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## WHY DID ALMA DRAW ON THE TEACHINGS OF ABINADI?

“And behold, again it hath been spoken, that there is a first resurrection, a resurrection of all those who have been, or who are, or who shall be, down to the resurrection of Christ from the dead.”

Alma 40:16

### THE KNOW

Astute readers of the Book of Mormon may have noticed that “Alma [the Younger] shows an affinity for the words of Abinadi.”<sup>1</sup> Nowhere is this affinity more evident than in his counsel to his son Corianton, where research by John L. Hilton III indicates that Alma made at least thirteen allusions or direct quotations to Abinadi’s teachings (see table).<sup>2</sup>

For example, Alma warned Corianton that if he did not repent, his sins would “stand as a testimony against you at the last day” (Alma 39:8). Abinadi said the same thing about his innocent blood as the priests of Noah

prepared to slay him (Mosiah 17:10).<sup>3</sup> While responding to Corianton’s concerns about the resurrection, Alma explained, “there is no resurrection—or, I would say, in other words, that *this mortal* does not *put on immortality*, *this corruption* does not *put on incorruption*—until after the coming of Christ” (Alma 40:2). Abinadi taught the priests of Noah about the resurrection using similar terms: “Even *this mortal* shall *put on immortality*, and *this corruption* shall *put on incorruption*, and shall be brought to stand before the bar of God” (Mosiah 16:10).<sup>4</sup>

As Alma continued to teach Corianton, he explicitly stated that he was quoting words previously spoken by

another: “And behold, again **it hath been spoken**, that there is a *first resurrection*, a resurrection of all *those who have been*, or *who are*, or *who shall be*, down to the resurrection of Christ from the dead” (Alma 40:16). Again, Alma was most likely referring to the words of Abinadi, since he similarly taught, “And there cometh a resurrection, even a *first resurrection*; yea, even a resurrection of those that *have been*, and *who are*, and *who shall be*, even until the resurrection of Christ—for so shall he be called” (Mosiah 15:21).<sup>5</sup>

These and several more examples (see table) led Hilton to conclude, “As Alma provided doctrinal clarification to help his son see more clearly, he frequently turned to the words of Abinadi.”<sup>6</sup>

Phrase or Keywords	Alma	Abinadi
<i>Stand as a testimony against you at the last day</i>	Alma 39:8	Mosiah 17:10
<i>Salvation unto his people</i>	Alma 39:15–16, 18	Mosiah 15:10–11, 18
<i>Put on immortality ... put on incorruption</i>	Alma 40:2	Mosiah 16:10
<i>Gnashing of teeth</i>	Alma 40:13	Mosiah 16:2
<i>They have no part</i>	Alma 40:13	Mosiah 15:26
<i>First resurrection</i>	Alma 40:15–17	Mosiah 15:21–26
<i>Resurrection of Christ</i>	Alma 40:16–20; 41:2	Mosiah 15:21
<i>Brought to stand before God ... be judged ... according to their works</i>	Alma 40:21	Mosiah 16:10
<i>Bringeth about the restoration</i>	Alma 40:21–23, 26	Mosiah 15:24, 26–27
<i>Carnal, sensual, devilish</i>	Alma 42:9–11	Mosiah 16:4
<i>Were it not for the redemption</i>	Alma 42:11	Mosiah 15:19
<i>Demands of justice</i>	Alma 42:15	Mosiah 15:9
<i>Prepared from the foundation of the world</i>	Alma 42:26	Mosiah 15:19

## THE WHY

According to Hilton, recognizing connections like those discussed here illustrates that “the Book of Mormon is deep and rich, full of theological and textual connections that have yet to be tapped.”<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, they “demonstrate the textual integrity of the Book of Mormon.”

The Book of Mormon claims to be an ancient record authored by multiple individuals. The findings of this paper support this claim. By closely reading the text, we can picture a later prophet (Alma) poring over the words of his predecessor as he resolves his son’s concerns.

The consistent patterns of allusions in Alma 39–42 argue for textual intentionality. This was not something Joseph Smith made up.<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps most important, however, is that “The allusions described in this study shed light on Corianton’s concerns.”<sup>9</sup> Most of the allusions revolve around three major doctrinal topics, which appear to have been major concerns for Corianton: (1) the resurrection (Alma 40:1); (2) the meaning of restoration (Alma 41:1), and (3) the justice of God (Alma 42:1).<sup>10</sup> Abinadi had taught more about the resurrection than any other prophet we have on record, up to that point.<sup>11</sup> This points to at least one reason why Alma would have drawn on the words of Abinadi: he was a recent prophet who had addressed the key issues weighing on Corianton’s mind.<sup>12</sup> It is possible that Corianton was specifically confused about Abinadi’s teachings, and thus Alma used similar phrases and vocabulary as he clarified the principles Abinadi had taught.<sup>13</sup>

Some other possible reasons are more personal. Alma’s father—and Corianton’s grandfather—was the one who recorded and preserved Abinadi’s teachings. Abinadi’s teachings had been the very words that had convinced Alma the Elder, who was at that time one of King Noah’s priests, that he needed to repent. Alma the Younger would have surely heard these words and phrases repeated and taught by his father. Thus, “It seems natural,” observed Hilton, for Alma the Younger “to turn to the prophetic words that once had this very effect on Corianton’s grandfather—Alma the Elder.”<sup>14</sup>

Like Alma, parents today may wish to wisely and prudently draw on the words of scripture, the declarations of recent prophets, and the spiritual legacies of inspired grandparents or ancestors, while encouraging their children to live by gospel standards. To do so, it is imperative that parents be familiar with the scriptures, the words of modern-day prophets, and the testimonies handed down through family lines. As Hilton noted:

Alma has clearly studied the scriptures. He has paid a price to be so conversant in Abinadi’s words that he can weave them into a conversation as though they were his own. Because he has carefully studied Abinadi’s

words, when he is faced with a very difficult situation (a wayward son who has committed serious sin while serving a mission), Alma is able to help Corianton by explaining the words of recent prophets.<sup>15</sup>

14. Hilton, “Textual Similarities,” 57.
15. Hilton, “Textual Similarities,” 58.

## FURTHER READING

John L. Hilton III, “Textual Similarities in the Words of Abinadi and Alma’s Counsel to Corianton,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 51, no. 2 (2012): 39–60.

John Hilton III, “Abinadi’s Legacy: Tracing His Influence through the Book of Mormon,” in *Abinadi: He Came Among Them in Disguise*, ed. Shon D. Hopkin (Salt Lake City and Provo, UT: Deseret Book and BYU Religious Studies Center, 2018), 93–116.

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## NOTES

1. Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010), 134.
2. John L. Hilton III, “Textual Similarities in the Words of Abinadi and Alma’s Counsel to Corianton,” *BYU Studies Quarterly* 51, no. 2 (2012): 46–56; table based on p. 47.
3. See Hilton, “Textual Similarities,” 48.
4. See Hilton, “Textual Similarities,” 49–50.
5. See Hilton, “Textual Similarities,” 51–52. Incidentally, these two passages may have been even more similar in the original text, if the Nephite language still followed Hebrew norms at this time. In Hebrew, the same conjunction can be used for both *and* and *or*. See D. J. A. Clines, ed., *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, 8 vols. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993–2011), 1:596–598. Thus, in Hebrew, Alma’s statement “those who have been, *or* who are, *or* who shall be” and Abinadi’s statement “those that have been, *and* who are, *and* who shall be” could be identical. See also John A. Tvedtnes, “The Hebrew Background of the Book of Mormon,” in *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon: Insights you may have Missed Before*, ed. John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne (Salt Lake City and Provo, UT: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1991), 83–84; Donald W. Parry, *Preserved in Translation: Hebrew and Other Ancient Literary Forms in the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2020), 115–117.
6. John Hilton III, “Abinadi’s Legacy: Tracing His Influence through the Book of Mormon,” in *Abinadi: He Came Among Them in Disguise*, ed. Shon D. Hopkin (Salt Lake City and Provo, UT: Deseret Book and BYU Religious Studies Center, 2018), 100.
7. Hilton, “Textual Similarities,” 59.
8. Hilton, “Textual Similarities,” 59.
9. Hilton, “Textual Similarities,” 59.
10. Hilton, “Textual Similarities,” 56–57.
11. Hilton, “Textual Similarities,” 49–50, 53–55.
12. Hilton, “Textual Similarities,” 57.
13. Hilton, “Textual Similarities,” 51, 55, 59; Hilton, “Abinadi’s Legacy,” 101.



APPENDIX: ALMA’S USE OF ABINADI’S WORDS

Allusion	Abinadi’s Words	Alma’s Words
<p><b>Demands of justice</b></p>	<p>Mosiah 15</p> <p>9 Having ascended into heaven, having the bowels of <b>mercy</b>; being filled with compassion towards the children of men; standing betwixt them and <b>justice</b>; having broken the bands of death, <b>taken upon himself their iniquity and their transgressions</b>, having redeemed them, and <b>satisfied the demands of justice</b>.</p>	<p>Alma 42</p> <p>15 And now, the plan of <b>mercy</b> could not be brought about except an atonement should be made; therefore <b>God himself atoneth for the sins</b> of the world, to bring about the plan of mercy, to <b>appease the demands of justice</b>, that God might be a perfect, <b>just</b> God, and a <b>merciful</b> God also.</p>
<p><b>Salvation unto his people</b></p>	<p>Mosiah 15</p> <p>11 Behold I say unto you, that whosoever has heard the words of the prophets, yea, all the holy prophets who have prophesied concerning <b>the coming of the Lord</b>—I say unto you, that all those who have hearkened unto their words, and believed that the Lord would <b>redeem his people</b>, and have looked forward to that day for a <b>remission of their sins</b>, I say unto you, that these are his seed, or they are the heirs of the kingdom of God.</p> <p>18 And behold, I say unto you, this is not all. For O how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth <b>good tidings</b>, that is the founder of peace, yea, even the Lord, who has redeemed his people; yea, him who has granted <b>salvation unto his people</b>;</p>	<p>Alma 39</p> <p>15 And now, my son, I would say somewhat unto you concerning <b>the coming of Christ</b>. Behold, I say unto you, that it is <b>he that surely shall come to take away the sins</b> of the world; yea, <b>he cometh</b> to declare <b>glad tidings of salvation unto his people</b>.</p> <p>16 And now, my son, this was the ministry unto which ye were called, to declare these <b>glad tidings</b> unto this people, to prepare their minds; or rather that <b>salvation might come unto them</b>, that they may prepare the minds of their children to hear the word at <b>the time of his coming</b>.</p> <p>18 Is it not as necessary that the plan of <b>redemption should be made known unto this people</b> as well as unto their children?</p>
<p><b>Were it not for the redemption</b></p>	<p>Mosiah 15</p> <p>19 For <b>were it not for the redemption</b> which he hath made for his people, which was prepared from the foundation of the world, I say unto you, <b>were it not for this</b>, all mankind must have perished.</p>	<p>Alma 42</p> <p>11 And now remember, my son, <b>if it were not for the plan of redemption</b>, (laying it aside) as soon as they were dead their souls were miserable, being cut off from the presence of the Lord.</p>
<p><b>Prepared from the foundation of the world</b></p>	<p>Mosiah 15</p> <p>19 For were it not for the <b>redemption which he hath made for his people</b>, which was <b>prepared from the foundation of the world</b>, I say unto you, were it not for this, all mankind must have perished.</p>	<p>Alma 42</p> <p>26 And thus God bringeth about his great and eternal purposes, which were <b>prepared from the foundation of the world</b>. And thus cometh about the salvation and the <b>redemption of men</b>, and also their destruction and misery.</p>
<p><b>Resurrection of Christ</b></p>	<p>Alma 15</p> <p>21 And there cometh a resurrection, even a first resurrection; yea, even a resurrection of those that have <b>been, and who are, and who shall be, even until the resurrection of Christ</b>—for so shall he be called.</p>	<p>Alma 40</p> <p>16 And behold, again it hath been spoken, that there is a first resurrection, a resurrection of all those who have <b>been, or who are, or who shall be, down to the resurrection of Christ</b> from the dead.</p> <p>18 Behold, I say unto you, Nay; but it meaneth the reuniting of the soul with the body, of those from the days of Adam down to the <b>resurrection of Christ</b>.</p> <p>19 ... or in other words, their resurrection cometh to pass before the resurrection of those who die after the <b>resurrection of Christ</b>.</p> <p>20 Now, my son, I do not say that their resurrection cometh at the <b>resurrection of Christ</b>;</p>

<p><b>First Resurrection</b></p>	<p>Mosiah 15</p> <p>21 And there cometh a resurrection, even a <b>first resurrection</b>; yea, even a resurrection of those that have been, and who are, and who shall be, even until the resurrection of Christ—for so shall he be called.</p> <p>22 And now, the resurrection of all the prophets, and all those that have believed in their words, or all those that have kept the commandments of God, shall come forth in the <b>first resurrection</b>; therefore, they are the <b>first resurrection</b>.</p> <p>24 And these are those who have part in the <b>first resurrection</b>; ... and they have a part in the <b>first resurrection</b> ...</p> <p>26 ... these are they that have no part in the <b>first resurrection</b>.</p>	<p>Alma 40</p> <p>15 Now, there are some that have understood that this state of happiness and this state of misery of the soul, before the resurrection, was a <b>first resurrection</b>. Yea, I admit it may be termed a resurrection, the raising of the spirit or the soul and their consignation to happiness or misery, according to the words which have been spoken.</p> <p>16 And behold, again it hath been spoken, that there is a <b>first resurrection</b>, a resurrection of all those who have been, or who are, or who shall be, down to the resurrection of Christ from the dead.</p>
<p><b>Bringeth about the restoration</b></p>	<p>Mosiah 15</p> <p>24 And thus the Lord <b>bringeth about the restoration of these</b>; and they have a part in the first resurrection, or have eternal life, being redeemed by the Lord.</p> <p>26 But behold, and fear, and tremble before God, for ye ought to tremble; for the Lord redeemeth none such that rebel against him and die in their sins;</p>	<p>Alma 40</p> <p>22 Yea, this <b>bringeth about the restoration of those</b> things of which has been spoken by the mouths of the prophets.</p> <p>26 But behold, an awful death cometh upon the wicked; for they die as to things pertaining to things of righteousness;</p>
<p><b>They have no part</b></p>	<p>Mosiah 15</p> <p>26 But behold, and fear, and tremble before God, for ye ought to tremble; for the Lord redeemeth none such that rebel against him and die in their sins; yea, even all those that have perished in their sins ever since the world began, that have wilfully rebelled against God, that have known the commandments of God, and would not keep them; these are <b>they that have no part</b> in the first resurrection.</p>	<p>Alma 40</p> <p>13 And then shall it come to pass, that the <b>spirits of the wicked</b>, yea, who are evil—for behold, <b>they have no part</b> nor portion of the Spirit of the Lord; for behold, they chose evil works rather than good; therefore the spirit of the devil did enter into them, and take possession of their house—and these shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, and this because of their own iniquity, being led captive by the will of the devil.</p>
<p><b>Weeping, Wailing, and Gnashing of Teeth</b></p>	<p>Mosiah 16</p> <p>2 And <b>then shall the wicked be cast out</b>, and they shall have cause to howl, and <b>weep, and wail, and gnash their teeth; and this because they would not hearken unto the voice of the Lord; therefore the Lord redeemeth them not.</b></p> <p>3 For they are carnal and <b>devilish, and the devil has power over them</b>; yea, even that old serpent that did beguile our first parents, which was the cause of their fall; which was the cause of all mankind becoming carnal, sensual, <b>devilish</b>, knowing evil from good, <b>subjecting themselves to the devil.</b></p>	<p>Alma 40</p> <p>13 And then shall it come to pass, that the <b>spirits of the wicked, yea, who are evil</b>—for behold, they have no part nor portion of the Spirit of the Lord; for behold, they chose evil works rather than good; therefore <b>the spirit of the devil did enter into them</b>, and take possession of their house—<b>and these shall be cast out</b> into outer darkness; there shall be <b>weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, and this because of their own iniquity, being led captive by the will of the devil.</b></p>
<p><b>Carnal, Sensual, and Devilish</b></p>	<p>Mosiah 16</p> <p>3 For they are <b>carnal and devilish</b>, and the devil has power over them; yea, even that old serpent that did beguile our first parents, which was the cause of their fall; which was the cause of all mankind becoming <b>carnal, sensual, devilish</b>, knowing evil from good, subjecting themselves to the devil.</p>	<p>Alma 42</p> <p>6 But behold, it was appointed unto man to die—therefore, as they were cut off from the tree of life they should be cut off from the face of the earth—and man became <b>lost forever, yea, they became fallen man.</b></p>

	<p>4 Thus all mankind were <b>lost</b>; and behold, they would have been <b>endlessly lost</b> were it not that God <b>redeemed his people</b> from their <b>lost and fallen state</b>.</p> <p>5 But remember that he that persists in his own <b>carnal</b> nature, and goes on in the ways of sin and rebellion against God, remaineth in his <b>fallen</b> state and the <b>devil</b> hath all power over him. Therefore <b>he is as though there was no redemption made</b>, being an enemy to God; and also is the <b>devil</b> an enemy to God.</p>	<p>10 Therefore, as they had become <b>carnal, sensual, and devilish</b>, by nature, this probationary state became a state for them to prepare; it became a preparatory state.</p> <p>11 And now remember, my son, <b>if it were not for the plan of redemption, (laying it aside)</b> as soon as they were dead their souls were miserable, being cut off from the presence of the Lord.</p>
<b>Brought to stand before God ... be judged ... according to their works</b>	<p>Mosiah 16</p> <p>10 Even this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruption shall put on incorruption, and shall be <b>brought to stand before the bar of God, to be judged of him according to their works</b> whether they be good or whether they be evil</p>	<p>Alma 40</p> <p>21 But whether it be at his resurrection or after, I do not say; but this much I say, that there is a space between death and the resurrection of the body, and a state of the soul in happiness or in misery until the time which is appointed of God that the dead shall come forth, and be reunited, both soul and body, and be <b>brought to stand before God, and be judged according to their works</b>.</p>
<b>Put on immortality ... put on incorruption</b>	<p>Mosiah 16</p> <p>10 Even <b>this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruption shall put on incorruption</b>, and shall be brought to stand before the bar of God, to be judged of him according to their works whether they be good or whether they be evil</p>	<p>Alma 40:2</p> <p>2 Behold, I say unto you, that there is no resurrection—or, I would say, in other words, that <b>this mortal does not put on immortality, this corruption does not put on incorruption</b>—until after the coming of Christ.</p>
<b>Stand as a testimony against you at the last day</b>	<p>Mosiah 17</p> <p>10 Yea, and I will suffer even until death, and I will not recall my words, and <b>they shall stand as a testimony against you</b>. And if ye slay me ye will shed innocent blood, and <b>this shall also stand as a testimony against you at the last day</b>.</p>	<p>Alma 39:8</p> <p>But behold, ye cannot hide your crimes from God; and except ye repent <b>they will stand as a testimony against you at the last day</b>.</p>