, explained how Heavenly Father tutors us as we make and keep covenants: “Covenants—or binding promises between us and Heavenly Father—are essential for our eternal progression. Step-by-step, He tutors us to become like Him by enlisting us in His work. At baptism we covenant to love Him with all our hearts and love our sisters and brothers as ourselves.

In the temple we further covenant to be obedient, selfless, faithful, honorable, charitable. We covenant to make sacrifices and consecrate all that we have. Forged through priesthood authority, our kept covenants bring blessings to fill our cups to overflowing. How often do you reflect that your covenants reach beyond mortality and connect you to the Divine? Making covenants is the expression of a willing heart; keeping covenants, the expression of a faithful heart” (“With Holiness of Heart,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2002, 103).

Mosiah 18:10. Having His Spirit

- Elder Robert D. Hales of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles observed that having the Holy Ghost influences our conduct and solidifies our testimonies:

“The Holy Ghost gives us the strength and courage to conduct our lives in the ways of the kingdom of God and is the source of our testimony of the Father and the Son. . . .

“By choosing to be in His kingdom, we separate—not isolate—ourselves from the world. Our dress will be modest, our thoughts pure, our language clean. The movies and television we watch, the music we listen to, the books, magazines, and newspapers we read will be uplifting. We will choose friends who encourage our eternal goals, and we will treat others with kindness. We will shun the vices of immorality, gambling, tobacco, liquor, and illicit drugs. Our Sunday activities will reflect the commandment of God to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. We will follow the example of Jesus Christ in the way we treat others. We will live to be worthy to enter the house of the Lord” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2000, 6–7; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 8).

Mosiah 18:12–18. Alma Held the Priesthood

- President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) explained that Alma had authority to baptize:

“We may conclude that Alma held the priesthood before he, with others, became disturbed with King Noah. Whether this is so or not makes no difference because in the Book of Mosiah it is stated definitely that he had authority [see Mosiah 18:13].



“If he had authority to baptize that is evidence that he had been baptized. Therefore, when Alma baptized himself with Helam that was not a case of Alma baptizing himself, but merely as a token to the Lord of his humility and full repentance” (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith Jr., 5 vols. [1957–66], 3:203).

MOSIAH 18:21–29

What did Alma teach his people to do to “walk uprightly before God”? (v. 29).

Mosiah 18:21. “Hearts Knit Together in Unity and in Love”

- Through modern revelation the Lord counseled, “Be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27). President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency commented on the division prevalent in our fallen world and how keeping the commandments brings unity:

“With the Fall it became clear that living in unity would not be easy. . . .

“. . . We need hope that we can experience unity in this life and qualify to have it forever in the world to come. . . .

“If we are to have unity, there are commandments we must keep concerning how we feel. We must forgive and bear no malice toward those who offend us” (in

Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 85–86, 88; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 66, 68).

- Unity and love came as the people of Alma recommitted themselves to living the commandments of God. While serving in the Seventy, Elder C. Max Caldwell described this increase in love as a condition that needs to be developed:

“Jesus’ love was inseparably connected to and resulted from his life of serving, sacrificing, and giving in behalf of others. We cannot develop Christlike love except by practicing the process prescribed by the Master. . . .

“Charity is not just a precept or a principle, nor is it just a word to describe actions or attitudes. Rather, it is an internal condition that must be developed and experienced in order to be understood. We are possessors of charity when it is a part of our nature. People who have charity have a love for the Savior, have received of his love, and love others as he does” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 40; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 30).

Mosiah 18:23. “Observe the Sabbath Day, and Keep It Holy”

- “Because the Sabbath is a holy day, it should be reserved for worthy and holy activities. . . . If we merely lounge about doing nothing on the Sabbath, we fail to keep the day holy” (*True to the Faith: A Gospel Reference* [2004], 146).

Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke about how the Sabbath is a special time for families to be together and reviewed 10 other activities of the many that are worthy of the Sabbath day: “This is the time we are to attend our regular meetings together, study the life and teachings of the Savior and of the prophets. ‘Other appropriate Sunday activities include (1) writing personal and family journals, (2) holding family councils, (3) establishing and maintaining family organizations for the immediate and extended family, (4) personal interviews between parents and children, (5) writing to relatives and missionaries, (6) genealogy, (7) visiting relatives and those who are ill or lonely, (8) missionary work, (9) reading stories to children, and (10) singing Church hymns.’ [“Suggestions for Individual and Family

Sabbath-Day Activities,” *Ensign*, Mar. 1980, 76]” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2003, 44; or *Ensign*, May 2003, 42).

- Elder Mark E. Petersen (1900–1984) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that our observance of the Sabbath day reflects our appreciation of the Atonement of Jesus Christ:

“We can readily see that observance of the Sabbath is an indication of the depth of our conversion.

“Our observance or nonobservance of the Sabbath is an unerring measure of our attitude toward the Lord personally and toward his suffering in Gethsemane, his death on the cross, and his resurrection from the dead. It is a sign of whether we are Christians in very deed, or whether our conversion is so shallow that commemoration of his atoning sacrifice means little or nothing to us” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1975, 72; or *Ensign*, May 1975, 49).



Mosiah 18:28. “They Should Impart of Their Substance of Their Own Free Will”

- President Marion G. Romney (1897–1988) of the First Presidency counseled us to develop charity by giving ourselves fully to the work of the Lord: “Some may ask, ‘How do I obtain these righteous feelings in giving? How do I overcome giving grudgingly? How do I obtain the “pure love of Christ?”’ To those I would say: Faithfully live all the commandments, give of yourselves, care for your families, serve in church callings, perform missionary work, pay tithes and offerings, study the scriptures—and the list could go on. As you lose yourself in this service, the Lord will touch and soften your heart” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1981, 131–32; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1981, 93).

Mosiah 19–24. People of Limhi Compared to People of Alma

- When the prophet Abinadi first went to the wicked people of King Noah, he told them that if they did not repent they would come under bondage (see Mosiah 11:21). When the Lord commanded Abinadi to return to them two years later, they still had not repented (see Mosiah 12:1). Therefore, according to the word of the Lord, all of them would inevitably come under bondage. Furthermore, the second time Abinadi preached to them, the Lord’s warning to the people of King Noah was even stronger. In addition to being brought into bondage, many would be slain. Others would experience famine and pestilence, and if they

still refused to repent, they would be destroyed (see Mosiah 12:2–8).

After Abinadi’s second visit, there was a division among the people. Alma believed Abinadi, and a group of people listened to Alma, repented, and became righteous. However, the majority of the people—under the leadership of King Noah and then his son Limhi—did not repent until much later. Although both groups eventually came under bondage because they refused to repent after the first warning of the Lord, consider the following differences between what happened to Alma’s group, who voluntarily repented, and Limhi’s group, who were compelled to repent.

Time Period	People of Limhi	People of Alma
Abinadi’s second visit	Noah’s people rejected and killed Abinadi (Mosiah 17). They continued in their wickedness.	Alma believed Abinadi (Mosiah 17:2–4). Alma was forced to flee.
Aftermath of Abinadi’s second visit	Noah–Limhi’s people continued in wickedness (Mosiah 19:2–20). They were divided (v. 2). They were contentious (v. 3). They were attacked by the Lamanites (vv. 6–7). King Noah was killed by his own people (v. 20). The people were brought into Lamanite bondage and had to pay a 50 percent tribute to the Lamanites (v. 15).	A small group believed Alma (Mosiah 18:3–21). They traveled to hear Alma preach (v. 4). They were taught to repent and have faith (v. 7). They covenanted with God (vv. 8–11). They escaped the efforts of King Noah to destroy them (vv. 33–34).
Two years from the time of Abinadi’s death (Mosiah 19:29)	Limhi’s people endured bondage (Mosiah 19:22–20:22). They endured bondage and 50 percent tribute (19:22). The Lamanites attacked (20:7). They fought back (20:8–11). They accepted bondage (20:22).	Alma’s people prospered (Mosiah 23:2–5). The Lord strengthened them (v. 2). They built a city (v. 5).
A period of time following the first two years (Mosiah 19:29)	Conditions of bondage intensified (Mosiah 21:3–6). The Lamanites smote them on the cheeks and exercised authority over them (v. 3). The Lamanites gave Limhi’s people heavy burdens and drove them like animals (v. 3). The people murmured because of their trials (v. 6). Limhi’s people went to war three times to deliver themselves and were defeated each time. Many were killed and there was much sorrow (vv. 7–12).	Alma’s people continued in peace and prosperity (Mosiah 23:19–20). They lived in righteousness (vv. 14–15). They prospered exceedingly (vv. 19–20).

Time Period	People of Limhi	People of Alma
Continued after the first two years	<p>Limhi's people repented and turned to the Lord (Mosiah 21:7–14, 25–26).</p> <p>They were compelled to be humble (vv. 13–14).</p> <p>They accepted their bondage and abuse (v. 13).</p> <p>They cried mightily to the Lord (v. 14).</p> <p>They sent men to find help in Zarahemla (vv. 25–26).</p>	Alma's people continued in peace and prosperity.
Continued after the first two years	<p>The Lord eventually delivered them from Lamanite bondage (Mosiah 21:15–22:16).</p> <p>The Lord was slow to hear them, but He softened the hearts of their enemies, who eased their burdens (21:15).</p> <p>They were not delivered at first (21:15).</p> <p>They prospered by degrees (21:16).</p> <p>They helped others (21:17).</p> <p>They covenanted to serve God (21:31).</p> <p>They gave wine to the Lamanite guards, who then fell asleep (22:7, 10).</p> <p>They escaped (22:11).</p>	Alma's people continued in peace and prosperity.
c. 120–121 B.C. (Mosiah 22; 24:25 footnotes)	<p>Limhi's people arrived in the land of Zarahemla (Mosiah 22:13).</p> <p>A Lamanite army pursued Limhi's people (vv. 15–16).</p>	<p>Alma's people experienced bondage and delivery from the Lord (Mosiah 23–24).</p> <p>The Lamanite army sent after Limhi's people discovered Alma's people in the land of Helam (Mosiah 23:25).</p> <p>Alma's people were taken into bondage (Mosiah 24:8–10).</p> <p>They remained faithful and endured patiently (vv. 10–16).</p> <p>The Lord eased their burdens and strengthened them (vv. 14–15).</p> <p>The Lord delivered them out of bondage and into the land of Zarahemla (v. 20).</p>

- Limhi's people were forced to remember the Lord during their Lamanite bondage. Alma's people willingly repented after Abinadi's second warning. Consequently, the suffering of Limhi's group was greater and more prolonged. Some years later, Alma the Younger explained a principle that helps us understand the different results experienced by these two groups: Some "are compelled to be humble . . . for a man sometimes, if he is compelled to be humble, seeketh repentance" (Alma 32:13), and "blessed are they who humble themselves without being compelled to be humble" (v. 16).

Mosiah 21:13–14. Humility Fortifies Our Dependence upon the Lord

- After failing the third time to fight their way out of bondage, Limhi's colony finally turned to God in humility and prayer and sought deliverance by His hand. Their experiences compelled them to seek the Lord and not to put their trust in the arm of the flesh (see Alma 32:13–16; see also 2 Nephi 4:34).

President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) taught that humility strengthens our dependence upon the Lord: "Humility, of course, is not a sign of weakness. Humility does not mean timidity. A person can be humble,

powerful, and courageous. The Prophet Joseph is a good example. Humility is an acknowledged recognition of our dependence on a higher power” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [1988], 369).

MOSIAH 21:15–22

*In what ways did the people of Limhi begin to “prosper by degrees in the land”? (v. 16).
How can we receive similar help?*

Mosiah 21:15. “The Lord Did Hear Their Cries”

- Even though many people in Limhi’s colony brought their distress upon themselves, the Lord was merciful and answered their prayers. The Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44) described the Lord’s mercy in response to the sorrow the Prophet felt as a result of his mistakes: “I have called to mind all the past moments of my life, and am left to mourn and shed tears of sorrow for my folly in suffering the adversary of my soul to have so much power over me as he has had in times past. But God is merciful and has forgiven my sins, and I rejoice that he sendeth forth the Comforter unto as many as believe and humbleth themselves before him” (*The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, comp. Dean C. Jessee [1984], 238; punctuation, spelling, and capitalization standardized).

Mosiah 23:21. “He Trieth Their Patience and Their Faith”

- Even though the people who followed Alma had repented and been faithful, the Lord allowed them to be temporarily oppressed by the Lamanites in fulfillment of Abinadi’s prophecy (see Mosiah 12:1–5) and as a trial of their patience and faith. Elder Orson F. Whitney (1855–1931) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that everything we experience teaches us valuable lessons: “No pain that we suffer, no trial that we experience is wasted. It ministers to our education, to the development of such qualities as patience, faith, fortitude and humility. All that we suffer and all that we endure, especially when we endure it patiently, builds up our characters, purifies our hearts,

expands our souls, and makes us more tender and charitable, more worthy to be called the children of God . . . and it is through sorrow and suffering, toil and tribulation, that we gain the education that we come here to acquire and which will make us more like our Father and Mother in heaven” (cited in Spencer W. Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle* [1972], 98).



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Mosiah 23–24. The History of Alma’s People

- Mosiah chapters 23–24 is a flashback within a flashback (see commentary for Mosiah 9–22 on p. 149). The history of Alma, from the time they were driven into the wilderness by the people of King Noah until they arrived in Zarahemla, was added to the record. This small flashback occupies approximately 20 years. When the reader finishes chapters 23–24, both Zeniff’s people and Alma’s people have returned to Zarahemla and King Mosiah (see the chart “Flashbacks from Omni through Mosiah” in the appendix, p. 413).

Mosiah 24:13–15. “They Did Submit Cheerfully and with Patience to All the Will of the Lord”

- If we are entirely dependent upon God, then He can take our limitations and our weaknesses and magnify them into strengths useful for His divine purposes. Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles encouraged us to cheerfully rely on the Lord when we face the challenges of mortality:

“Problems or trials in our lives need to be viewed in the perspective of scriptural doctrine. Otherwise they can easily overtake our vision, absorb our energy, and deprive us of the joy and beauty the Lord intends us

to receive here on earth. Some people are like rocks thrown into a sea of problems. They are drowned by them. Be a cork. When submerged in a problem, fight to be free to bob up to serve again with happiness. . . .

“The Lord is intent on your personal growth and development. That progress is accelerated when you willingly allow Him to lead you through every growth experience you encounter, whether initially it be to your individual liking or not. When you trust in the Lord, when you are willing to let your heart and your mind be centered in His will, when you ask to be led by the Spirit to do His will, you are assured of the greatest happiness along the way and the most fulfilling attainment from this mortal experience. If you question everything you are asked to do, or dig in your heels at every unpleasant challenge, you make it harder for the Lord to bless you [see 1 Nephi 3:7]” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1996, 32–33; or *Ensign*, May 1996, 24–25).

Points to Ponder

- Reflect upon the baptismal covenants recorded in Mosiah 18:8–10. What can you do this week to live your covenants more fully?
- In what ways has your faith been strengthened by trials?
- How can the example of Alma and his followers help you trust in the Savior’s Atonement and power?

Suggested Assignments

- Find a scripture for each aspect of our redemption through the Savior’s Atonement described in Mosiah 18:2, including His power, suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven. You may want to write your references in the margin of your scriptures next to Mosiah 18:2.
- Study and outline the baptismal covenant as described by Alma in Mosiah 18:8–10.
- Call, visit, or write a letter to a Church priesthood leader, teacher, or adviser who has nourished you “with things pertaining to righteousness” (Mosiah 23:18) and express your appreciation and testimony to him or her.