



Abinadi before King Noah

21. The Trial and Discourse of Abinadi Mosiah 12–18

“And thus God breaketh the bands of death, having gained the victory over death; giving the Son power to make intercession for the children of men—Having ascended into heaven, having the bowels of mercy; being filled with compassion towards the children of men; standing betwixt them and justice; having broken the bands of death, taken upon himself their iniquity and their transgressions, having redeemed them, and satisfied the demands of justice.” (Mosiah 15:8-9)

Hymn 70, “Sing Praise to Him”

Sing Praise to Him who reigns above
The Lord of all creation,
The source of pow'r, the fount of love,
The rock of our salvation.
With healing balm my soul he fills
And ev'ry faithless murmur stills.
To him all praise and glory!

What his almighty pow'r hath made
His gracious mercy keepeth.
By morning glow or evening shade
His watchful eye ne'er sleepeth.
Within the kingdom of his might,
Lo! all is just and all is right.
To him all praise and glory!

The Lord is never far away,
But, thru all grief distressing,
An ever present help and stay,
Our peace and joy and blessing.
As with a mother's tender hand,
He leads his own, his chosen band.
To him all praise and glory!

Thus, all my toilsome way along,
I sing aloud thy praises,
That men may hear the grateful song
My voice unwearied raises.
Be joyful in the Lord, my heart!
Both soul and body bear your part.
To him all praise and glory!

Ministry of Abinadi (11:20–17:20)

- Abinadi's first mission: **repentance** (11:20-29)
 - "And it came to pass that there was a man among them whose name was Abinadi; and he went forth among them, and began to prophesy, saying: Behold, thus saith the Lord, and thus hath he commanded me, saying, Go forth, and say unto this people, thus saith the Lord—Wo be unto this people, for I have seen their abominations, and their wickedness, and their whoredoms; and **except they repent I will visit them in mine anger**. And except they repent and turn to the Lord their God, behold, I will deliver them into the hands of their enemies; yea, and they shall be brought into bondage; and they shall be afflicted by the hand of their enemies." (11:20-21)
- Abinadi's second mission: **destruction warned** (12:1-8)
 - "Abinadi came among them in disguise, that they knew him not, and began to prophesy among them, saying: Thus has the Lord commanded me, saying—Abinadi, go and prophesy unto this my people, for they have hardened their hearts against my words; **they have repented not of their evil doings; therefore, I will visit them in my anger, yea, in my fierce anger will I visit them in their iniquities and abominations.**" (12:1)
 - Abinadi arrested and accused (12:9-16)

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Trial of Abinadi (12:17–17:20, dramatic episode with quotations from his sermon)

Words of Abinadi and account of trial recorded by Alma the Elder, later abridged by Mormon

- Trial Preliminaries (12:17-13:6a)
 - Questioned about Isaiah 52:7-10 (12:17-24)
 - Abinadi questions Noah's priests (12:25-37)
 - Attempts to silence Abinadi (13:1-6a)
- Abinadi's **Discourse**
 - Abinadi's exposition of the Ten Commandments (13:6b-26)
 - **Abinadi Teaches of Christ (13:33-16:15)**
 - quotation of Isaiah 53:1–12 (14:1–12)
 - Christ as the Father and the Son (15:1–9)
 - the Seed of Christ (15:10–18)
 - the first resurrection (15:19–31)
 - redemption and judgment (16:1–15)

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Trial Preliminaries (12:17–13:6a)

- Questioned about Isaiah 52:7-10 (12:17-24)
 - “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings; that publisheth peace . . . **Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice;** with the voice together shall they sing” (12:21-22)
 - Interesting that even the “wicked priests” are using the Brass Plates and their quotations of Isaiah!
- Abinadi questions Noah’s priests (12:25-37)
 - “Are you priests, and pretend to teach this people, and to understand the spirit of prophesying, and yet desire to know of me what these things mean? . . . **if ye understand these things ye have not taught them; therefore, ye have perverted the ways of the Lord.**” (12:25-26)
 - **Noah and his priests should have been watchmen for the people**
 - **Noah and his priests have broken the first two of the Ten Commandments about God and idolatry** (12:33-37)
- Attempts to silence Abinadi (13:1-6a)
 - “Touch me not, for God shall smite you if ye lay your hands upon me, for I have not delivered the message which the Lord sent me to deliver . . .” (13:3)

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Abinadi Teaches of Christ

Quotes Isaiah 53 (14:1b-12)

- Noah’s priests had tried to “catch him in his words” over Isaiah 52
- Now Abinadi quotes Isaiah appropriately, to teach of Christ
 - “He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But **he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.**” (14:3-5)
 - “. . . he was numbered with the transgressors; and **he bore the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.**” (14:12b)

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“Being the Father and The Son . . .”

- “And now Abinadi said unto them: I would that ye should understand that God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people. And because he dwelleth in flesh he shall be called the Son of God, and having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son” (Mosiah 15:1–2)
- Possible Avenues of Interpretation
 - **The Father and the Son are the same being**
 - Contrary to Restoration understanding of the Godhead
 - **This is about the “unity” of the Father and the Son**
 - Suggested by Jesus’ great Intercessory Prayer (see John 17)
 - **Jesus is, in fact, “the” Father in senses different than how Elohim, our Heavenly Father, is the Father of our spirits**
 - Suggested by various passages and teachings of the Book of Mormon itself

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How Christ is the Father

“The Father and The Son: A Doctrinal Exposition by The First Presidency and The Twelve,” 30 June 1916 (James R. Clark, *Messages of the First Presidency*, Vol. 5, pp. 26-34)

- 1. Father as **Creator**
 - “Father of Heaven and Earth”
- 2. Father of **those who abide in his gospel**
 - esp. those who enter his covenant and **to whom he promised to grant eternal life** (see Mosiah 5:7)
- 3. Father **by Divine Investiture of Authority**
 - “. . . in all His dealings with the human family Jesus the Son has represented and yet represents Elohim His Father in power and authority . . . Thus the Father placed His name upon the Son; and Jesus Christ spoke and ministered in and through the Father’s name; and so far as power, authority and Godship are concerned *His words and acts were and are those of the Father.*” Clark, 31-32)

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Christ as the Father and the Son: Another Look

(Mosiah 15:1-5)

God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people.

And because he dwelleth in flesh
he shall be called the Son of God,
 and having subjected the flesh *to the will of the Father,*

being *the Father* and the Son—

The Father, because he was conceived by the power of God;
and the Son, because of the flesh;

thus becoming the Father and Son—

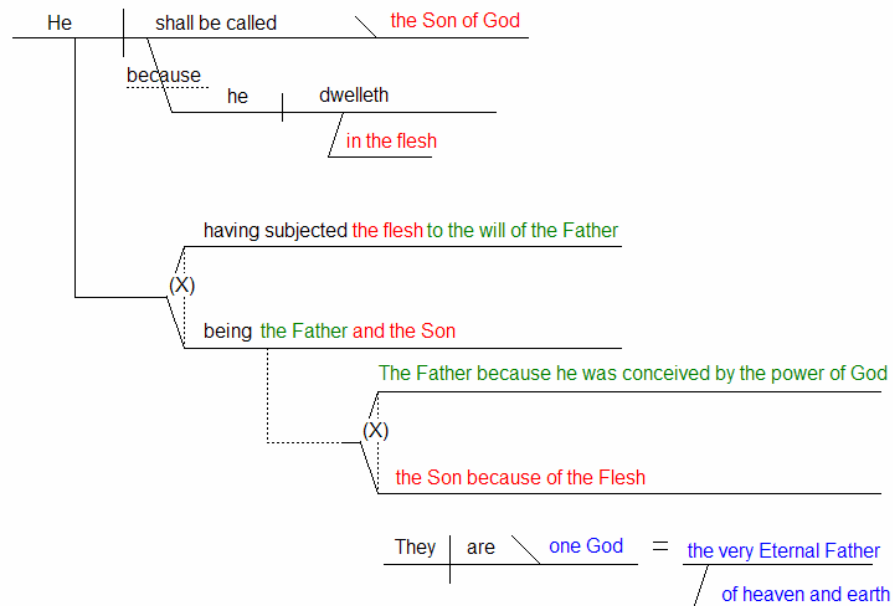
And they are one God, yea, the very Eternal Father of
 heaven and of earth.

And **thus the flesh**

becoming subject to **the Spirit,**
 or **the Son to the Father,**
 being one God,

suffereth temptation,
 and yieldeth not to the temptation,
 but suffereth himself to be mocked,
 and scourged, and cast out, and disowned by his people.

Mosiah 15:3-5 for diagram-lovers!



Because of the flesh . . .

- Could Abinadi be saying that Jesus Christ—the premortal and divine Jehovah before his birth and the man Jesus after—was himself one God?
 - **The Father, *because he was conceived by the power of God***
 - As the only begotten of God the Father, Jesus shared in the same divine nature and power
 - **The Son, *because of the flesh***
 - As the son of Mary, he experienced mortality and was in a lesser state
 - **The flesh becoming subject to the Spirit (or the Son to the Father) made them one God**
- Compare Mosiah 15:1-5 with 3 Nephi 1:14
 - “Behold, I come unto my own, to fulfil all things which I have made known unto the children of men from the foundation of the world, and to do the will, both of the Father and of the Son—of *the Father because of me*, and of *the Son because of my flesh*. And behold, the time is at hand, and this night shall the sign be given.” (1:14)
 - Here a good interpretation of “the Father because of me” seems to be that *Christ is the same as the Father because he has submitted fully and completely to the Father’s will*

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Further Insight from D&C 93:1–5

- “Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am; And that I am the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world . . .
- “And that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and the Father and I are one—The Father because he gave me of his fulness, and the Son because I was in the world and made flesh my tabernacle, and dwelt among the sons of men. I was in the world and received of my Father, and the works of him were plainly manifest.”
 - A good argument for the unity of God the Father and Jesus the Son along the lines of John 17

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Purpose of the Son Becoming Flesh

- “Yea, even so he shall be led, crucified, and slain, **the flesh becoming subject even unto death, the will of the Son being swallowed up in the will of the Father. And thus God breaketh the bands of death, having gained the victory over death . . .**” (15:7–8a)
- “. . . *giving the Son power to make intercession for the children of men—Having ascended into heaven, having the bowels of mercy; being filled with compassion towards the children of men; standing betwixt them and justice; having broken the bands of death, taken upon himself their iniquity and their transgressions, having redeemed them, and satisfied the demands of justice.*” (15:8b–9)

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“He Shall See His Seed . . .”

“And now I say unto you, **who shall declare his generation?** Behold, I say unto you, that when his soul has been made an offering for sin he shall see his seed. And now what say ye? **And who shall be his seed?**” (15:10)

- “. . . **whosoever has heard the words of the prophets**, yea, all the holy prophets who have prophesied concerning the coming of the Lord—I say unto you, that **all those who have hearkened unto their words, and believed that the Lord would redeem his people, and have looked forward to that day for a remission of their sins, I say unto you, that these are his seed, or they are the heirs of the kingdom of God.** *For these are they whose sins he has borne; these are they for whom he has died, to redeem them from their transgressions.* And now, are they not his seed?” (15:11-12)
- “And now, **the resurrection of all the prophets, and all those that have believed in their words, or all those that have kept the commandments of God, shall come forth in the first resurrection; therefore, they are the first resurrection. They are raised to dwell with God who has redeemed them; thus they have eternal life through Christ, who has broken the bands of death.**” (15:22-24)

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Results of Abinadi's Teaching (17:1-20)

- Alma¹ is persuaded (17:1-4)
 - Converted, Alma tries to intercede for Abdinadi, and is driven out by the priests of Noah
 - “And he being concealed for many days did write all the words which Abinadi had spoken.” (17:4b)
 - “Alma, who had fled from the servants of king Noah, repented of his sins and iniquities, and went about privately among the people, and began to teach the words of Abinadi—” (18:1)
- Abinadi is executed (17:5-20)
 - Dying prophecy concerning the priests of Noah (17:15; fulfilled Alma 25:7-12)