

# TEACHINGS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

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Semester 2, Lecture 36  
Mosiah 16–18  
Abinadi and Alma

Now with Mosiah 17 come a series of extremely interesting and significant stories. He really pours it on here. After Abinadi gave his sermon, what was the reaction? “The king commanded that the priests should take him and cause that he should be put to death.” And it’s very obvious why. After the sermon in chapters 15 and 16, what else was there left for the king to do? The contrast between what I am doing and what I could be doing is simply intolerable—I can’t face it. I must get rid of the one, or get rid of the other. You can’t share them. As Brigham Young said, nothing is harder than trying to carry the load on both shoulders. It will just tear you apart. You’ve got to decide one way or the other. He [King Noah] heard the story, and he knew it was true, but it was intolerable. He couldn’t face it. The only thing to do was get the man out of sight and out of mind. So take him away and put him to death.

“But there was one among them whose name was Alma,” and there’s a very important thing about Alma. You’ll notice his situation and what kind of fellow he was. What was Alma’s situation? It goes out of the way to tell us why he was in this situation. He was a direct descendant of Nephi. That meant he had the priesthood, but he wasn’t among those—the old guard—that had been kicked out by Noah at an earlier time. Remember, Noah cleaned out Zeniff’s priests that he had appointed. And as we read back here in Mosiah 11:5, he got rid of them. “For he put down all the priests that had been consecrated by his father [so Alma hadn’t been consecrated by Zeniff], and he consecrated new ones in their stead.” And Alma was apparently one of those new ones. Why? Well, in the first place he was young. It says that he was a young man. He hadn’t been in that old group at all. In the second place, he was in the highest aristocracy. Remember, the first Nephi had been the king, so he was the nearest thing you would get to royal blood. He couldn’t avoid the job. He would naturally be appointed by the king and also have the king’s ear because he was in high respect, of course. And he was also honest, and he knew [Abinadi] was telling the truth. He knew too much, as a matter of fact. That’s why the king had to get rid of him now. His name was Alma, he was a descendant of Nephi, and he was a young man. He was one of the new guard, but he believed the words of Abinadi. He knew what had been going on, the iniquity Abinadi had testified about. Of course, he interceded for Abinadi. He had the ear of the king and he said, well, what about it? Let’s let him go. The least we can do is let him go in peace. The king wouldn’t have that, and so now he wanted to get rid of Alma himself. To agree to this [Alma’s exhortation] would be an admission of his guilt. He couldn’t afford to do that, so he had to get rid of Alma, too. He was a troublemaker [for the king], and he knew too much, as we learn in verse 2.

Then what happened? He “sent his servants after him that they might slay him” so that nobody would know about it. See, that’s the way he did things, not in the open. This Noah was quite a character, and yet he turns out to be a rather sympathetic character, and that’s surprising, isn’t it? “But he [Alma] fled from before them [Alma was up to that—he knew what was going to happen, so he got out of the way in time; he was no fool to stay around] and hid himself that they found him not. And he being concealed for many days

did write all the words which Abinadi had spoken.” Remember, those were scripture. Abinadi was heavy with scripture. He taunted the priests of Noah for teaching the scripture and not knowing it, not understanding it, and not following it. Then the same thing happened here. So here we come to that interesting parallel in the Dead Sea Scrolls with the Teacher of Righteousness or the Star. From now on he goes through exactly the same routine as Alma. Well, it’s altogether too close. They’re stamped from the same mold, even the same details. Here’s one from the Dead Sea Scrolls, first published in 1950, discovered in 1948. This wasn’t known, of course, to Joseph Smith, and yet he gives an identical, carbon copy of Alma’s story, all the way through. Now how is that possible? Well, this is one of those recurrent scenarios. It happened before here; we can go back to 1 Nephi 4:30. We have him right here. The same thing happens—this going out.

I must tell you about the Dead Sea Scrolls, but the first semester is the time we deal with them. We don’t want to get hung up on them now, but I must tell you something about them because we haven’t had them in here. The parallels to the Book of Mormon are so striking. Just a year ago, a very good explanation was brought out by a Jewish professor at the University of Chicago. It explains why these parallels are so close, and it’s very convincing, too. But you know about the people of the Dead Sea Scrolls. You’ve got to put them on here now. [Draws map on the board.] This is the delta, and here’s the Dead Sea, and here’s the Jordan River. This is the Sea of Galilee up here. Here’s Jerusalem and Qumran along here. This is En-Gedi here, and here’s the Nahal Hever. Masada is down here, all along the Dead Sea shore. I’ll read some of this new report by Golb, and we’ll go by that. These people came down there and settled. This is the way Lehi came down here. These are the people of the Dead Sea Scrolls, and they came out from Jerusalem when Jerusalem was about to fall to the Romans. It was going to be destroyed utterly and completely. They lived out in the desert in the same way Nephi did, and they were inspired. They took Isaiah as their guide, and they went out into the desert to prepare the way for the Messiah. They had the baptisms, and they had all the teachings. But it is so Christian, it worries everybody, you see. It’s the same religion we find in the New Testament, so everybody says, “Well this is just the sect of the Essenes, there.” That got to be the popular explanation. At first they wouldn’t hear of the Essenes, but then everybody went overboard for the Essenes. They were a sect of four thousand that Pliny and Josephus tell about, the four thousand religious people who went and settled near Qumran there. But these people weren’t Essenes at all.

Let me tell you what Mr. Norman Golb of Chicago wrote in 1987. He said they’re not Essenes. The first thing discovered in Cave 1 was the *Serekh Scroll*, their Doctrine and Covenants. Not only the doctrines, [but] their reason for being there, their organization, their oaths, their covenants—everything was discovered in the first book. Since then there have been hundreds and thousands of fragments discovered in many caves—fragments and lots of complete documents. But here it was that it gave us everything we wanted to know—when they went out, why they went out. And it’s just a parallel of Lehi—the same sort of thing, skipping out like that. We see here in Nephi’s account that they were doing the very same thing that was done in the scrolls. Let me just tell you about the scrolls here so we can get this because they are a very, very powerful witness to the Book of Mormon. You can’t neglect them very well. This *Serekh Scroll*, called the *Manual of Discipline* when it was first discovered by Brownley down at Claremont, was particularly intriguing. It “strayed radically from what was thought to be the mainstream of Jewish thinking. It wasn’t the rabbinical religion of the Jews at all.” As we saw last semester, when the temple was burned and Jerusalem fell, Johanan ben Zakkai went out and got permission to found the first rabbinical school at Jamnia. After that schools were founded in Babylonia when

they went there, and this was the beginning of rabbinical Judaism, which is a very different type of Judaism. They were very much against the temple, they didn't preach these things, they soft-pedaled the Messiah and everything else. And so it's not like the religion of Lehi at all, but that's what we find in these scrolls. That's where the difference is.

As he [Golb] says here, "This strayed radically from what was thought to be the mainstream of Jewish thinking. How did this happen? Moreover, it foreshadowed the Christian doctrines, as found in the New Testament." What are these people doing 150 years before Christ, 50 years before, during the time of Christ and after, talking just like apostles and prophets? It was a church organized with twelve disciples and a presidency of three. They had the sacrament that looked forward to the coming of the Messiah—the bread and the wine and all that. Well, these are Christians; the Jews shouldn't be doing it that way. But, of course, this is what we find in the Book of Mormon. This is the religion they brought from Jerusalem with them. And so he goes on here and says, "The secrets and the hidden message of the scripture, the concept that stands in stark contrast to the type of personal wisdom extolled in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes." They're not philosophical at all about this; this is not philosophical wisdom that the rabbis favor. Well, they said it must have been written by the Essenes. They found there was only one group of Essenes, and they said they were up here.

Down at En-Gedi you have the cave of letters. We mentioned Alma, so let's start with En-Gedi right there in the cave of letters, in the Nahal Hever. There was a young man called Alma. When they dug there, they found that the people had fled from Jerusalem. They took their personal and legal documents with them, which tell us an awful lot about them. Moreover, they had been fleeing to the caves and doing this thing way back since the Old Kingdom of Egypt. They had been doing it for over three thousand years. So it was before there were ever Jews there. Other people were doing it. They found some marvelous bronze temple vessels and other things that they had buried in these caves. Every time there was trouble and Jerusalem fell, the people would flee to the wilderness, as the Lord tells them to do in the chapter 24 of Matthew. When it comes, then flee to the mountains. They had always fled to the mountains and to the caves. Well, they did it this time, and they took their stuff with them. One of the first things discovered was this document, and it was a deed to a farm. Now when you go into the Scrollerly [Shrine of the Book], that big turtle-shell building in Jerusalem now called the Scrollerly, the first scroll you come to on your left is actually papyrus. They were still getting the stuff from Egypt, and it stopped, of course, with the war. The light shines through it so you see it very bold and clear, and here is this deed for "Alma, the son of Judah." And it's Alma, A-L-M-A. Now people always make fun of the name *Alma*. They say it's a Latin name, *alma mater*, etc. They say, "This is Latin. This has nothing to do with the Jews—they never had a name Alma like that, and you wouldn't call a man Alma anyway." But among the first things they discovered here in the cave is this deed to a farm. (I should have brought Yadin's book along, but it's not necessary.) Sure enough, his name is A-L-M-A, "Alma, the son of Judah." So it was a good Jewish name. A man in the company had this farm, and his name was "Alma, son of Judah." So the name deserves notice. It couldn't have been invented by Joseph Smith; it wasn't known. Lots of people laughed at it until it turned up in the cave here. But we find these things not only up there at the north end.

Incidentally, here is Jericho, just a few miles away. That's the Musa Bey Alamy farm there. That's where they raise chickens, and a mob came down and killed 3,000 chickens one night just before we got there. The mob came out of Jericho. Those people play rough.

[Quoting again from Golb:] “. . . at En-Gedi, twenty miles south of the caves. [It is] widely accepted the Essene sect had a formative influence on Christians. Today, all propagate the theory of Essene authorship, but,” he says, “it won’t hold. The Qumran Essene is at odds with almost every shred of evidence there is. Analysis of the scroll actually reveals that to Judaism as a whole, not just one obscure sect, it was a salient influence.”

We find a whole stash of them down here at Masada, their last hold, and they were brought directly from Jerusalem. And these were brought directly from Jerusalem. Now it turns out that this library wasn’t written there at all; it was brought from Jerusalem. They were taking their books out, and these were the things that were taught and preached at Jerusalem in the time that it fell. The temple was gone. The rabbis were hostile to the temple, and they took over. A rabbi holds no priesthood, you see, and has nothing to do with the temple. From then on they set the norm of Judaism, and there was a ferocious struggle. It went for centuries in which they completely wiped out every trace. Now we have this great work of Edwin Goodenough, nine volumes on Jewish symbolism. It goes into the earliest Jewish symbolism and shows what a struggle there was before they finally wiped out the old Judaism. And that’s the old Judaism we find in the Book of Mormon. That’s why it’s always talking about the Messiah, the resurrection, and all that sort of thing, which the rabbis play down as much as they possibly can. In fact, they would deny it completely if they could. They say the Bible says nothing about resurrection, and they also reject the passages like Isaiah that refer to the Messiah. But they weren’t rejected by these people.

The Essenes, as described by Pliny, were celibate monks. Well, these people weren’t. Their cemeteries show men and women all buried together there. “The excavations showed well-developed settlements with cisterns, pools, reservoirs and water sources. There was a great deal of baptizing going on.” When these were first discovered, Rockefeller sponsored a lot of [the work]. All the churches got together. There were five different groups, and each one had a claim on so many scrolls. But they all declared that all these pools and washing places at Qumran were just for dyeing leather or something like that. They were water storage tanks for plumbing or the like. Well, the Jews took it over after the 1967 war, and they changed the labels on all these. They said these were not for industry at all—they were for baptism. They used these for baptism; it was very plain they had. And they went back and showed that this was so. They were great people for baptizing out here. “. . . well-developed settlements with cisterns, pools and reservoirs. Their dining halls, kitchens, stables, pottery, and tower adjoined the buildings whose identity remains uncertain.” They went out and settled for a while until they were driven out by the Romans. There are various theories. We won’t hold you on this. But the [Roman] soldiers came, fought a protracted battle, and finally drove them out. Some of them went to Damascus, where we find the Damascus Fragment. Some of them went out to al-Ragim in the desert. I wrote an article in *Revue de Qumran* on that. That may be another settlement of those that went out a few miles south of Amman there in the desert. It’s very interesting—since then, that has become a shrine, not of the Essenes or anything like that. It has become the shrine of the Cave of the Seven Sleepers. They run bus tours out there and everything else. It was set up by the Moslems—that’s another story.

“By 1956 scrolls were being discovered in ever greater numbers of caves, altogether too many of them, and hidden there were specially made pottery containers and linen packets to hold them [they’re hidden away here]. They weren’t made in the scriptorium; they brought them from Jerusalem with them [and he tells us why that is]. By the spring of

1956 a total of eleven caves spread over a distance of about two miles [had been discovered].” Cave 11 was quite high up, quite a hard one to get to. But by that time they had found at least 500 manuscripts. And this was just the beginning, you see. These were all from the time of Christ and before the time of Christ.

When I was teaching at Claremont at Scripps College, I used to teach alternate days with Professor Goodspeed who retired from Chicago. He was teaching there, and we would teach the girls at Scripps College on alternate days—his on Tuesdays and mine on Thursdays. We arranged it that way. Goodspeed said, “The New Testament was not written down at all in the time of Christ. It wasn’t written down until the fourth century. The Jews never wrote anything. We have no record of the Jews writing anything at the time of Christ.” He died, and the year after they found thousands and thousands of things written by Jews everywhere—written in rapid, cursive hands, very familiar with the whole thing. Everybody had been writing. The Jews had the *scribendi cacoethes* very badly. They wrote everything down. So all of a sudden, it turns out, they were great writers and kept records of everything. And so we have it here. There were 500 scrolls. “The scrolls embraced a wide variety of themes, literary genres, every type of literature one would expect to find among the Palestinian Jews. And the Qumran Essene theory could not convincingly account for such an astoundingly large and heterogenous body of literature.” The Essenes would never produce that. So they had to expand their definition of Essene to include everything, but that didn’t work either.

Then of the Qumran caves [writings], only one was an author’s original. They had all been brought from Jerusalem. They weren’t written there. “. . . five hundred to eight hundred extremely diverse texts from the Qumran cave, and these scrolls derived from one or more large libraries.” Just like in the Book of Mormon, they were kept all together in libraries. And they had no libraries at Khirbet Qumran. “In 1952 at *Murabba’at* [an enormous cave much larger than this room, just eleven miles south of Qumran], they discovered not only letters dating to 132 A.D. written by the hand of senders, containing many precise geographical and personal names, but equally specific legal documents.” It was 1966 when they discovered the Cave of Letters in the Nahal Hever, and then they were really into it. These people had buried them deliberately in the dust and they were speaking from the dust. Digging them up, people were just enveloped in clouds of dust, tears streaming down their faces because of emotion because of the dust. The kids could actually pick these up and read them. They had been buried 2,000 years there, and they spoke out of the dust. They spoke so much like the Book of Mormon—it’s just astounding. People doing the same thing.

In 1952 the *Copper Scroll* from Cave 3 [was discovered]. The *Copper Scroll* was kept on bronze sheets, and that was called *brass* in Joseph Smith’s day. The word *bronze* wasn’t used until end of the nineteenth century. You won’t find the word *bronze* in the Bible, for example. They just used *brass*, which means *bronze*. It’s a mixture of copper and tin rather than zinc and tin, which is brass. The description said they put it on copper because they didn’t want it to perish. It had the most valuable information on it, so they put it on copper. We have the thing now, and it was originally written on sheets about this size. They were riveted together like this, the whole sheet of them, and then they were rolled up so that they could be stowed away rather than be put on top of each other. But it was originally a copper book. And they gave descriptions of precious objects buried in various hiding places, so it was a record they wanted to keep. They didn’t want it to perish. The experts said the treasures were purely fictional, but not at all. “The Copper Scroll has been

executed not in a scribe's elegant hand, but the relatively crude and haphazard style associated with documentary autographs—terse straight-forward enumeration, including written documents.” It tells where other written documents were hidden. That's why it is so valuable.

“Many of the hiding places were located in the wadis eastward and southward from Jerusalem. [The] text describes caches hidden near Jericho, for example. But it describes widespread sequestration of books, valuable artifacts, at sites scattered throughout the whole Judean wilderness in a pattern radiating not from Qumran but from Jerusalem.” These people fled from Jerusalem and took their records with them. That's the point. And they buried them deliberately when they thought they weren't going to survive. “In the early '60s, they found Masada and fragments of fourteen more scrolls of similar age and scribal character, songs of the Sabbath sacrifices. The scrolls were brought to Masada by such refugees, among other items. Thirteen scrolls of these emanated from Jerusalem. The inhabitants of Jerusalem undertook massive concealment of scrolls at Qumran and elsewhere between 68 and 70 A.D.”

Then [there was] the idea that the Essene sect had a major influence on Christianity and that mainstream Judaism did not. It was the mainstream Judaism that went over into Christianity, that Christianity took over. It was revealed through Christ and the apostles. It's the New Testament that picks up the mainstream of Judaism, which was interrupted by the rabbis. They give us what they call the normative Judaism today, which is very different. The Judaism of the Book of Mormon is what we find here. That's why this is so striking. “The Christians' ideas attributed to the Essenes—predestination, election, duality of flesh and spirit, darkness and light, falsehood and truth—evolved out of Judaism as a whole. But Judaism and Christianity cease to be distant theological cousins and become much closer relatives because of these scrolls.”

So that's the situation. And the stock situation is that the people run out into the desert and hide there and carry on their religious activities and their devotions. We have this back here, as I was mentioning, in 1 Nephi 4:30. He [Nephi] is going to have [Zoram] join the company, and you see what kind of a company they were. They fled from Jerusalem. They knew Jerusalem was going to be destroyed. Remember, the prophets had all been preaching that at the time. He saw the servant of Laban and grabbed him and held him. He swore an oath to him that if he would come and live there with them, they would spare his life. “And I spake to him, even with an oath, that he need not fear; that he should be a free man like unto us if he would go down in the wilderness with us” (1 Nephi 4:33). See, they considered themselves as being free, now that they had escaped from the bondage of the wicked priests at Jerusalem. They were founding their own community now, and they brought the priesthood with them. They were going to continue the ordinances, looking forward to the coming of the Messiah. That's what they were all doing. And this is a typical one of these communities, because it comes from this. He says, come down and live with us and you'll be a free man like us, if you go down into the wilderness with us. If we don't do that, then we won't be diligent in keeping the commandments of the Lord. He said, “Surely the Lord hath commanded us to do this thing.” If we're going to keep the commandments in diligence, we can't stay in Jerusalem any longer. That's the point.

It talks a good deal in the scrolls about the corruption of the priests of Jerusalem—the priests of the lie, etc. Exactly like the priests of Noah and his crowd, we'll see in a minute here, I suppose. I didn't want to get hung up on this, but this is important because it's

very strong evidence right here. “Therefore, if thou wilt go down into the wilderness to my father thou shalt have place with us.” There will be a wide place, and you will be able to join our family. See *sahl* means “a wide place for you,” and *ahl* means a *family*, a *tent*, and the *community*. So they were going to accept Laban’s servant, Zoram, into the family, and he joined them down there. Remember the Zoramites in the Book of Mormon. And he also made the covenant with them. See, everybody who came out to Qumran had to make a covenant to stay with them, and then he lived there according to the rules. It [the Book of Mormon] says, “Yea, and he also made an oath unto us that he would tarry with us from that time forth,” and they trusted him. When he made the oath, “our fears did cease concerning him.”

So here is such a community, and we find another one after they get to the New World. In 1 Nephi 16:37 they’re still in the desert, and this is their idea. See, Laman and Lemuel know the sort of thing that’s been happening, and they say this is all going to happen again. They’re planning to establish just such a community as this one in the wilderness, and he says “Behold, let us slay our father, and also our brother Nephi, who has taken it upon him to be our ruler and our teacher, who are his elder brethren [they’re just like the sectaries]. . . . He tells us these things, and he worketh many things by his cunning arts [He’s going to make himself the leader. See he’s the teacher of righteousness. There’s always the leader, the star, that leads them out into the wilderness. They always depend on the leader, and he’s going to be the one] . . . that he may deceive our eyes, thinking, perhaps, that he may lead us away into some strange wilderness; and after he has led us away, he has thought to make himself a king and a ruler over us” (1 Nephi 16:38). That’s the plan, you see—they’re going to lead us out into a strange desert here, and there he’ll set up the community. He’ll be the head and he’ll rule it. And that’s the sort of thing they’re suspecting him of.

So this is the pattern that’s being followed: “. . . that he may do with us according to his will and pleasure. And after this manner did my brother Laman stir up their hearts to anger.” But then when they got to the New World, he did that, remember. Nephi broke off with as many as would follow him, and they went and they settled a community of Nephi. Later, Mosiah left that one and went off and ended up in Zarahemla. But remember when they settled in Nephi’s colony, they made Nephi king. Well, that’s the very thing Laman and Lemuel said they would do when they got him out in the desert—they’d make him king. And they did make him king over them. He didn’t want to be, but they made him. And so this is following a very sharp, a very distinctly marked pattern.

Question: Why would their fears concerning the servant of Laban cease as soon as he made the oath?

Answer: Because he made an oath, a covenant. An Arab wouldn’t think of breaking his oath. He’d rather die than break his oath. This is very important when you’ve made the oath. We don’t think of oaths—we love to break oaths, we do it all over the place.

Question: What about Laman and Lemuel? Didn’t they make any oaths that they broke?

Answer: Well, they wanted to go back home, remember? Their father Lehi said, okay, go back home. Jerusalem’s been destroyed; you’re on your own. You’re perfectly free to go. They were intimidated, so they stayed. They didn’t know what would happen to them. They got cold feet and wouldn’t go home. It was safer where they were.

Mosiah 17:3: The king “caused that Alma should be cast out from among them, and sent his servants after him that they might slay him.” Remember, we had the Abinadi story. It parallels this very closely. Abinadi preached to the priests, and they did the same thing—the priests that lied and tried to catch him in his words. He fled and he said he lived among the fisher folk and the farmers, and he hid out from them. Then he came back into the town and started to preach. This is what Alma did. “But he 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 16:4). That’s what we just read. And we read in the 1QS, especially the Thanksgiving Hymn where the leader praises the Lord that he has been rescued after all his sufferings, and he says, “I praise thee Lord for thou didst not desert me when I was among the people and didst not leave me in my secret affairs, but saved my life out of the pit and grave in the midst of lions. And thou didst take me to a place removed among the fisher folk and hunters [so he hid out for a while, you see]. “Thou didst hide me, O God, from the children of men and hid thy law in me [he wrote it down when he was there; the same thing is happening here, you see] until the time that thy help should be revealed to me, Thou didst preserve my life, the life of the poor one in the place of lions.” So he went out to the desert and hid there, just as Alma hid out and wrote these things down that he heard from Abinadi.

Then notice the beginning of chapter 18 tells us (we’re getting ahead of the game) that Alma went about “privately among the people and began to teach the words of Abinadi. . . . And he taught them privately (the first and third verses). So he appeared this way, just as Abinadi had gone around in disguise before until the time came when he cast off the disguise. And he did it deliberately, because he told the king here that he had deliberately put himself into his hands. Notice Mosiah 17:9: “. . . that ye may know of their surety I have suffered myself that I have fallen into your hands,” so my blood would witness against you. He says he deliberately allowed it to happen. He only cast off the disguise when he wanted to be discovered. When he came into their midst, then he said, “Thus has the Lord commanded me, saying—Abinadi . . .” Then they knew who he was. And he [Alma] says here in the ninth verse, “. . . that ye may know of their surety [that my words are true; he’s going to testify with his blood and so he says,] I have suffered myself that I have fallen into your hands.”

The *Hodayoth*, the Thanksgiving Hymn, says, “Thou hast not kept hiding for shame. All those who permit me to visit and instruct them, who came together in the church of thy covenant to listen to me and to follow the ways of thy heart, they rallied to my defense as a group of saints.” So the Teacher of Righteousness got some people together supporting him.

And the New World Qumran: “And it came to pass that as many as did believe him did go forth to a place which was called Mormon, having received its name from the king, being in the borders of the land having been infested, by times or at seasons, by wild beasts” (Mosiah 18:4). This is very interesting.

After these people were driven out of Qumran, they went up to Damascus and continued in the desert there. It tells us in the *Damascus Scroll*, “And the volunteers from the people who bear the staff, the wandering Moses, go to the fountain of the spring, which is the law. There the inhabitants of Israel depart from the land of Judah and dwell in the land of Damascus as strangers.” But they go by a fountain of water. They have to settle there, where there’s water. The *staff* is the one who teaches them the law, as Isaiah says. And as

Nephi says in 1 Nephi 19:23, “I did read unto them that which was written by the prophet Isaiah [when they were in the desert]; for I did liken all scriptures unto us, that it might be for our profit and learning.”

He says people go up to the Damascus desert when they’re driven out (Damascus is a desert, as you know). One step out of town and you’re in howling wilderness. And they went up there and settled the same way with this leader. Back again to chapter 17. Alma went and hid, and the king caused his guards to surround Abinadi. They took him and burned him, and they said he was worthy of death. Now this is interesting, too—this is the crime. This is the *titulus*. This is the charge against him; it’s the accusation. When a person was crucified, above his head was a sign telling why he was being crucified, like “This is the king of the Jews.” Pontius Pilate said, “I’m going to put up there, ‘This is the king of the Jews.’”

The elders and high priests said, “No, no, no. Put, ‘He *said* he was king of the Jews.’”

And Pilate said, “Oh, no—he *is* the king of the Jews.” He put the blame on them; they have to answer. They tried to put it on him, you see. With “He said he was king of the Jews,” they’d get out of it that way. And the same thing happens here. He’s guilty of this because this was the crime. He [the Savior] said he was king of the Jews, and he [Abinadi] said the same thing—that Christ was the Redeemer. “For thou hast said that God himself should come down among the children of men [well, that was the claim that Christ made; that was the charge against him in the *titulus* on the cross], and now for this cause thou shalt be put to death.” Because he said Christ should come down. That’s the same reason that Christ himself was crucified. And it was for blasphemy, for saying a thing that was unthinkable, that the doctors would not permit for a moment, and it was appalling. And then he says, all right, that’s what I expected. “I have suffered myself that I have fallen into your hands. . . . I will not recall my words, and they shall stand as a testimony against you. And if ye slay me, ye shall shed innocent blood, and this shall also stand as a testimony against you at the last day.”

Why does blood stand as a testimony? Well, when a murder has been committed or there’s dirty work going on, it’s blood that’s the evidence, isn’t it? It’s the blood that testifies that there has been the shedding of blood, of course. Nothing testifies better than that—the blood itself testifies. If there’s blood on the ground, you know that someone has shed blood. And that’s why we get this idea of the blood testifying against you.

Then Noah changed his mind. He wanted to let him go now. He didn’t like it, and he was afraid of him. He feared the judgment of God would come upon him. Now this is interesting. Noah feared God? This man? Yes, he did. Remember, he considered himself the leader of religious [people]. By [their] standards, he was a righteous man. Remember, in Mosiah 12:13–15, they say he hasn’t done anything wrong. They say, “And now, O king, what great evil hast thou done, or what great sins have thy people committed, that we should be condemned of God or judged of this man? And now, O king, behold, we are guiltless, and thou, O king, hast not sinned; therefore, this man has lied concerning you, and he has prophesied in vain. And behold, we are strong, we shall not come into bondage, or be taken captive by our enemies; yea, and thou hast prospered in the land, and thou also shalt prosper.” That proves you shall also prosper, so you’re righteous. Because we’re prosperous, we’re victorious and everything else. They really believed that.

So what's wrong with King Noah? He was a very popular king. He put on a great show, and the people loved him. This is a very interesting thing about Noah. He was worried, and he wanted to do the right thing here. He was afraid because he knew darn well that Abinadi was right, and he wanted to let him go. But, notice what happened. The priests wouldn't let him out. The very same thing happened with Pilate. Remember? Pilate wanted to put it onto the Jews, and they got their revenge. Notice that he had this dialogue with the Jews, and they were each trying to outwit the other. Who had the last word? Each one tried to stick the other with responsibility for the crucifixion, the death of Christ. And so he [Pilate] said, "He is the king of the Jews."

And they said, "He said he was King of the Jews."

"No, he is the King of the Jews." Well, they have their revenge on him. They said, "All right, we have no other king but Caesar." Well, what a thing for the Jews to say because, after all, that was Pilate, and Pilate was serving Caesar. This would make a traitor out of Pilate. See, if he [Jesus Christ] was recognized as King of the Jews, then he would be a *Rex amicalis*, and there would be nothing wrong. His rule would be perfectly legitimate. Pilate recognized Christ as King of the Jews. That would make him a *Rex amicalis* and perfectly legitimate. He would not be in rebellion against Caesar. But the Jews said, "We are loyal only to Caesar. We do not acknowledge him as king. We acknowledge only Caesar as our king." Where did that leave Pontius Pilate? He was Caesar's representative there, and this ruined his career. He ended up in disgrace. It left him to say he recognized him [Jesus] as king, but they recognized only Caesar. Here we are wanting to support Caesar, you want us to support him. What are you doing? Taking us away from Caesar and having us support him? We think this guy's a fraud [paraphrased]. And it was only the high priests and the elders who insisted on it; they kept shouting that. So that put Pilate on the spot. He had to give in, and they went ahead and did the deed.

And the same thing happened here. Notice, the king wanted to give up. He recognized Abinadi, but the priests wouldn't let him do it. Verse 12: "But the priests lifted up their voices against him . . . saying: He has reviled against the king." They were putting it on the king to make him responsible. He's reviled against you. You can't deny your office. You can't deny that you're the king, and he has reviled against you [paraphrased]. They were forcing him to put Abinadi to death, to defend the kingly office and keep his royal dignity. "He has reviled the king. Therefore the king was stirred up in anger against them, and he delivered him up that he might be slain [they put it all onto the king, but it was the priests again]. And it came to pass that they took him and bound him, and scourged his skin with faggots, yea, even unto death. And now when the flames began to scorch him, he cried unto them."

How do you scourge the skin with faggots, and what's the difference between *scourge* and *scorch*? They're the same word, the same word exactly. Scourge, scorch, scotch, score—it means to damage the skin of someone. Our word *scratch* is the same thing. And you have the very same thing in Semitic languages. *Ḥārash* is the Hebrew word for *scratch* and for *to plow*. *Ḥaratha* is the Arabic word for "mar the surface, engrave, make a mark on something, or plow the ground." They all have that same word that means "to scorch, to scourge, to scratch." When his skin started to curl up, in other words, he said this. It's interesting. The faggots are burning brands. They burn, and we think of *scourging* as with a *scourge*, as "to scourge with a whip." But they're the same word exactly. They scourged him and scorched him—in other words, he was being fried. It's not a comfortable way to

die, either. Verse 14: “He cried unto them saying: Behold, even as ye have done unto me, so shall it come to pass that thy seed shall cause that many shall suffer the pains that I do suffer, even the pains of death by fire. And then he pronounced that the same thing was going to happen to the king himself out in the woods later on. “Yea, and ye shall be smitten on every hand, . . . And in that day ye shall be hunted, and ye shall be taken by the hand of your enemies, and then ye shall suffer, as I suffer, the pains of death by fire.”

Now who was recording all this that he said? Remember, Alma wasn't on the scene in disguise then. But remember, after this happened, many repented and went out and joined Alma, and there were some there that did, you see. They had the record of this thing. They were able to report what went on because it was a public execution. Verse 20: “And now, when Abinadi had said these words, he fell, having suffered death by fire.”

Now what happened? Alma fled from the servants of King Noah, repented of his sins and iniquities, and then went about privately among the people and began to teach just exactly as the Teacher of Righteousness did here [in the Dead Sea Scrolls]. And this is what he taught—the absolute basics of the gospel. These are the big questions, these are the essentials. Without them you have no gospel; with them, you have everything. The first is resurrection of the dead. Is there any more [after this life]? That's a terrible question, you see. Is this all there is? The answer is *no*, as we saw the last time. There's much more, and it's the resurrection of the dead. The second is that you're not only resurrected to make life possible but to make it endurable and enjoyable. I don't want to live forever, if I've got to suffer forever. No that's not it, but to make life desirable for eternal life—to make it possible and then to make it desirable. And that's the same thing. Redemption of the people. That is atonement, bringing them back to the presence of God, and that happens through power. Things are done through power. It's a physical, real thing that happens. The suffering and death of Christ and his resurrection and ascension—now that's the atonement. What he's preaching here is resurrection, redemption, atonement, buying back again, bringing together again where you were. Notice all these words that begin with *re*. That means *again*. A re-surrection means “a rising up again.” That means you were in the flesh before. Of course we're here now, and then we will rise up again. But then after, it is the redemption. You are bought back again. You came down here, you suffered the Fall, you committed all these sins, etc. Then you're freed. *Emptio* is “to buy something,” and *redemption* is “to buy somebody back again who was with you before.” See, you were in the presence of the Lord before; now he's buying you back into his service again after you've been out of it for a while. You've been serving the devil. That's what he [Alma] preached.

“And as many as would hear his word he did teach. And he taught them privately, that it might not come to a knowledge of the king. And many did believe his words. And it came to pass that as many as did believe him did go forth to a place which was called Mormon, having received its name from the king, being in the borders of the land having been infested by times or at seasons, by wild beasts” (Mosiah 18:3). See, it was in the *midbār*, between the cultivated and the desert. It's not absolute howling desert. It's a place where there's a spring of water, and there are trees growing. This is an important picture because at Qumram, right down the coast, there is *Ras Fashkha*, a great grove trees. Not huge, but it's a nice grove of trees and springs that come up. They're quite salty now, but it's just a couple of miles south of there. They have plenty of water, and that's why they settled there, of course, along the Dead Sea.

Verse 5: “Now, there was in Mormon a fountain of pure water, and Alma resorted thither [notice this is the country, and it’s a desert terrain; it’s no jungle, as you have to hide in a thicket], there being near the water a thicket of small trees, where he did hide himself in the daytime from the searchers of the king.” So obviously it was fairly open country, desert country, because they had to search out a water place. There were groves growing around the springs; an oasis is what it was, where they were hiding here. “And . . . as many as believed him went thither to hear his words.” Well, this is exactly what was happening with the Dead Sea community. But that’s only a morning’s walk from Jerusalem, if you walk downhill to Jericho and then to Qumran. How could they be there for years and not be discovered? Well, they were known and watched. There was always tension going on, people coming and going. It was the same thing here. Finally they had to leave, as you know. They weren’t able to stay long. The king’s soldiers kept snooping around, and they finally drove them out. Then they went to another place, as we find out later.

And the same thing happened here [at Qumran]. They went up to Damascus, and they went out west into the desert. Then many became Mandaean. They went clear over to Mesopotamia and down to the south. The Mandaeans at the mouth of the Tigris and Euphrates now are their descendants. Their records are full. They keep their records on lead plates, because lead plates are preserved in the water. The water won’t destroy them. The Mandaeans at the mouth of the Euphrates and the Tigris down there are the marsh Arabs today. They have a great thing about lots of baptizing and purification. They have the same garments we do, etc. They go through all that, and they have these records there. They say they came originally from the Jordan, and their baptisms are continued from the Jordan there. That goes back to the time of Christ. So you find these people all over the place, and this is the pattern that’s being followed in the Book of Mormon. It’s a very old one. You can parallel it many places. And it’s in such detail. It’s so interesting the way it comes out in the case of Alma, because he had been tipped off. Abinadi knew the record and all this sort of thing.

This is the 1QS, the *Serekh Scroll*, the *Manual of Discipline*: “At the fulfillment of these times, they shall separate themselves from the dwelling in the midst of a perverse people and go forth into the desert to prepare a way for him, even by the study of the law as it was given to Moses according to that which has been revealed from time to time as it was shown to the prophets through the Holy Ghost.” See, they talk about the Holy Ghost and things like that that the rabbis never talk about or never mention. It’s full of this very un-Jewish talk.

And, says the Book of Mormon, “as many as believed him went thither to hear his words. And it came to pass after many days there were a goodly number gathered together at the place of Mormon, to hear the words of Alma. . . . And he did teach them, and did preach unto them . . . [and he said unto them] are [ye] willing to bear one another’s burdens?” (Mosiah 18:6–8).

The 1QS: “. . . to lead and instruct them in knowledge and so give them understanding in the hidden wonders of truth in the midst of the men of the church, to walk each one blamelessly with his neighbor in all that has been revealed to them in the time of preparing the way in the wilderness, to instruct them in all that must be done at this time.”

And Alma says here at the waters of Mormon, “What have you against being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a covenant with

him, that ye will serve him and keep his commandments?" (Mosiah 18:10). There is no mention made here of baptism for the remission of sins. It's a witness and a covenant only, and it's exactly the same thing at Qumran. Well, this is what it says here: "With baptism he submits his soul in all humility to every commandment of God, after which he applies himself to walking carefully in all the ways of God as he commanded him for the specific time and conditions in turning aside to the right or to the left. And then he will truly be a covenant member of God's eternal church," as a testimony that he has entered into a covenant to serve him, as Alma tells them. And they agree, they are "willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light; . . . willing to mourn with those that mourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort."

There's this oneness. They called themselves the *yahdad* out there, which means "the oneness, the unity in everything." And so we read in their Doctrine and Covenants, "for all shall be united in one true church, the oneness of truth and in becoming humility, and the love of mercy and fair dealing each with his neighbor, to be perfect, each in supporting his fellow, in truth and humility and love of mercy toward all." You see the same sort of code and everything followed here.

Question: One thing I notice when I read this is that the warning before Christ had been crucified is different from that which is followed today and that which was followed after Christ came. Is that due somewhat to the difference in the nature? The words are in verse 13.

Answer: Yes, as I said, the baptism words are different. There's no mention of the remission of sins, either. Up until long after my grandparents' time, they baptized more than once. There were lots of baptisms. Every saint who came out here in the first few years got rebaptized when they got here. And the same thing with the baptisms here. It talks a great deal in the *Serekh Scroll* about the waters of niddah, the waters of purification, the waters of baptism, and then the waters of washing before the anointing. This was a very important thing. They would have their regular washings and anointings. These were regularly repeated, but with the baptism it was only once, and it was for entering the covenant. Once you had entered that, you were in it. It's the same thing here. There are very close parallels. We don't need to split hairs about these things, but it's a stunning parallel all the way through anyway.

In chapter 18 here: ". . . as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God and be called his people, and are willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light."

"The sons of Zadok [Zadok means Melchizedek—Zadok, the righteous one] are following the patterns. The priests are the penitent ones of Israel. Those who have left the land of Judah [they are the Levites], they are the elect of Israel who shall be called up by his name in the last days [they were always referring to the last days, too; that's another thing] and to stand witness of God at all times and in all things and in all places." See again, we repeat the same words practically with the sacrament. They witness unto Him that they remember the covenants they've already made. They witness unto Him—that's what the sacrament's for. And they had the sacrament too the same way. There's an appendix to the first scroll here that describes how the sacrament is, because this shall look forward to the time when the Messiah shall partake of the sacrament with them, just as we look backward to the time, and also forward to the time when he will. Whenever the Lord came after his resurrection, he broke bread, and ate with them, and had the sacrament with

them, as he does in the Book of Mormon. So it stands as a witness at all times and in all things.

The 1QS says, “. . . not to turn away from him out of any fear or terror of any burning [that’s persecution], that is the threat in the government of Belial, that ye may all be redeemed and be numbered with those of the first resurrection, that ye may have eternal life. . . . [And he says] I was comforted amidst all the raging people gathered together, for I know that after a time thou wilt raise up the living one in the midst of thy people and a remnant of thine inheritance and purify them in purification of forgiveness for their deeds.” They talk a great deal about purification, too, naturally.

Question: What was Alma’s authority in the priesthood?

Answer: Well, he was a direct descendant of Nephi, so he had the authority; whereas, King Noah was a descendant of Zeniff who was a descendant of Zarahemla. So they were Mulekites, but Nephi was really of a priestly line of Lehi.

Question: So even when Alma was living with the king and his court he had the authority?

Answer: Yes, as we learn from the first chapter of Luke, priests were ordinary people like Zacharias and his family. Zacharias had to serve as a priest in the temple behind the veil, where only the high priests could go. He had to serve there a week every year; that was his [responsibility]. But he was just an ordinary citizen. The same thing with Lehi, but he was a man of high position, as you know, and had considerable influence in the town. He had the priesthood all right. Notice these people call themselves the sons of Zadok. Of course, that’s Melek Zadok—that’s Melchizedek, as composed of the priesthood of Aaron. In the Dead Sea Scrolls, it says these things shall be in effect until the High Priest comes who will have the priesthood of Aaron. He shall come who is a priest of Israel and Aaron. But they only had the lower priesthood; they admitted that here. And these will only be done this way until the High Priest comes. So they were looking forward to the coming of the Savior this way, and Alma was doing the same thing here.

Now [to] the fountain of pure water and the many believers. Verse 7: “After many days there were a goodly number gathered together at the place of Mormon, to hear the words of Alma. . . . And now, as ye are desirous to come into the fold of God, and to be called his people and are willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light; Yea, and are willing to mourn with those that mourn [very poetic, eloquent passages] . . . even in death . . . being baptized in the name of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered a covenant with him . . .” Notice, it uses the language of water and pouring out. There were the waters of Niddah, the waters of pouring. And it says here, “. . . and keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you.” Notice he uses the image of the water connected with the baptism. He pours out the Spirit with the baptism. No mention of sins. And notice he says in the verse 12 again, “O Lord, pour out thy Spirit upon thy servant, that he may do this work with holiness of heart. And when he had said these words, the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, and he said: Helam, I baptize thee, having authority from the Almighty God, as a testimony that ye have entered into a covenant.” That’s why he baptized him, as a testimony, but it doesn’t say for remission of sins, you notice. This is very interesting. They’re following strictly the order before the time of Christ, and this is the order we find in the Dead Sea Scrolls, “as a testimony that ye have entered into a covenant to serve him until you are dead as to the mortal body;

and may the Spirit of the Lord be poured out upon you [he refers to pouring again—this figure of pouring the Spirit, pouring the waters of baptism and dunking him in the water]; and may he grant unto you eternal life, through the redemption of Christ, whom he has prepared from the foundation of the world.” [They were] looking forward to the pre-existent, eternal, unchanging gospel that’s to be given later.

The time is already up, and I haven’t even got started on this. I wasn’t going to get slowed down on it. Well, there were 204 souls. Verse 17: “Whosoever was baptized by the power and authority of God was added to his church.” And then Alma gave the authority from God to ordain priests, and again we find this in the Dead Sea Scrolls. They divided themselves into companies of fifty, and the high priest, the Teacher of Righteousness, visited one community after another and checked up. He had them teach only what he wanted them to teach, very strictly; and Alma [also] said, [teach] only what I teach you. Verse 18: “Alma, having authority from God, ordained priests; even one priest to every fifty of their number [that was the normal class in Qumran] did he ordain to preach unto them. . . . And he commanded that they should teach nothing save it were the things which he had taught, and which had been spoken by the mouth of the holy prophets.” The opening lines of the *Serekh Scroll*, the first scroll that was ever found, says, this is according to all the teachings that came by the mouth of the holy prophets, which has been revealed through Moses by the hand of God and to all the holy prophets. This is what we’re going to teach, what we’re going to do [paraphrased]. So this says the same thing, “by the mouth of the holy prophets.” He uses that very same expression.

Verse 20: “Yea, even he commanded them that they should preach nothing save it were repentance and faith on the Lord.” This is the first step and the last. They’re out there to preach repentance. (Well, we’ll have to mark it here, because an interesting thing comes next.) This is an astonishing parallel. Well, we find Nephi doing the same thing. We find Jeremiah doing the same thing. We find David hiding out doing the same way with his own community, and lots of people. This is the Rechabite plan. Remember, when Jerusalem fell, it was the sons of Jonadab ben Rechab who were put in charge of the temple, the only people who could be trusted. Way back in the early days, they were the ones who went out into the desert. They made a covenant not to live in houses of stone, and they felt they must live in the desert if they were to be righteous. [Thereafter], the custom of going out and fleeing into the desert to get away from the wicked city was called the Rechabite custom after Jonadab ben Rechab and his family, which Jeremiah tells us about in the chapter 35 of Jeremiah.

Well, we’re dragging along here. But these things are so relevant, these little stories that come in here, and the parallels are so stunning. These things certainly came forth in the time of the Lord. Here they were hiding all this time. As I said, Goodenough, who was supposed to be the authority on the Old Testament and New Testament, said, “No, John didn’t write until the fourth century. There was nothing there at all because the Jews never wrote anything.” And here it was, all written down, all waiting to be discovered until the shepherd boy by the name of Mohammed Dhib [discovered them]. He was the nephew of the major domo in the house of President Barnes of American University in Damascus. Well, I stayed with President Barnes for a couple of weeks there, and the fellow who was in charge told me about it. It was his nephew, and this man was very much interested in the Pearl of Great Price. I don’t know how he got onto it. We did have missionaries in Lebanon then, but they usually went just to the Armenians. He was enamored of the Pearl of Great Price, and it was his nephew who discovered the Dead Sea Scrolls. It’s an amazing

thing, the way things hang together. I don't know what's going to happen yet, but the Lord has his way of doing these things.

But isn't it interesting that the scrolls have gone under a cloud today. For ten years there was great excitement, and then all of a sudden, a damper. Jews, Christians, everybody agreed, we won't talk about the scrolls any more. We don't like what they say. Remember, John Allegro was one of the first to discover this. He lost his job at Oxford because he pointed out that after 1960 the scrolls were actively suppressed by both Jews and Christians. Nobody wanted them to be circulated. As a matter of fact, Joseph Fitzmeyer was here teaching. He's the foremost Roman Catholic authority on the scrolls and teaches at Catholic University, where my daughter is now, incidentally. He taught Aramaic here one summer. There were three or four of us in the class; that's what it amounted to. The Dead Sea Scrolls were his specialty, and Father De Vaux was in charge of them there. They had the book of Enoch and other things like that, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. And could Fitzmeyer get to see them? No, when I come near he won't let me see any of the scrolls [he said]. Well, they were suppressing them at that time, a few years ago. They wouldn't even let Father Fitzmeyer see them. Father De Vaux, who was the principal Catholic excavator, wouldn't let Father Fitzmeyer see the newly discovered stuff. Oh, what I was getting at is, at that time less than five percent of the scrolls had ever been made available, had ever been published or shown to anybody. Less than five percent—that's how popular they've been. You'd think people would be falling all over themselves to find out what was in these scrolls. No, they don't like it. It's too close to the Book of Mormon, if you ask me.