

Mosiah 18–24: Alma, Baptism, Bondage

Monte F. Shelley

1. **FYI:** “build buildings” (23:5) is a Hebraism.

2. Baptism (Mosiah 18)

Alma: ⁸“Here are the waters of Mormon ... 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; ⁹ Yea, and are willing to *mourn with those that mourn*; yea, and *comfort those that stand in need of comfort*, and to *stand as witnesses of God* at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even *until death*, that ye may be *redeemed of God*, and be numbered with those of the *first resurrection*, that ye may have *eternal life*—¹⁰ Now ... if this be the desire of your hearts, 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*, that he may *pour out his Spirit more abundantly* upon you?”

Alma ¹³ said: Helam, I baptize thee, having authority from the Almighty God, 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*; and may he grant unto you *eternal life*, through the *redemption of Christ* ... ¹⁴ And after Alma had said these words, both Alma and Helam were *buried in the water*; and they arose and came forth out of the water rejoicing, being filled with the Spirit.

3. Alma Organized the Church

Alma baptized 204 people. ¹⁷ And they were called the *church* of God, or ... Christ ... And ... whosoever was baptized by the power and authority of God was added to his church.

Priests: ¹⁸ Alma, having authority from God, ordained ... one priest to every fifty ... to preach ... and to teach them ... things pertaining to the kingdom of God. ¹⁹ And he commanded them 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. ²⁰ Yea, even ... repentance and faith on the Lord.

²⁶ And the priests were not to depend upon the people for their support; but *for their labor* they were to *receive the grace of God*, that they might *wax strong in the Spirit*, having the *knowledge of God*, that they might *teach with power and authority* from God.

Duties: ²¹ There should be *no contention* one with another, but that they should look forward with one eye, having one faith and one baptism, having their hearts knit together in unity and in *love one towards another*. ... ²³ And ... they should observe the *sabbath day*, and keep it holy, and *also every day* they should *give thanks* to the Lord their God ... ²⁵ And ... one day in every week ... they should *gather themselves together* to teach the people, and to worship the Lord their God ... ²⁷ And ... the people of the church should impart of their substance ... ²⁸ of their own free will and good desires towards God, and to those priests that stood in need, yea, and to every needy, naked soul.

4. Alma and People Flee from Noah (Mosiah 23)

¹⁻⁵ Lord warned Alma to flee from Noah and strengthened the 450 people who traveled 8 days to a beautiful land of pure water. ¹⁹ “They called the land Helam. ²⁰ And ... they did multiply and prosper exceedingly ... and they built ... the city of Helam.”

The people wanted Alma to be their king, but Alma refused:

- “Ye shall not esteem one flesh above another, or one man shall not think himself above another;” (23:7)
- “If ... ye could always have just men to be your kings it would be well ... But remember the iniquity of king Noah and his priests” (23:9)

Therefore, “*trust no man to be a king over you*.” ¹⁴ And also *trust no one to be your teacher* nor your minister, except he be a man of God, walking in his ways and keeping his commandments. ¹⁵ And ... every man should *love his neighbor* as himself, that there should be *no contention* among them. ¹⁶ Alma was their high priest, ... the founder of their church.

5. Opposition in all things

SOED **Opposition:** 1. setting opposite or against ... 4. placing one thing in contrast with another.

6. Bondage to Lamanites

	Limhi	Alma
Lamanite Army	(19:6–14) Army attacked. Noah, priests, and some men run and leave families behind. Some repent or return after burning Noah. Daughters plead for those who remain	(23:25–29) Alma said fear not, but “remember the Lord ... and he would deliver them. Therefore they <i>hushed their fears</i> , and began to <i>cry unto the Lord</i> that he would soften the hearts of the Lamanites”
Bondage	(19:10,15,26) bloodshed, 50% tribute, 2 years	(23:35–39) No bloodshed, guards
Problem	(21:1–5) heavy burdens, surrounded	(23:39; 24:9) King Amulon persecuted them. Tasks and great afflictions
Response	(21:6–14, 17) Murmur, war 3 times (trusted arm of flesh), humbled before God, cried to God for deliverance, helped needy	(24:10) trusted God; “ <i>they began to cry mightily to God</i> .” When threatened with death for praying out loud, they prayed silently.
Answer to Prayers	(21:15–16) God was slow to answer. God softened hearts so Lamanites eased burdens. People prospered by degrees.	(24:13–15) God was quick to answer. “The Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease.”
Plan	(22:1–8) Discussed options. Gideon said let’s get guards drunk, and flee at night with possessions and families.	(24:16–17) “So great was their faith and their patience that ... the Lord ... [said] Be of good comfort, for on the morrow <i>I will deliver you out of bondage</i> .”
Escape	(22:9–13) Sent extra wine, departed by night, pursued for 2 days until Lamanites couldn’t follow tracks.	(24:18–25) “In the morning the Lord caused a deep sleep to come upon the Lamanites.” Thanked God, told to flee, “I will stop the Lamanites in this valley”
Travel to Zarahemla	(22:11, 14) Ammon led them to Zarahemla. “Mosiah received them with joy”	(22:25) God led them to Zarahemla; travelled 12 days, “Mosiah did also receive them with joy”

7. WHY do bad things happen to people?

8. Why?

- Why were you late?
- Why did we come to earth?

9. Why were they in bondage?

- Limhi’s people: (7:25–28; 20:20–21)
- Alma’s people: (23:21)

10. To stir them up to a remembrance

Lamanites “shall be a scourge unto [the Nephites], TO stir them up in remembrance of me; and inasmuch as they will not remember me, and hearken unto my words, they shall scourge them even unto destruction” (2 Ne 5:25)

“There was ... a law of performances and of ordinances ... which they were to observe strictly from day to day, to keep them in remembrance of God and their duty towards him.” (13:30)

11. The Lord trieth their patience and their faith (23:21)

SOED **Faith**: [L. *fidus* trustworthy, *fidere* trust. Used to translate Greek πίστις.] I. 1. *confidence, reliance, trust* ... II. 3. Assurance given, formal declaration, pledge, promise ... III. 1. The duty of fulfilling one’s trust; fealty; the obligation of a promise [covenant]

BAUER **πίστις** (*pístis*): 1. That which causes trust and faith— a. *faithfulness, reliability*, b. *solemn promise, oath, truth, c. proof, pledge*. 2. *trust, confidence, faith* in God’s commandments and promises.

SOED **Patient, patience**: [L. *pati* suffer] 1. Suffering or enduring (pain, trouble, or evil) with calmness and composure ... (b) Long-suffering, forbearing under provocation of any kind; esp. bearing with others, their faults, limitations, ... (c) Quietly awaiting the course or issue of events, etc. (d) Persistent, constant, unwearied in the face of difficulties and hindrances.

Neal A. Maxwell: Faith ... includes faith in God’s developmental purposes, for ‘the Lord seeth fit to chasten his people; yea, he trieth their patience and their faith.’ (Mos 23:21) Still, some of us have trouble when God’s tutoring is applied to us! We plead for exemption more than we do for sanctification. (*Ensign*, May 1991)

Patience is not indifference. Actually, it is caring very much, but being willing, nevertheless, to submit both to the Lord and to what the scriptures call the ‘process of time.’ Patience is tied very closely to faith in our Heavenly Father. Actually, when we are unduly impatient, we are suggesting that we know what is best— better than does God. Or, at least, we are asserting that our timetable is better than his. Either way we are questioning the reality of God’s omniscience, as if, as some seem to believe, God were on some sort of postdoctoral fellowship. (*Ensign*, Oct 1980)

12. King Benjamin: Becoming as a Child

“The natural man is an enemy to God ... and will be ... unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit ... and becometh as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father.” (3:19)

a. **Submissive**: yielding to power or authority (SOED)

b. **Humble** [L. low, lowly ... f. *humus* ground] (SOED)

One who lowers himself before God (prayer, dependence), and esteems his neighbor as himself (down to earth) instead of being lifted up in pride above his neighbor.

c. **Meek** (GR gentle, considerate, forgiving, benevolent, kind)

d. **Full of Love for God and Neighbor**

e. **“Willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him”**

Limhi’s people: murmured, fought 3 times, trusted in arm of flesh. Then, ^{21:13} “they did humble themselves even to the dust, subjecting themselves to the yoke of bondage, submitting themselves to be smitten, and to be driven to and fro, and

burdened, according to the desires of their enemies. ¹⁴ And they did humble themselves even in the depths of humility; and they did cry mightily to God ... that he would deliver them out of their afflictions. ... ¹⁷ King Limhi commanded that every man should impart to the support of the widows and their children.”

Alma: Fear not, Trust in God. Accept what is but pray and work for deliverance. ^{24:15} “They did submit cheerfully and with patience to all the will of the Lord.”

13. Stand as Witnesses

^{18:9} “Ye are ... willing ... to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and ... places that ye may be in, even until death.”

^{24:14} “I will also ease the burdens which are put upon your shoulders, that even you cannot feel them upon your backs, even while you are in bondage; and this will I do that ye may stand as witnesses for me hereafter, and that ye may know of a surety that I, the Lord God, do visit my people in their afflictions.”

^{24:21} They poured out their thanks to God because he had been merciful unto them, and eased their burdens, and had delivered them out of bondage; ... and none could deliver them except it were the Lord their God. ²² And they gave thanks to God, [and] ... lifted their voices in the praises of their God.

14. What are other types of bondage?

Amulon and Priests	Limhites
Left wives and families. “Daughters of the Lamanites did gather ... to sing, and to dance.” They took 24 into the wilderness to be their wives (20:1–5)	Limhi’s people stayed (19:12) or returned to be with their families.
Their Lamanite wives plead for their lives (23:33–34)	Daughters plead for their lives (19:13)

Amulon	Alma
Priest of king Noah; did not believe Abinadi or repent	Priest of king Noah; believed and repented
Led colony into wilderness when Noah commanded men to flee from Lamanites and to leave their families (19:11–23)	Led colony into wilderness with families when the Lord warned him to flee (18:32, 34; 23:1).
Gained favor of Lamanite king (24:1)	Gained favor with God
King over Alma’s people (23:39), exercised unrighteous dominion.	Refused to be king over his people (23:6–16). High priest, righteous dominion
Teacher of Lamanites who were friendly but knew not God (24:1, 5)	Teacher of church
Taught language of Nephites, keep records, write (24:4, 6), but did not teach about God or Law of Moses, or the words of Abinadi (24:5)	Taught words of Abinadi (18:1) and that God did and would deliver them (25:10,16)
Wicked and Prospered “The Lamanites began to increase in riches, and began to trade one with another and wax great, and began to be a cunning and a wise people, as to the wisdom of the world...delighting in ... wickedness and plunder, except it were among their own.” (24:7)	Righteous and Prospered “They did multiply and prosper exceedingly in the land of Helam” (23:19)