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## Chapter 13: Book of Mosiah

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## Chapter 13: Book of Mosiah

### Mosiah Chapter I (1–3)

All evidence points to the Nephite continuation of Nephi’s original mandate for the large plates. They were to record the wars and contentions of the people (1 Nephi 9:4, 19:4). It is therefore unsurprising that Mormon tells us in the first extant sentence that there was no more contention (Mosiah 1:1). However, where a modern reader might think that was the point of writing, for Mormon this is a filler statement indicating nothing was happening (of interest to Mormon). Perhaps the best evidence of Mormon’s lack of interest in times of no contentions comes in the aftermath of the Savior’s visit in 4 Nephi.

Mormon’s least explicated time comes precisely in the greatest time of peace and of the highest implementation of Christ’s gospel. Marilyn Arnold expresses sentiments no doubt felt more universally: “A fuller account would have been especially gratifying because, except for a little trouble at the end, the first two centuries of this period were years of matchless tranquility initiated by the Savior’s coming. Given the non-tranquil character of 200 years of American history, or almost any country’s history, unruffled peace for two centuries seems nothing short of miraculous.”<sup>323</sup> Right where we might expect details, Mormon demonstrates no interest.

Thus, the extant beginning of the book of Mosiah serves to highlight what is missing. The first extant sentence — “And now there was no more contention in all the land of Zarahemla, among all the people who belonged to king Benjamin, so that king Benjamin had continual peace all the remainder of his days” (Mosiah 1:1) — is a conclusion, not a beginning.<sup>324</sup> Compare this sentence to the opening sentence of Alma

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323. Marilyn Arnold, *Sweet is the Word: Reflections on the Book of Mormon — Its Narrative, Teachings & People*, (American Fork, UT: Covenant Communications, 1996), 289.

324. Washburn, *The Contents, Structure and Authorship of the Book of Mormon*, 34, notes that the sentence begins with *and*, indicating that it was a continuation

chapter II (4): “Now it came to pass in the sixth year of the reign of the judges over the people of Nephi, there were no contentions nor wars in the land of Zarahemla” (Alma 4:1). The difference is the functional use of “now it came to pass” and “and now.” *And now* is used for a continuation of events, and “now it came to pass” opens new themes. The presence of *and now* serves to reinforce the missing beginning of the book that was lost with the book of Lehi on the 116 manuscript pages because “and now” should be linking the new text to the previous.

Mosiah chapter I will end with *Amen* (at the end of our Mosiah 3:27). In between we have the first section of Benjamin’s speech with a preface where Benjamin is speaking to his sons. Well has John W. Welch noted that “As a work of sacred literature and masterful oratory, Benjamin’s speech deserves deep respect.”<sup>325</sup> Welch and Stephen D. Ricks note that “Mormon may well have copied the text directly from Benjamin’s original.”<sup>326</sup> If by “original” Welch and Ricks mean the copy included on the official plates of Nephi, then that is certainly correct — Mormon copied the speech rather than restating it.

The question for the present inquiry is why this speech was on the large plates. As records of the wars and contentions, this speech would be an unusual entry. However, as an act of the King, it is perfectly suited to the material to be included on the large plates. That tells us why the speech itself was recorded, and its quality and spiritual impact testify to Mormon’s choice to include it. What is the more interesting question is why Mormon included what we have from Mosiah 1:2–17. These verses were spoken to King Benjamin’s sons, not to the people. At least on the surface, a father’s instructions to his sons would not appear to be a proper subject for the affairs of the Nephite kingdom. In this case, however, the entire discussion with his sons is absolutely political and serves to set the stage for the political significance of a speech.

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rather than a beginning.

325. John W. Welch, “Benjamin’s Speech: A Masterful Oration,” in *King Benjamin’s Speech: “That Ye May Learn Wisdom,”* eds. John W. Welch and Stephen D. Ricks (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1998), 55.

326. John W. Welch and Stephen D. Ricks, “Introduction,” in *King Benjamin’s Speech: “That Ye May Learn Wisdom,”* ix. They also suggest that it might have been copied from “one of the copies that Benjamin caused to be ‘written and sent forth among those who were not under the sound of his voice,’ (Mosiah 2:8).” That suggestion is unlikely, as part of what is recorded is an extemporaneous continuation of the planned speech. Only the planned speech could have had copies prepared in advance, and the presence of the rest of the material tells us this speech was recorded after the fact.

Because the great civil conflict in Zarahemla was lost with the early part of the book of Mosiah and is known from the end of Omni and the end of Words of Mormon, it is easy to separate the story of Benjamin's speech from the political upheaval that precipitated the event. There had been a civil war. The uneasy combination of the people of Nephi with the people of Zarahemla exploded into violence. The statement that "there was no more contention in all the land of Zarahemla" (Mosiah 1:1) is the concluding statement of the missing episode of civil war; its very meaning was that there *had been* contention if there was, at this point, *no more* contention. It is an indication that the war ended and there was sufficient peace and recovery in the land that Benjamin could move to this next issue.

When the Nephites merged with the people of Zarahemla, the Nephite political claims gained ascendance. Since the Nephites wrote the record, and we read the Book of Mormon as a religious text more often than as a history, we miss how the Nephites became dominant politically in a city that already had established rulers. Benjamin reiterates those reasons for his sons prior to giving the important political speech.

In Mosiah 1:2, Benjamin notes their connection to an ancient sacred location in the Old World. In verse 3, he notes that they brought the brass plates with them. Thus they have a tangible connection to the sacred, distant, location. This leads to:

I say unto you, my sons, were it not for these things, which have been kept and preserved by the hand of God, that we might read and understand of his mysteries, and have his commandments always before our eyes, that even our fathers would have dwindled in unbelief, and we should have been like unto our brethren, the Lamanites, who know nothing concerning these things, or even do not believe them when they are taught them, because of the traditions of their fathers, which are not correct.

O my sons, I would that ye should remember that these sayings are true, and also that these records are true. And behold, also the plates of Nephi, which contain the records and the sayings of our fathers from the time they left Jerusalem until now, and they are true; and we can know of their surety because we have them before our eyes.

And now, my sons, I would that ye should remember to search them diligently, that ye may profit thereby; and I would that ye should keep the commandments of God, that ye may prosper

in the land according to the promises which the Lord made unto our fathers.

And many more things did king Benjamin teach his sons, which are not written in this book.

And it came to pass that after king Benjamin had made an end of teaching his sons, that he waxed old, and he saw that he must very soon go the way of all the earth; therefore, he thought it expedient that he should confer the kingdom upon one of his sons. (Mosiah 1:5–9)

Benjamin explains the importance of the plates as the foundation of Nephite civilization (contrasting them with the Lamanites — here without reiterating that many Zarahemlaites had defected to become Lamanites, see Words of Mormon 1:16). Benjamin testifies that the records are true (again reinforcing the connection to the ancient source of legitimacy). Then he ends with conferring the kingdom upon Mosiah<sub>2</sub>. The function of this section, and the reason Mormon included it, is to provide both the argument for legitimacy as well as provide the historical context for the naming of the people and coronation of Mosiah<sub>2</sub>.

Both the introduction and the speech itself was copied onto the large plates. Mormon copied from the large plates. This first chapter ended with the *Amen* that was the conclusion of the first part of Benjamin's speech.

### **Mosiah Chapter II (4)**

The end of chapter I (1–3) came at the end of the planned speech, though it is unclear whether or not Mormon understood (or even cared about) that distinction. The testificatory *Amen* closed the chapter. As with other chapters that end with a testificatory *Amen*, the story hadn't ended. At the beginning of chapter II (4), Mormon describes the impact of the planned portion of Benjamin's speech. After a narrative beginning, Mormon continues with the copied text from the large plates.

There is no *Amen* ending creating the close of this chapter. However, there is a natural break in the sermon when there was a large amount of intervening time. At the beginning of the next chapter we find: "And now, it came to pass that when king Benjamin had thus spoken to his people, he sent among them, desiring to know of his people if they believed the words which he had spoken unto them" (Mosiah 5:1). It is possible the text Mormon copied had an indication of this temporal break. No matter how it was accomplished, sending out servants on any type of interview (likely of groups rather than individuals) and the subsequent reporting

must have taken time. I suggest this chapter break reflects something on the large plates indicating either a chapter on the large plates, or at least the passage of time, which Mormon abbreviated in his description.

The chapter continues with more quoted material. This time, the chapter concludes with the testificatory *Amen*.

### **Mosiah Chapter III (5)**

Mosiah chapter III is the people's response and covenant made in response to Benjamin's declaration of the new people:

*And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters.*

*And under this head ye are made free, and there is no other head whereby ye can be made free. There is no other name given whereby salvation cometh; therefore, I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ, all you that have entered into the covenant with God that ye should be obedient unto the end of your lives.*

*And it shall come to pass that whosoever doeth this shall be found at the right hand of God, for he shall know the name by which he is called; for he shall be called by the name of Christ. (Mosiah 5:7–9)*

This was declared as one of the reasons for the assembly of the people: “And moreover, I shall give this people a name, that thereby they may be distinguished above all the people which the Lord God hath brought out of the land of Jerusalem; and this I do because they have been a diligent people in keeping the commandments of the Lord” (Mosiah 1:11).

Mormon, as a disciple of Christ (3 Nephi 5:13), would have been very attuned to this call to take upon oneself the name of Christ. Even though he had not yet written the words on the plates of the Book of Mormon, he had certainly read Christ's words when he appeared at Bountiful:

*Have they not read the scriptures, which say ye must take upon you the name of Christ, which is my name? For by this name shall ye be called at the last day;*

*And whoso taketh upon him my name, and endureth to the end, the same shall be saved at the last day. (3 Nephi 27:5–6)*

Mormon would have been sufficiently astute in his own cultural heritage to see the political ramifications of Benjamin's covenant, but the connection to the more religious meaning with which he was aware was unmistakable. It is probable that both the political and religious implications were behind his inclusion of King Benjamin's speech.

This chapter ends with a testificatory *Amen*.

### **Mosiah Chapter IV (6)**

Orson Pratt left this chapter unchanged. As an original chapter, it is surprisingly short. Pratt split the original Mosiah chapter I into three separate chapters. This chapter could not be much smaller, as it consists of only seven verses and just 307 words. Two things made this a short chapter. First, the content of the chapter is the narrative conclusion to chapter II (5), which was forced to end due to the *Amen*, but the historical aftermath remained to be described. That is what we find in this chapter.

This chapter ends with the death of Benjamin three years after the coronation of his son Mosiah<sub>2</sub>. The statements about Mosiah<sub>2</sub> are simply designed to indicate that he followed in his father's footsteps:

And it came to pass that king Mosiah did walk in the ways of the Lord, and did observe his judgments and his statutes, and did keep his commandments in all things whatsoever he commanded him.

And king Mosiah did cause his people that they should till the earth. And he also, himself, did till the earth, that thereby he might not become burdensome to his people, that he might do according to that which his father had done in all things. (Mosiah 6:6–7)

This is not the beginning of Mosiah<sub>2</sub>'s story but rather the ending of his father's story. The concluding sentence highlights the nature of Mosiah 1:1 as a conclusion rather than a beginning. Mormon writes: "And there was no contention among all his people for the space of three years" (Mosiah 6:7).

Although the "no contention" phrase is the ending of a section, as we saw with our extant beginning of the book of Mosiah, it needn't create a chapter ending. In this case, I suggest that what happened is that Mormon wrote this much and then took a break from writing. This temporal break created by default a chapter ending (as seen in the discussion of the next chapter).

### **Mosiah Chapter V (7–8)**

Mormon opens with: "And now, it came to pass that after king Mosiah had had continual peace for the space of three years" (Mosiah 7:1). The phrase

“continual peace” is parallel to “no contentions” as a filler indicating nothing happened that Mormon cared to write about. The similarity of the beginning of this chapter to the end of the previous chapter suggests repetitive resumption — but without any intervening text to require the return. I suggest this is a case where the intervening material was time rather than text. Mormon stopped writing, and when he picked up the stylus again, he began a new chapter. We don’t know what marked a chapter, but there was certainly an ending to the events associated with Benjamin, and when Mormon began to write again, he understood the previous chapters had finished Benjamin’s story, and he created a new chapter to discuss Mosiah (though he is quite willing to finish a previous chapter at the beginning of a new chapter in other circumstances).

The rest of chapter V (7–8) tells of Ammon’s expedition to find those who had left Zarahemla to return to the land of Nephi. J. N. Washburn explains this unexpected turn in Mormon’s narrative: “Chapters 7 and 8 bring the first break in the continuity and lead into the most complicated and difficult part of the whole *Book of Mormon*. Here the story of the Nephites in Zarahemla is suddenly dropped — almost before it is well begun — for no good reason at all that is apparent, that we might follow, though briefly, an expedition up to the land of Nephi. This brings us to another story, but at the *end* rather than the beginning. To put it another way, the story of Zeniff begins with the end.”<sup>327</sup>

Mormon has been using the large plates of Nephi as his source. Mosiah’s decision to send Ammon and his brethren to the land of Lehi-Nephi was probably recorded on the plates, since it was an act of a king. As Mormon is writing, he knows where his text is going, and there are many things in later Nephite history that depend upon understanding the separation and reunification of the people who had gone to Lehi-Nephi. He places it in its proper temporal context as he found it on the large plates.

After the reunification of the people, the record of Ammon was probably copied onto the large plates (there is no indication that Mormon changes his source for this story). Therefore, Mormon skips to an account written on the plates long after the events but which would have been the next large-plate entry about those who left for Lehi-Nephi.

That hypothesis explains why Mormon might include the story of Ammon meeting Limhi, but it doesn’t explain why Mormon repeated that story in Mosiah 25:25–28 when he was taking his text from the

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327. Washburn, *The Contents, Structure and Authorship of the Book of Mormon*, 35.



Record of Zeniff. It also does not tell us why Mormon's initial discussion told enough of the story to discuss the finding of the plates of Ether and the ruins of the Jaredites. This is especially true since that information is part of what he knew he would describe later.

Everything we have from Mormon suggests that he did not write without a reason. Discussing the descendants of Zeniff was essential because without that story, Mormon would have a more difficult time explaining Alma<sub>1</sub> and the import of Alma<sub>2</sub>'s conversion. What we need is a hypothesis that explains the intentional duplication of the stories of the finding of the plates of Ether and the discussion about finding one who might translate. That this theme is critical to Mormon's story is testified by the presence in Mosiah 28:10–18, when Mormon discusses Mosiah's translating the plates which had been found.<sup>328</sup> I will suggest a possible reason in the discussion of chapter XII (28–28:19).

### **Mosiah Chapter VI (9–10) [Has Header]**

Mormon includes a synoptic header to declare the different source for this chapter. It is the first time we see a separate record used as a source for Mormon's story. Mosiah chapter VI (9–10) is written in the first person. All indications are that Mormon included this chapter as a quotation from Zeniff's holographic record. The header is the only introduction we get to this new record, and by beginning with a quoted chapter, Mormon provides no linking context between what he had written and what he is now entering on the plates.

The abrupt transition from chapter V to VI is unique in Mormon's work. Later, when Mormon shifts from the large plates to Alma<sub>2</sub>'s personal record (beginning in Alma 5), the transition is much smoother. When Mormon declares that he is taking much of 3 Nephi from a "shorter but true account" (3 Nephi 5:9–10), there is a much smoother transition. In this case, it isn't only that the transition is abrupt, it is essentially absent. Mormon ended chapter V and began chapter VI, which came from a different record with a different person speaking. Only the header: "The Record of Zeniff — An account of his people, from the time they left the land of Zarahemla until the time that they were delivered out of the hands of the Lamanites," lets the reader know that something has changed. I suggest that the header provides the narrative shift. I have noted that these headers function as narration,

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328. Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader's Guide*, 227 and 319n14, recognizes the repetition is "intriguing" but offers no suggestion to understand it.

opening chapters with narration even when our first verse is a quotation (see “Mormon Beginning Chapters”).

Mormon gives us no hint as to why he copied Zeniff’s record but abridged everything thereafter. Mormon’s typical reason for copying is to include an important doctrinal sermon, but we don’t see that in Zeniff’s record. I hypothesize that there were at least two reasons for including the whole record. The first is that the brevity of the account suggests the abridgment might not have been significantly shorter. Second, Zeniff’s story reinforces the Lord’s promises relative to the land, something Mormon highlights throughout his text. The promise was that if the Nephites would be righteous, they would prosper, and their enemies would not conquer them. In the case of Zeniff, Nephites have returned to a land where they are surrounded by the ancestral enemy, yet they were able to prosper. Perhaps an important line from Zeniff’s record highlights this point:

And it came to pass that we did go up to battle against the Lamanites; and I, even I, in my old age, did go up to battle against the Lamanites. And it came to pass that we did go up in the strength of the Lord to battle.

Now, the Lamanites knew nothing concerning the Lord, nor the strength of the Lord, therefore they depended upon their own strength. Yet they were a strong people, as to the strength of men. (Mosiah 10:10–11)

Also useful is Zeniff’s explanation of the reason for the Lamanite enmity. By the time Mormon copied this chapter, he had found — and probably read — the small plates of Nephi (Words of Mormon 1:3). Nephi’s text proclaimed the Nephite right to rule (it is probable that this was also present on the large plates, and Mormon might also have read it there). Thus, the explanation for why the Lamanites were enemies would continue to be relevant to Mormon’s intended audience. Therefore, the following verses in Zeniff’s writing could have been another reason for copying the record in its entirety:

They were a wild, and ferocious, and a blood-thirsty people, believing in the tradition of their fathers, which is this — Believing that they were driven out of the land of Jerusalem because of the iniquities of their fathers, and that they were wronged in the wilderness by their brethren, and they were also wronged while crossing the sea;

And again, that they were wronged while in the land of their first inheritance, after they had crossed the sea, and

all this because that Nephi was more faithful in keeping the commandments of the Lord — therefore he was favored of the Lord, for the Lord heard his prayers and answered them, and he took the lead of their journey in the wilderness.

And his brethren were wroth with him because they understood not the dealings of the Lord; they were also wroth with him upon the waters because they hardened their hearts against the Lord.

And again, they were wroth with him when they had arrived in the promised land, because they said that he had taken the ruling of the people out of their hands; and they sought to kill him.

And again, they were wroth with him because he departed into the wilderness as the Lord had commanded him, and took the records which were engraven on the plates of brass, for they said that he robbed them.

And thus they have taught their children that they should hate them, and that they should murder them, and that they should rob and plunder them, and do all they could to destroy them; therefore they have an eternal hatred towards the children of Nephi. (Mosiah 10:12–17)

Those verses provide a succinct summary of an argument Nephi made over the course of his entire first book, and at least the first chapters of his second.

The chapter ends for two reasons. Perhaps the more important was the final *Amen*, but it also marks the end of Zeniff’s holographic entry. Mormon had been copying from Zeniff’s record but returns to the more standard method of interacting with a source in the next chapter.

### **Mosiah Chapter VII (11:1–13:14)**

Mosiah chapter VII is taken from the Record of Zeniff, but it is Mormon’s abridgment of that record rather than a copy. As with other Nephite records, the name of the record is the dynastic name, so the fact that this chapter begins with Noah as the new king did not require a change in the record name. As Zeniff’s son, Noah carried on the dynasty.

As the official record of the dynasty, one must suppose the original record was very supportive of Noah, whereas Mormon’s abridgement clearly is not. Apart from what Mormon might have copied, Mormon’s desire to paint Noah in an unfavorable light must have differed from

what the official historian wrote — hence it was virtually necessary for Mormon to return to a narrative abridgment.

Mormon's representation of Noah is designed to portray him as leaving the true gospel. The witnesses to his apostasy are interesting and perhaps cautionary for modern readers. Noah is painted as apostate because he seeks after and achieves prosperity. The problem is not the prosperity, however, but the fact that it is achieved on the backs of his people. The Nephite ideal is egalitarianism, and Noah is the embodiment of social, cultural, and economic hierarchies.

As an apostate (and what we may learn of his religion suggests it is the same or similar to the order of Nehors<sup>329</sup>), it is unsurprising that the Lord would send an Old World-style prophet to call him to repentance. Mormon includes the story of Abinadi to provide the origin story for Alma<sub>1</sub>. It also pleased him that Abinadi would preach of the Messiah, and so Abinadi's defense is copied rather than summarized. The question is from where was the defense copied?

A possible complication for understanding the source is the statement in Mosiah 17:4 "But he [Alma<sub>1</sub>] fled from before them and hid himself that they found him not. And he being concealed for many days did write all the words which Abinadi had spoken" (Mosiah 17:4). With the information that Alma<sub>1</sub> had written the words of Abinadi, it is tempting to suggest that we are seeing Alma<sub>1</sub>'s copy here. However, as an official court of the king, it fits within the acts of the king that might be recorded, so the dialogue and Abinadi's speech was probably captured in the record. This perspective makes it easier to understand how we have the record of what Abinadi said after Alma<sub>1</sub> had already fled the court. Where there is narration, that comes from Mormon.

The chapter ending is obscured in modern editions. It comes in the middle of Abinadi's sermon, as noted in the section on Mormon's chapter endings. In this case, the chapter ends at the end of the quotation from scripture (meaning brass-plate scriptures for the Nephites). Even though there was no break in Abinadi's explanation, the ending of the quotation triggered a chapter break. Mormon is copying at this point, so it is unclear whether Mormon added the chapter break or copied it. As noted in the section on chapter endings, the similar ending after a quotation of scripture in 3 Nephi most likely occurred because it was in the original, and Mormon simply copied it. Based on that parallel, I suggest this chapter break was also in the original from which Mormon was copying, and he similarly copied the break as well as the text.

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329. Gardner, *Second Witness*, 4:41–51.

It must be noted, however, that Abinadi will cite Isaiah in the next chapter, and that quotation did not create a chapter break. I suggest this reinforces the idea that this chapter ending was copied, and we do not have enough information about the way the Record of Zeniff was created to surmise how those scribes chose to end chapters.

### **Mosiah Chapter VIII (13:15–16:15)**

It follows no modern logic that there should be an interruption of a chapter break during a single discourse given by one person. Even when we have chapter breaks during King Benjamin's speech, they were chapter breaks that corresponded to a break in the discourse itself — either representing a timing break, of the temporary halt of the testificatory *Amen*. In this case, however, removing the chapter break conceals nothing save for the fact of the original break; it is an anomaly.

In this chapter, Mormon continues Abinadi's discourse wherein he cites Isaiah 53 in its entirety. Although it is entered as a separate chapter in our modern editions to make the correlation to Isaiah 53 more apparent, in the original it comes as part of the discourse. As noted previously, Mormon is copying this text, and the different way the decalogue and this quotation from Isaiah are treated suggest that the chapter breaks are also being copied. In Mormon's chapters, this one ends with Abinadi's testificatory *Amen*.

### **Mosiah Chapter IX (17–21)**

Mormon shifts from copying to narrating. Nevertheless, the source is still the record of Zeniff. As the record of the deeds of the kings, the results of the court proceedings are a plausible inclusion in the record. Early in the chapter (Mosiah 17:2–3), we are introduced to Alma<sub>1</sub>. Although Alma<sub>1</sub>'s expulsion from the court is reasonably recorded on the official record, Mormon is narrating rather than copying, so the introduction of Alma<sub>1</sub> is very sympathetic where that treatment would certainly not have been the perspective of the official Record of Zeniff under Noah.

This chapter covers the sentencing of Abinadi and the cursing of Noah. It ends with the historical events that led to the bondage of Limhi's people to the Lamanites, the story of sending a party to find Zarahemla (but instead found Jaredite remains and the plates of Ether), and the arrival of Ammon and his brethren.

This is a packed chapter and one difficult to analyze. The Record of Zeniff is the reasonable source for everything except a small section not set off from the rest of the chapter in the original but does constitute the separate chapter Mosiah 18 in our modern edition. Orson Pratt

recognized it as a separate subject. That section deals with Alma<sub>1</sub>'s small group in the wilderness.

As the section on Abinadi concludes with his dying statements and Mormon's narrative conclusion, we get a quick change that returns the narrative to the story of Alma<sub>1</sub>, who was introduced earlier: "And now, it came to pass that 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" (Mosiah 18:1). This section proceeds to discuss what Alma<sub>1</sub> taught, based upon Abinadi's teachings, though certainly layered upon his own foundation of study of scripture.

There is a textual transition away from Alma<sub>1</sub>'s people and refocusing on the people of Noah (and later Limhi): "And it came to pass that the army of the king returned, having searched in vain for the people of the Lord" (Mosiah 19:1). Just a few sentences earlier (Mosiah 18:33), Mormon had written: "And now the king said that Alma was stirring up the people to rebellion against him; therefore he sent his army to destroy them." The initial sentence was told from the perspective of the people of Alma<sub>1</sub>. The return of the army is told from the perspective of the people of Noah, and the physical returning is mirrored by the narrative returning.

The textual question is where the information about Alma<sub>1</sub>'s people came from. It could not have come from the Record of Zeniff, although everything else in this chapter could have (and most likely did). The only possibility is the record of Alma<sub>1</sub>. Mormon formally introduces that source with a header before chapter XI (23–27). I think the inserted section in the current chapter was taken from that record, and evidence for that source can be seen in the text itself.

At the end of the section in chapter IX (17–21), Mormon writes:

And it came to pass that Alma and the people of the Lord were *apprised of the coming of the king's army*; therefore they took their tents and their families and departed into the wilderness.

And it came to pass that the army of the king returned, *having searched in vain* for the people of the Lord. (Mosiah 18:34–19:1)

When Mormon formally notes that he is taking information from a new source, he opens the text based on the new source with:

Now Alma, *having been warned of the Lord that the armies of king Noah would come upon them*, and having made it known to his people, therefore they gathered together their flocks, and took of their grain, and departed into the wilderness before the armies of king Noah.

And the Lord did strengthen them, that the people of king Noah could not overtake them to destroy them. (Mosiah 23:1–2)

I have highlighted the obvious parallels between these verses. This is a type of repetitive resumption that cuts against type. There is no intervening insertion. There is nothing about the material that follows this section (Mosiah 18) which suggests it was an unplanned insertion. On the contrary, it is critical to the story Mormon is telling.

Nevertheless, we have the very tight connection between a section that must have come from Alma<sub>1</sub>'s record, even though unattested, and the formal beginning of that record. I believe Mormon is signaling that he did take that information from the record he introduces in Mosiah 23. Mormon had the difficult task of telling stories that overlapped in time, and in this case, he pulls information from a separate record to insert it where it made sense in both the temporal and physical location of the story. When he returned to that separate record, it was at the later time and a different geography.

The last events of the chapter concern the arrival of Ammon and his brothers. This is information covered in chapter V (7–8). Most importantly, the story of the finding of the plates of Ether is recounted. Mormon takes this account from a separate source (the Record of Zeniff, where the previous version was from the plates of Nephi). He summarizes the information here without providing the dialogue from the previous instance. Nevertheless, knowing that he had already written it, he found it important to include again:

Now king Limhi had sent, previous to the coming of Ammon, a small number of men to search for the land of Zarahemla; but they could not find it, and they were lost in the wilderness.

Nevertheless, they did find a land which had been peopled; yea, a land which was covered with dry bones; yea, a land which had been peopled and which had been destroyed; and they, having supposed it to be the land of Zarahemla, returned to the land of Nephi, having arrived in the borders of the land not many days before the coming of Ammon.

And they brought a record with them, even a record of the people whose bones they had found; and it was engraven on plates of ore.

And now Limhi was again filled with joy on learning from the mouth of Ammon that king Mosiah had a gift from God,

whereby he could interpret such engravings; yea, and Ammon also did rejoice. (Mosiah 21:25–28)

The implications of this repetition will be discussed when they appear yet again at the end of chapter XII (28:1–19).

The end of the chapter is also unusual. There is no typical marker to indicate the reason for the chapter break. For comparison, I'll show the final sentence of this chapter against the first sentence of the next:

And now all the study of Ammon and his people, and king Limhi and his people, was to deliver themselves out of the hands of the Lamanites and from bondage. (Mosiah 21:36).

And now it came to pass that Ammon and king Limhi began to consult with the people how they should deliver themselves out of bondage; and even they did cause that all the people should gather themselves together; and this they did that they might have the voice of the people concerning the matter. (Mosiah 22:1)

The sentences are certainly not identical, but they provide much of the same information. Had there been intervening text, I would have suggested a case of repetitive resumption. There is no intervening material. Mormon has been using the record of Zeniff for most of this narrative. In the end of Chapter IX, he caught up to the events he had earlier discussed. I suggest that the chapter ends when Mormon ceases to use that record for his information.

### **Mosiah Chapter X (22)**

As noted for the end of chapter IX (17–21), there is a repetition of sentences. Rather than an insertion, I suggest that this represents the return to the use of the large plates as the source of his material. Mormon marks external sources when he uses them, but he does not make any indication when he returns to the large plates. This chapter is just such an unmarked return.

At the end of the chapter, they have successfully escaped from the Lamanites and returned to Zarahemla, where “Mosiah received them with joy; and he received their records, and also the records which had been found by the people of Limhi” (Mosiah 22:14). Note, however, the explicit mention of the plates of Ether: “the records which had been found by the people of Limhi.” Mormon is gently emphasizing the importance of these records.



## Mosiah Chapter XI (23–27) [Has Header]

Mormon's chapter header declares that he has changed his source from the Record of Zeniff to "an account of Alma and the people of the Lord." The confirmation that it was Alma<sub>1</sub> comes later in the chapter when the text focuses on his son, Alma<sub>2</sub>, and the sons of Mosiah. While some of chapter XI could have come from the large plates, it could also have been recorded on Alma<sub>1</sub>'s record. Mormon marks chapters when he begins working with a non-large-plate source, but he does not mark when he ends. In this case, our chapter 25 might have come from the large plates, but since Mormon didn't mark a return to Alma<sub>1</sub>'s record in chapter 26, it seems he used that personal record for the whole of it.

Orson Pratt divided this chapter into reasonable logical units. Chapters 23 and 24 record the events of Alma<sub>1</sub>'s people in the land of Helam, their being brought into bondage, and their escape to Zarahemla. Chapter 25 discusses Mosiah<sub>2</sub>'s reading of the records (Mosiah 25: 4–6) and his introduction to Alma<sub>1</sub>. Alma<sub>1</sub> was extremely influential in the development of both church and state in Zarahemla, and Mormon would have wanted to tell his story for those accomplishments alone. As he was also the father of the future chief judge, there is even more reason to make certain that Alma<sub>1</sub>'s story is part of the Mormon's overall plan.

Alma<sub>1</sub> is given the floor to speak. What he does is preach what he had learned from Abinadi. This includes a renewal of the concept of baptism (and perhaps its introduction as an entry rite into a *church*). Although Mormon is narrating and not quoting, it is more likely that this overt preaching was part of Alma<sub>1</sub>'s record rather than the large plates of Nephi. Most importantly, this chapter marks the beginning of churches in Zarahemla.

In chapter 26, Mormon introduces apostasy. He notes that:

Now it came to pass that there were many of the rising generation that could not understand the words of king Benjamin, being little children at the time he spake unto his people; and they did not believe the tradition of their fathers.

They did not believe what had been said concerning the resurrection of the dead, neither did they believe concerning the coming of Christ.

And now because of their unbelief they could not understand the word of God; and their hearts were hardened.

And they would not be baptized; neither would they join the church. And they were a separate people as to their faith, and

remained so ever after, even in their carnal and sinful state; for they would not call upon the Lord their God.

And now in the reign of Mosiah they were not half so numerous as the people of God; but because of the dissensions among the brethren they became more numerous.

For it came to pass that they did deceive many with their flattering words, who were in the church, and did cause them to commit many sins; therefore it became expedient that those who committed sin, that were in the church, should be admonished by the church. (Mosiah 26:1–6)

This large apostasy (in less than a generation) is used to set the stage for two things. The first is Alma<sub>1</sub>'s position in Zarahemla as well as before the Lord. The tight connection between religion and politics in the ancient world is manifest in Alma<sub>1</sub>'s problem. He is a judge ostensibly dealing with a religious issue — but a religious issue that had tremendous political implications. It could have been seen as treason rather than apostasy. The Lord answers him (Mosiah 26:14–32). The end result was the de facto separation of church and state in Zarahemla, a factor that would play into virtually all future contentions in the city (at least those Mormon elected to include).

The second reason for this introduction is to provide the context for the story of Alma<sub>2</sub> and the sons of Mosiah. Pratt separated that story into chapter 27. The original chapter ends with the conversion of the sons of Mosiah, who preach in the land of Zarahemla. This is Mormon's narration, and he concludes the chapter with: "And thus they were instruments in the hands of God in bringing many to the knowledge of the truth, yea, to the knowledge of their Redeemer. And how blessed are they! For they did publish peace; they did publish good tidings of good; and they did declare unto the people that the Lord reigneth" (Mosiah 27:36–37). This is Mormon's comment on the sons of Mosiah and was not on the plates. Perhaps because it was Mormon's interjection, Mormon ended the chapter. However, I suspect the real reason was that the more important story of the sons of Mosiah did not occur in the land of Zarahemla but in the land of Nephi. Mormon ends the chapter with the end of their preaching in the land of Zarahemla and prepares his readers for the next phase of the story in the next chapter.

## Mosiah Chapter XII (28:1–19)

Mormon does a reasonable job of announcing when he is departing from the large plates to a separate source. He consistently fails to note when he returns to the large plates from that separate source. This chapter is evidence of that lack of marking. There is no indication that there is a change, but we have left the story that could have been on Alma<sub>1</sub>'s record and have returned to material that makes most sense to have been on the official plates of Nephi. Although the previous chapter ended with a discussion of the sons of Mosiah, those actions paralleled Alma<sub>2</sub>, and their close connection is reason enough to see the Zarahemla preaching tour as having been reported on Alma<sub>1</sub>'s record.

The new discussion of the sons of Mosiah begins with their petition to the king to take a small number of companions and preach to the Lamanites in the land of Nephi. That is an act of the king, and may signal that Mormon is returning to the large plate record. After giving permission, Mormon notes that: “And they took their journey into the wilderness to go up to preach the word among the Lamanites; and I shall give an account of their proceedings hereafter” (Mosiah 28:9). Mormon sets up their departure in the correct time frame from the plates of Nephi but will provide their story as a flashback. This was necessary because Mormon couldn't tell the story until after they had returned and brought records of what had happened.

The next major event in Nephite history is the ending of the reign of the kings and instituting the reign of the judges. Mormon begins that story in Mosiah 28:10 “Now king Mosiah had no one to confer the kingdom upon, for there was not any of his sons who would accept of the kingdom.”

A part of the transfer of the kingdom was the transfer of the sacred relics. Mormon begins to tell that story, but the mention of the plates of Ether sidetracks him. Mosiah 28:11 serves as the point of departure for Mormon's aside about the plates. In most cases of repetitive resumption, Mormon returns in the same chapter. In this case, perhaps occasioned by his reference to his own writing task in his own time, the resumption occurred in the following chapter. Orson Pratt appears to have recognized that the return belonged with the departure text, so our modern editions have moved what was the first verse of the next chapter to be the last verse of the current chapter.

**Departure:** Therefore he took the records which were engraven on the *plates of brass*, and also *the plates of Nephi*, and all the things which he had kept and preserved according to the commandments of God, after having translated and

caused to be written the records which were on the *plates of gold which had been found by the people of Limhi*, which were delivered to him by the hand of Limhi; (Mosiah 28:11)

**Resumption:** And now, as I said unto you, that after king Mosiah had done these things, he took the *plates of brass*, and *all the things which he had kept*, and conferred them upon Alma, who was the son of Alma; yea, all the records, and also the interpreters, and conferred them upon him, and commanded him that he should keep and preserve them, and also keep a record of the people, handing them down from one generation to another, even as they had been handed down from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem. (Mosiah 28:20)

The mention of the plates of Ether is the trigger for the third retelling of the same basic story:

... after having translated and caused to be written the records which were on the plates of gold which had been found by the people of Limhi, which were delivered to him by the hand of Limhi;

And this he did because of the great anxiety of his people; for they were desirous beyond measure to know concerning those people who had been destroyed.

And now he translated them by the means of those two stones which were fastened into the two rims of a bow.

Now these things were prepared from the beginning, and were handed down from generation to generation, for the purpose of interpreting languages;

And they have been kept and preserved by the hand of the Lord, that he should discover to every creature who should possess the land the iniquities and abominations of his people;

And whosoever has these things is called seer, after the manner of old times.

Now after Mosiah had finished translating these records, behold, it gave an account of the people who were destroyed, from the time that they were destroyed back to the building of the great tower, at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people and they were scattered abroad upon the face

of all the earth, yea, and even from that time back until the creation of Adam.

Now this account did cause the people of Mosiah to mourn exceedingly, yea, they were filled with sorrow; nevertheless it gave them much knowledge, in the which they did rejoice.

And this account shall be written hereafter; for behold, it is expedient that all people should know the things which are written in this account. (Mosiah 28:11–19)

In this third telling of the story, we finally reach the end of the process. The first two accounts note the finding of the plates and the desire to translate them. They posit Mosiah<sub>2</sub> as one who possessed the seer stones that would allow him to translate. In this chapter, we have Mosiah<sub>2</sub> using the two stones and translating.

The difference here is that we have only the briefest conclusion about what was on those plates. Interestingly, Mormon doesn't tell us why "this account did cause the people of Mosiah to mourn exceedingly." The only textual antecedent was the confounding of the languages at the Tower of Babel, but that was an event with which they were already familiar. Mormon does not, therefore, elucidate the reasons for their mourning. However, as Mormon will use the plates of Ether as a subtext in his longer historical arc, he will associate the downfall of the Jaredites with secret combinations: "And whatsoever nation shall uphold such secret combinations, to get power and gain, until they shall spread over the nation, behold, they shall be destroyed; for the Lord will not suffer that the blood of his saints, which shall be shed by them, shall always cry unto him from the ground for vengeance upon them and yet he avenge them not" (Ether 8:22).

This theme will connect the Jaredites to the cause of civil disruptions, and eventually to the Gadianton robbers and the downfall of the Nephite nation. Mormon uses the triple repetition of this basic story to emphasize the role of the plates of Ether in providing the information that will assist in the Nephite demise.

Note that the last line of the original chapter was "And this account shall be written hereafter; for behold, it is expedient that all people should know the things which are written in this account" (Mosiah 28:19). The story is important to Mormon, and it needs to be known. Interestingly, there is no indication that Mormon himself wanted to write it. Perhaps he had imagined having Moroni write it even this early in his writing.

### Mosiah Chapter XIII (28:20–29:47)

The shift from chapter XII to XIII does not have a textual indicator; there is no end of a sermon, no testificatory *Amen*. There is a shift in narrative focus, and that is the probable reason to end the previous chapter and begin a new one. The previous chapter ended the focus on the land of Nephi (until it is revisited in Alma 17–27). Chapter XIII (28:20–29) focuses on the final acts of Mosiah<sub>2</sub>, and the transition from kingship to the reign of the judges.

The chapter will end the book of Mosiah. It ends with the deaths of both Alma<sub>1</sub> and Mosiah<sub>2</sub>. They both appear to have died within the same year, as Mormon mentions them together. It is also a testament to the importance and influence of Alma<sub>1</sub> that his death is listed along with that of a king. The conclusion of the chapter is “and thus ended the reign of the kings over the people of Nephi; and thus ended the days of Alma, who was the founder of their church” (Mosiah 29:47).

The mention of the ending of the kingship and the establishment of the church as a separate unit is important to the rest of Nephite history. The presentation of Alma<sub>2</sub> as “the first chief judge, he being also the high priest” (Mosiah 29:42) is meant to provide the beginning of the essential separation of church and state that occurred during Mosiah<sub>2</sub>’s reign. It is also the beginning of the pattern discussed in the section “Fitting Names into Narrative Types,” Chapter 5, which posits that the names of Alma<sub>1</sub>’s lineage are used to provide the picture of a continuation of the religious line during times when the political dynastic structure was shifting.

