



19. Mosiah, Introduction; King Benjamin's Speech. Mosiah 1–3

King Benjamin Preaching from His Tower

“Believe in God; believe that he is, and that he created all things, both in heaven and in earth; believe that he has all wisdom, and all power, both in heaven and in earth; believe that man doth not comprehend all the things which the Lord can comprehend. And again, believe that ye must repent of your sins and forsake them, and humble yourselves before God; and ask in sincerity of heart that he would forgive you; and now, if you believe all these things see that ye do them.” (Mosiah 4:9-10)

Hymn 86, “How Great Thou Art”

(vv. 1 and 3)

O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds thy hands have made,
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy pow'r thruout the universe displayed;

Chorus:

Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee,
How great thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Savior God, to thee,
How great thou art! How great thou art!

And when I think that God, his Son not sparing,
Sent him to die, I scarce can take it in,
That on the cross my burden gladly bearing
He bled and died to take away my sin,

Book of Mosiah

Historical Questions: Authorship

- Mormon
 - c. A.D. 311-385; writing some 500 years *after* the events!
 - Prophet, general, historian, author
 - Here the surviving portion of [Mormon's abridgment of the Large Plates of Nephi begins](#)
 - *Watch for the third person commentator, the voice of the editor with phrases such as "And thus we see . . ."*
- [Superscription lacking]
 - "Manuscript evidence suggests that the first two chapters of the book of Mosiah were among the 116 pages lost by Martin Harris and that what is currently Mosiah 1 was originally the third chapter in the book. This is why there is no summary headnote at the beginning of Mosiah." (Hardy, 177 n. 1)
- Presumably named after [Mosiah²](#), the king whose reign provides the framework for most of the book
 - But the first two lost chapters may have covered [Mosiah¹](#)'s migration to the Land of Zarahemla and summarized Benjamin's reign (now contained only in Omni 1:12-30)

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Book of Mosiah

Historical Questions: Sources and Dates of Content

- **Large Plates of Nephi**
 - [Records of the kings in Zarahemla](#) (abridged, 1:1-6:7 and 25:1-29:47)
 - Includes Benjamin's speech (quoted)
 - [Records of Nephite Colonists in Land of Nephi](#) (7:1-24:25)
 - [Records of Covering the Reigns of Noah³ and Limhi](#) (abridged, 7:1-8:21 and 11:1-22:16)
 - [Record of Zeniff](#) (transcribed complete, 9:1-10:22)
 - [Record of Alma¹](#) (abridged, 23:1-24:25)
- **Fixed Dates** (see Nyman *TRAT*, 177-78)
 - [Beginning of Mosiah²'s reign](#) (c. 124 B.C., 476 years after Lehi Left Jerusalem)
 - [Death of Benjamin](#) (3 years later, c. 121 B.C., 479 L.L.J.)
 - [Deaths of Mosiah² and Alma¹](#) (c. 91 B.C., 509 L.L.J.)
- **Specific chronological references appear only near the beginning and at the end of the book** (6:4-5; 7:1, 4-5; 29:45-46)
 - "The arrangement of the book of Mosiah *shows Mormon making his historical interests serve his higher, religious purposes . . .* As a result, Mormon eschewed chronological reporting in favor of the spiritually rich moments he sought to accentuate." (Brown *BMRC*, 572 = packet, 231-32)

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Book of Mosiah

Literary Questions

- Structure
 - [Superscription lacking]
 - Skousen, Hardy, Bushman and others conclude the first two chapters of Mosiah were lost with the 116 pages!
 - End of King Benjamin's Reign (1:1–8:21)
 - Benjamin's Farewell Address (2:9–6:3)
 - Zeniff and the Colony in the Land of Nephi (9:1–22:16)
 - Account of Alma the Elder and His People in the Land of Helam (23:1–24:25)
 - Mosiah²'s Reign in Zarahemla (25:1–29:47)
- Themes
 - Deliverance
 - Spiritual deliverance through Christ
 - Temporal deliverance (e.g., freedom from bondage) as a type
 - Kingship and Servanthood
 - Christ as heavenly king, Christ as servant
 - Good kings are servants of their people, wicked kings serve themselves

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End of King Benjamin's Reign (1:1-6:7)

Large Plates of Nephi > Mormon's abridgment

- Historical narrative (1:1–2:8)
 - Benjamin teaches his sons (1:1–8)
 - Mosiah², Helorum, and Helaman¹
 - Benjamin installs Mosiah² as king (1:9–6:3)
 - Benjamin's Charge to Mosiah (1:9–17)
 - Assembly at the temple (1:18–2:8)
- Benjamin's farewell address (sermon, 2:9–6:3)
- Historical narrative resumed Mosiah² reigns as king (6:3–7)

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Benjamin's Farewell Address

- Purpose
 - Name a new king (1:10)
 - Cause people to take Christ's name by covenant (1:1-12)
- Possible Occasion: Has similarities to three Jewish autumn festivals (see Welch and Welch, charts 88-90 in packet)
 - New Year (Rosh Hashana): **kingship and God**
 - Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur): **forgiveness of sins**
 - Tabernacles (Sukkot): **gathering at temple, living in tents, anointing a king**
- Themes
 - **Understanding and applying Atonement of Jesus Christ**
 - **Service to God and others**
 - Gratitude, indebtedness, humility
- Style
 - Often poetic
 - Uses **chiasmus** (A – B – C – B' – A') to emphasize points e.g., Mosiah 3:18-19 (focusing on "has been" and "will be")

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Outline of Benjamin's Address

(2:9–4:30, **Sermon**)

- **Benjamin Reviews His Stewardship** (2:9–14, **sermon**)
 - Serving God (2:15–26)
 - Benjamin completes his reign: **SERVICE** (2:27–2:30)
 - Benjamin's charge to the people (2:31–41)
- **Benjamin Teaches of Christ** (3:1–27, **sermon** continued)
 - The Angel's Prophecy of Christ (3:1–15)
 - The Angel Explains the Fall and the Atonement (3:16–23)
 - The Angel's Warning from the Lord (3:24–27)
- The Reaction of the People: **the Process of Repentance** (4:1–3)
- Benjamin Continues: **Man and God** (4:4–30)
 - Who Is Saved? (poetic discourse, 4:4–8)
 - Retaining a Remission of Sins: Believe in God . . . (hymn and poetic discourse, 4:9–16)
 - We Are All Beggars . . . (4:17–27)
 - Final Instructions (4:28–30)

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Unprofitable Servants

- “And even I, myself, have labored with mine own hands that I might serve you, and that ye should not be laden with taxes . . . I do not desire to boast, **for I have only been in the service of God.**” (2:14–16)
 - **The model king, a type of Christ, serves out of love of God and his fellow beings**
- “And behold, I tell you these things that ye may learn wisdom; that ye may learn that **when ye are in the service of your fellow beings ye are only in the service of your God.**” (2:17)
- “I say unto you that if ye should serve him who has created you from the beginning, and is preserving you from day to day, by lending you breath, that ye may live and move and do according to your own will, and even supporting you from one moment to another—I say, **if ye should serve him with all your whole souls yet ye would be unprofitable servants.**” (2:21)

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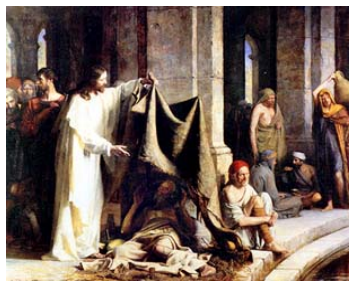
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Birth and Ministry

The Angel's Prophecy of Christ 1 (3:1–10, vision report)

- **Condescension**
 - “For behold, the time cometh, and is not far distant, that with power, **the Lord Omnipotent who reigneth, who was, and is from all eternity to all eternity, shall come down from heaven among the children of men and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay . . .**” (3:5a)
- **Ministry**
 - “. . . and shall go forth amongst men, **working mighty miracles, such as healing the sick, raising the dead, causing the lame to walk, the blind to receive their sight, and the deaf to hear, and curing all manner of diseases. And he shall cast out devils, or the evil spirits which dwell in the hearts of the children of men.**” (3:5b–6)



“Christ Healing by the Pool of Bethesda” from *The Life of Christ* by Carl Heinrich Bloch (1834-90)

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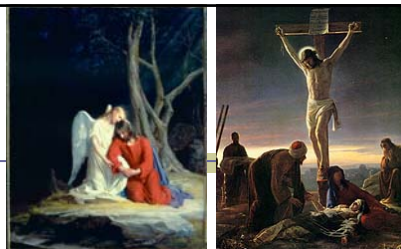
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Suffering and Crucifixion

The Angel's Prophecy of Christ 2 (3:1-10)

"Christ in Gethsemane" and "The Crucifixion" from
The Life of Christ by Carl Heinrich Bloch (1834-90)



- "And lo, **he shall suffer** temptations, and pain of body, hunger, thirst, and fatigue, **even more than man can suffer, except it be unto death; for behold, blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people.**" (3:7)
 - **"And he shall be called Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of heaven and earth, the Creator of all things from the beginning; and his mother shall be called Mary."** (3:8, chiasmatically placed between **Gethsemane** and the **cross!**)
- "And lo, he cometh unto his own, that salvation might come unto the children of men even through faith on his name; and even after all this they shall consider him a man, and say that he hath a devil, and **shall scourge him, and shall crucify him.**" (3:9)

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The Fall and the Atonement (3:11-23)

The Angel's Prophecy of Christ 3

- "And moreover, I say unto you, that **there shall be no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ**, the Lord Omnipotent." (3:17)
- Covered by the Atonement: those who have fallen by the transgression of Adam (all of us) . . . in particular:
 - **Those who do not know the will of God concerning them and thereby ignorantly sin** (3:11)
 - The wording "the sins of those who have fallen by the transgression of Adam, who died not knowing the will of God" suggests that in our fallen state, if we do not know better, our tendency will be to follow our natural impulses and chose wrongly (see "Natural Man" of 3:19 below)
 - **The willfully disobedient who repent and exercise faith in Jesus Christ** (3:12-13)
 - **Little children** (3:16, 21)
 - Their natural impulses often lead them to "fall," i.e. do that which is wrong, but the blood of Christ covers these sins since before they are accountable they are not fully able to exercise their agency to overcome their fallen nature

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The Natural Man

- “For ***the natural man is an enemy to God***, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, ***unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit***, and ***putteth off the natural man*** and ***becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord***, and ***becometh as a child***, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, ***willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father***” (3:19)
 - ***Natural man***: fallen men and women are subject to the impulses, appetites, and desires of a mortal body
 - The overriding tendency will be to chose that which is opposite of God, placing us at enmity with him
 - Nonetheless, agency is preserved for those who are sufficiently mature and accountable
 - Hence the active verbs illustrating how we overcome this “natural” state: ***yield, put off, become, submit***
- **The angel’s warning from the Lord (3:24–27)**
 - Complete with fire and brimstone!