Lesson 18
Mosiah 12–17

Mosiah 12

**Verse 1:** Why has Abinadi come in disguise if he is going to tell them who he is immediately? Someone reading the Book of Mormon for the first time, not knowing what is coming up, might chuckle at the scene described here. What’s going on? What does this verse show us about Abinadi?

**Verse 2:** Being smitten on the cheek seems pretty mild. We hear something like: “Thus saith the Lord, because you have been so iniquitous, you’re going to be slapped on the face.” The oddity of this is heightened by the fact that the other consequences are so stark: you will be driven by men and killed; you will be eaten by vultures, dogs, and wild beasts. Can you think of any explanation for this oddity?

**Verse 8:** Abinadi gives us another of the Book of Mormon’s purposes. Why is it important in the latter days for us to know of the wickedness of Noah’s people?

**Verses 10–12:** Why do the people embellish Abinadi’s prophecies against Noah? Why do they change the object of his prophecy from the people as a whole to Noah specifically? Were we in a literature class, we might talk about the characterization occurring in this speech. How does
the writer characterize these people? Why does he give us this characterization?

**Verses 13–14:** Notice how the people seem to admit they have been included in the prophecy by including themselves in their excusing.

**Verse 15:** Why would a group feel it necessary to tell their leader, “We are strong, we shall not come into bondage”? Does their need to bolster their confidence say something about them?

**Verse 16:** The people tell Noah to do what he thinks is good. Are they afraid to do it themselves? Why?

**Verse 17:** Notice that Noah isn’t willing to decide on his own what would be good to do with Abinadi. Do you sense fear on Noah’s part?

**Verse 19:** The priests question Abinadi to see if they can cross him, hoping to find an accusation against him. Why do they need to do that? The people took him and turned him over to Noah to do with Abinadi as he pleased. Now Noah’s priests are looking for something to charge him with. What’s going on?

**Verses 21–24:** How ironic that they should ask him about a scripture concerning prophets and the heralding of God’s kingdom on earth. Why do you think they asked him about this particular scripture?

**Verse 25:** Abinadi has claimed to be a prophet, and they have asked him to explain the words of another, rather difficult prophet. That seems quite a natural thing to do; why does Abinadi condemn them for it?
Verses 26–27: Look carefully at what Abinadi says here:

1. If you have understood these things, you haven’t taught them.
2. So you have perverted the way of the Lord.
3. You haven’t applied your hearts to understanding.
4. So what have you taught?

What’s the connection between 1 and 2, especially given that he says they haven’t applied their hearts to understanding? How do 1 and 2 relate to 3 and 4? We would usually speak of applying our minds to understanding. What does it mean to apply our hearts to it?

Verses 29–37: Here Abinadi shows that they’ve not kept the law of Moses themselves, and neither have they taught it to the people. How is that related to what he said in verse 26 and 27?

Mosiah 13

Verse 1: Do you think this verse shows King Noah to be fearful? Why or why not?

Verse 4: Notice how the parallel grammatical structure creates an “equation” between “the truth” and “the word of God,” and between the people’s anger and Noah’s judgment that Abinadi is mad.

Verse 10: Types and shadows aren’t necessarily the same thing. Though the terms aren’t used with technical consistency, the type seems usually to be the “original” that the
shadow imitates. (Think of a piece of type that leaves an impression, a shadow.) Of what is Abinadi’s fate a type? In other words, something in the future imitates his fate. What is it? Of what is it a shadow? In other words, his fate imitates something that has passed. What?

Verse 11: Why does Abinadi read the scriptures to them? What has that to do with the scriptures not being written in their hearts?

Verse 28: Why doesn’t salvation come by the law alone?

Verse 29: If a stiff-necked people require a strict law, what would a humble, celestial people require?

When he says they are quick to do iniquity and slow to remember the Lord, does he say anything about why a strict law is required?

Verse 30: The law was given, with its performances and ordinances, to make them remember the Lord. What might that say about our own law?

What does it mean to remember the Lord?

Verse 31: Of what are the performances of the Mosaic law types (patterns)? How are they such types?

Verses 32–35: Here Abinadi gives at least some of the answer to the question just above; he tells them what the law of Moses is a pattern of. But how is it a pattern for the coming of the Savior? How is it a pattern of the redemption? How is it a pattern for Christ’s incarnation? How is it a pattern for the resurrection and for the oppression and affliction of Christ? To understand the importance of Abinadi’s message to Noah’s priests (and its ability to influence
Alma), think of specific ways in which the law of Moses gave the patterns for these things.

**Mosiah 14**

Abinadi has been telling Noah and his court how the law of Moses is a type of Christ. He concluded that discussion by foretelling Christ’s incarnation, his resurrection, and his persecution. How does this quotation of Isaiah 53 expand on those themes? Is it significant that he quotes a section from Isaiah that follows just after the section they asked him to explain (Mosiah 12:21–24)? This prophecy gives many details of Christ’s life, details testified to by the Gospels. Why would such detail have been important to the people of Isaiah’s day? To Noah’s people?

**Verse 1:** The parallel grammar compares those who believe to those to whom the Lord’s arm (his power) has been revealed. How is this so?

**Verse 2:** Why does Isaiah compare Christ to a newly sprouted plant? To a plant sprouted from dry ground? What things might the dry ground indicate? The image may be one of dry desert growth—scrub brush and sage. Why might the Savior be compared to scrub brush?

Why does Isaiah say that Christ isn’t someone we will find attractive? Notice that it isn’t the world who won’t find him attractive; it is we who will not.

**Verse 3:** In Isaiah, the word translated “grief” in this and the next verse can also be translated “disease.” Why is it important for us to know that Jesus was despised and rejected,
that he felt sorrow and was acquainted with grief or disease? Might this follow up on Abinadi’s earlier point, that what happens to him is a type and shadow of things to come?

Sometimes we try to answer the question “Why is there suffering?” but we rarely come up with very satisfying answers. Notice, however, that the scriptures don’t even ask the question. Instead, as here, they point to Christ, showing that he too suffered, seeming to suggest that if he did we should expect to. (See also Romans 8:17–18, where Paul suggests that those who become the children of Christ must suffer as he did.) How do we square such an approach with our desire to account for suffering?

**Verse 4–7:** Much of these verses is deeply ironic: The Savior bears our diseases and sorrows, but we count him as one whom God has afflicted. Because we sinned, he was punished; because he suffered, we are healed. Though we have all gone astray, he is punished. What is the point of that irony?

In verse 7, in addition to the obvious reference to his appearance before Pilate, what might it mean that he didn’t open his mouth?

In verse 6 we are compared to sheep. In verse 7, the Savior is. But our comparison is negative, and Christ’s is positive. What might the use of sheep in both comparisons indicate?

**Verse 8:** Why does Isaiah tell us that Jesus was taken from prison? Why does Abinadi tell the Nephites? (One translation of this sentence in Isaiah says, “He was taken away by arrest and by trial”; another says, “He was taken away by perverted judgment.”)
What does the clause “who shall declare his generation?” mean? Some have taken this to ask, “Who will convince [or explain him to] his generation?” What do you think?

**Verse 9:** Does it make a positive difference if we translate *because* as “although”?

**Verse 10:** By making himself an offering for sin, the Savior will see his children. Can you explain straightforwardly what this means? What does it mean about becoming a child of God?

This is an important point of focus for Abinadi in chapter 15. With what other scriptures can you connect it? Mosiah 5:7? 1 John 3:2? Others?

**Verse 11:** Another translation of the beginning of this verse in Isaiah is “By his suffering he shall see joy.” Why is that teaching important to us?

What does it mean to say that he will justify many “by his knowledge”? What knowledge does this refer to? Do you think it means knowledge of the factual kind or something more like “acquaintance”? Many languages make this distinction. If you were translating this verse into one of those languages, which way would you translate it?

**Verse 12:** What does it mean to say he will get a portion with the great and will divide the spoil with the strong?

**Mosiah 15**

What does the sermon that follows have to do with the Isaiah passage that Abinadi has just read to them?
**Verses 2–5:** Why does Abinadi give them this explanation of the relation of the Father and the Son?

These verses are fairly difficult. Can you take them apart to see what is being said? For example, it is fairly clear why dwelling in the flesh makes Jesus the Son. But why does subjecting his flesh to the will of the Father make him both Father and Son? (Mosiah 5 may be helpful here.)

More difficult: why does being conceived by the power of God make him the *Father*? And why are they the Eternal Father?

**Verses 5–10:** Why does Abinadi give this overview of the quotation from Isaiah? Which things does he focus on? Why those?

**Verse 11:** Notice the progression: (1) If you’ve heard the words of the prophets, then (2) if you’ve hearkened to the words of the prophets and believed that Christ will redeem his people and you’ve looked forward to a remission of your sins, then (3) you are Christ’s seed. How does what Abinadi says here compare to what Benjamin said in chapter 4? Similarities? Differences?

**Verse 14:** Notice that Abinadi returns to the scripture they asked him to explain. Why does he do so now?

**Verses 15–18:** What does the image of beautiful feet suggest? Why is it repeated? What changes occur from one repetition to the next? Are those changes relevant?

**Verse 19:** In what senses would all have to perish if it weren’t for the redemption that Christ brings?
Verses 21–25: Compare this description of the first resurrection to that in the Doctrine and Covenants (e.g., sections 63 and 76). What are the similarities? What do you make of the differences?

Verse 26: To whom is Abinadi speaking when he says “ye ought to tremble”?

Verse 27: The end of this verse seems to identify the Lord with justice: he can’t deny himself; he can’t deny the claim of justice. Why is it that he would deny himself if he gave salvation to those who willfully rebelled against his commandments? (And haven’t any of us who have been given the commandments, and ever disobeyed them, willfully rebelled?)

Verses 28–31: What is Abinadi prophesying?

Mosiah 16

Verses 1–5: Notice how Abinadi has been alternating between a description of those who rebel and a description of those who are saved. Here he focuses on those who rebel. Why do you think he alternates in this way? Why not discuss one completely first and then the other?

Verses 6–8: Why is the message of the resurrection such an important part of Abinadi’s message to Noah’s people?

Verse 12: How does this verse describe the situation of Abinadi’s audience?
Mosiah 17

Verses 5–6: Are Abinadi’s three days in prison a shadow of Christ’s death?

Verse 7: Noah was willing to kill Alma immediately (verse 3), but it takes him and his priests three days to come up with a pretext for killing Abinadi. What do you make of that difference?

Verse 8: One of the most common accusations made against prophets is blasphemy, the substance of the accusation made here against Abinadi. Why do you think that is so?

Verse 9: Notice that Abinadi may have known from the beginning that this would happen.

Verses 11–12: We often think of Noah as a powerful ruler, but here we see him as a “wimp.” It becomes clear here that he hasn’t ever really been in charge. The priests rule through him: The original accusation was that of blasphemy, but when Abinadi answered that with his testimony, Noah was ready to drop everything. Then the priests charge Abinadi with speaking evil of the king—the original charge they made against him (12:10–14). That charge makes Noah mad once again, and he has Abinadi executed. There can be little doubt that the priests know how to manipulate Noah for their own purposes.

Verse 15: Of what is Abinadi prophesying in this verse?

Verses 16–17: How does this relate to Abinadi’s quotation of Isaiah 53?
**Verses 18–19:** In what ways is Abinadi’s death a type of Noah’s and the priests’ future? Is it a type of the final future of those who rebel against God?

**Verse 20:** In what sense wouldn’t Abinadi deny the commandments? He wouldn’t deny his testimony or the truthfulness of the prophecies, but what does it mean to say that he wouldn’t deny the commandments?