

Chapter One

“A MESSENGER OF GOOD AND EVIL TIDINGS”

A Narrative Study of Abinadi

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The Book of Mormon contains the brief yet powerful account of Abinadi’s ministry among the people of King Noah as found in Mosiah 11–17. In two narrative episodes of unequal length, Abinadi first appears among the people in Mosiah 11 and is promptly rejected. Two years later, Abinadi returns and boldly proclaims God’s message, resulting in his death at the hands of King Noah and his priests (see Mosiah 12–17). In a narrative critical approach to these Abinadi episodes, a few aspects that are often missed in other studies of these chapters in Mosiah come into clearer understanding. First, Abinadi’s two visits to the people, two years apart, share a similar structure and certain repeated phrases and concepts, showing a well-developed narrative that continues to use wordplay and repartee throughout the story. Second, this narrative examination helps explain how the people are blinded by the king and his priests and ultimately left with a choice of whose commands they will obey: God’s, through Abinadi, or

King Noah's and the priests'. Third, while King Noah is often considered the chief antagonist to Abinadi because of his monarchical position, the narrative actually shows the priests fulfill this role, as they dominate not only the people but the king as well. As part of the priests' control, a narrative reading highlights the central function of the Isaiah passage found in Mosiah 12, as the priests reject Abinadi as a true messenger because he is not bringing the *good tidings* the Isaiah passage describes, but rather he is preaching doom and gloom. In the end, this narrative study highlights how Abinadi's ministry became primarily a contest between God's true messenger, Abinadi, and the perverters of God's true religion, the priests of King Noah, over issues of true prophecy, means to salvation, and power. As a true prophet, Abinadi shares both evil tidings and warnings as well as some of the richest "good tidings" found in holy scripture, describing the future ministry of the Redeemer to counteract the leadership's misguided belief that salvation will come through the law of Moses without the key figure in that law: Jesus Christ.

NARRATIVE BACKGROUND

A narratological study looks at all the components that go into the telling of a story in order to appreciate its different narrative facets (the aesthetic dimension) and to better understand the purpose and emphasis of the writer (the rhetorical dimension). Because this is a religious text, the narrative details usually have theological purposes meant to guide the reader toward a particular understanding of characters and ultimately of world-views so that the author or narrator can get the desired point across. Since Abinadi suddenly shows up in the story and dies a few chapters later, each narrative detail shapes how one is to perceive his prophetic mission.¹ Grant Hardy has argued, "The starting point for all serious readers of the Book of Mormon has to be the recognition that it is first and foremost a narrative, offered to us by specific, named narrators. Every detail and incident in the book has to be weighed against their intentions and rhetorical strategies."² After discussing the role of the narrator in the story, we will examine the structure and details of Abinadi's first visit to King Noah's people to see how those elements are carried over in the more extensive second visit. While discussing his second visit, we will investigate Abinadi's rhetoric to

trace out his train of thought as he weaves together scriptures and gospel principles in his confrontation with the king and his priests.

The narrator is the voice that guides the reader through the story. The narrator not only provides the perspective of the story but is important for revealing information about characters, events, and settings within the narrative.³ Oftentimes the narrator is the same as the author, but sometimes an author chooses to tell the story through some other means, such as from the perspective of a character (like the first-person narration in Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*). Since this is a story *about* Abinadi and not *from* Abinadi, the narrator is someone else who incorporates dialogue and description of events to tell the story about Abinadi. As the abridger of the Book of Mormon, Mormon is the general narrator in the book of Mosiah. However, Mormon drew on previous sources that had their own writers and narrators, and sometimes he allowed their first-person narration to guide the story. In the case of Abinadi's story, the author of Abinadi's teachings in King Noah's court was Alma, who, while hiding from King Noah, wrote them down (see 17:4).⁴ "The immediacy of Alma's writing . . . gives to the Book of Mormon account of Abinadi's case high documentary credentials."⁵ However, some preliminary information about King Noah's reign and his society before Abinadi's lengthy message and perhaps the account of Abinadi's death, could have been found in other sources or were also recorded by Alma.

The written source for the account of Abinadi is found in the "record of Zeniff." Mosiah 7 describes how King Limhi, Noah's son and successor, is recounting the history of his people to Ammon, an emissary sent from Zarahemla, including a description about a prophet (Abinadi) who had testified about Christ (see 7:26–28). But then, two chapters later, beginning in Mosiah 9, the narrative flashes back in time to King Noah's father, Zeniff, beginning the "record of Zeniff," which continues until chapter 22, thus including our section on Abinadi.⁶ Zeniff begins his record in first person (see chapters 9–10). But when Noah begins his reign, the narrative is no longer in first person, likely because Noah did not keep a record, or at least not a record that included teachings about Christ that Mormon would want to include in his own record. Instead, the narrative is recorded in third person with someone guiding the story along and including many

first-person dialogues. The identity of the narrator of this Abinadi section is never revealed, but it seems most likely that Mormon is summarizing and quoting from the record of Zeniff that was probably recorded by his grandson Limhi as part of the court record. Either Limhi or Mormon at some point drew upon Alma's record, especially for Abinadi's teachings. Thus, there are many stages in the transmission of Abinadi's teachings, from Abinadi to Alma to Limhi to Mormon. The narrator could be any of the last three, with either Mormon as the primary narrator or with Mormon abridging the narration of someone else's account of Abinadi's ministry.⁷ Regardless of the exact identity of the narrator, it is certainly someone who is pro-Abinadi and anti-King Noah and his priests; thus, the narrator guides the reader through the Abinadi story from that perspective.

ABINADI'S FIRST VISIT

To set the stage for this narratological discussion, we will examine the setting in which this story is found. The setting of Abinadi's first visit comes as part of a narrator's summary of the beginning of King Noah's wicked reign and more specifically after King Noah's people had recently gained a rare military victory against the Lamanites, which resulted in great pride and boasting. The narrator leaves no guessing as to his assessment of King Noah and his priests and thus how the reader should view them: they were iniquitous, following the desires of their own hearts instead of the commandments of God, and were leading the people astray. Several *thus* declarations by the narrator summarize their negative effect: "Thus he [King Noah] had changed the affairs of the kingdom," removing his father's priests and consecrating new ones who "were lifted up in the pride of their hearts" (11:4-5). (In some irony, King Noah may have appointed these priests with similar characteristics to himself to serve as his puppets, but as we will see later, Noah, in effect, becomes a puppet to them.) "Thus they were supported in their laziness, and in their idolatry, and in their whoredoms, by the taxes which king Noah had put upon his people" (11:6). "Thus did the people labor exceedingly to support iniquity" (11:6).

The people's taxes made King Noah rich, so he could commission many grand building projects. As part of one of the elaborate building projects

that King Noah oversaw, special seats were designed for the priests where they could “speak lying and vain words to his people” (11:11). Vain and flattering words deceived the people so that they became idolatrous (11:7). Besides grand buildings, they planted vineyards, which the text says led to King Noah becoming a “wine-bibber, and *also his people*” (11:15; emphasis added). More disconcerting than these characteristics was the character change that came over the people after their military victory which the narrator takes careful detail to point out: “They . . . did delight in blood, and the shedding of the blood of their brethren” (11:19). The narrator highlights that though their foes are Lamanites, the Lamanites are still “their brethren,” but Noah’s people delight only in bloodshed. He goes on to attribute to the king and the priests the distasteful qualities of boasting, delighting in blood, and shedding their brethren’s blood: “And this because of the wickedness of their king and priests” (11:19). Thus, throughout the introductory section preceding Abinadi’s arrival, the narrator describes the people as heavily taxed and wicked, primarily because of the demands, influence, and examples of the king and his priests. Therefore, the narrator places the chief responsibility for their wickedness upon King Noah and the priests.

Most commentators on Abinadi gloss over Abinadi’s first visit to King Noah’s people except to note that Abinadi returned two years later “in disguise” (see 12:1). Yet this brief account not only provides the people an opportunity to repent before God’s justice is exacted but also lays an important foundation to understand Abinadi’s overall prophetic mission and the corrupt setting to which he was sent. It also shares a similar structure to Abinadi’s second visit to the people, as outlined here:

- A. Abinadi is among the people (11:20; 12:1).
- B. Abinadi prophesies to the people outside the presence of the king or priests (11:20; 12:1).
- C. Abinadi shares the word of the Lord in the first-person voice of God⁸ (11:20–25; 12:1–8).
- D. The people react angrily, described in a narrator’s summary (11:26; 12:9).

- E. The people relay Abinadi's teachings to King Noah (11:27; 12:9–16). A difference between the two episodes is that in the first there is no detail given *how* the words were relayed to the king, but in the second Abinadi is bound and delivered to the king, and they repeat his alleged teachings in the presence of the king.

At this point of the structure, the second episode differs because the priests take the adversarial role in the narrative with their efforts to confound Abinadi, whereas in the first episode there is no interaction between Abinadi and the priests or the king.

When Abinadi first appears in the kingdom “among them” (11:20), presumably as a member of their community, the narrative focuses mostly on Abinadi preaching to “them,” the general population, without any description of who they were or exactly where Abinadi preached to them. The rhetoric of Abinadi's speech is given in first-person speech directly from God. As such, it becomes a very personal message from God (“I”) to “my people.”⁹ To emphasize the true origin of the message, the first person subject *I* is used eight times in six verses. Although *this people* is used a few times in Abinadi's speech and could be interpreted as God distancing himself from them, the use of several key terms shows that, though wicked, they are still God's people. First, *Lord their God* shows up four times. Second, *my people* is added to a quotation of scripture given as a warning: “They shall know that I am the Lord their God, and am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of *my people*” (11:22; emphasis added). This verse quotes part of Exodus 20:5 but with an important change; instead of “the iniquity of the fathers,” it is “the iniquities of *my people*.” The description of King Noah's people as God's people is important to the conflict within the story and parallels Abinadi's speech in his second visit. The Lord's message through Abinadi is clear: except his people repent, God will deliver them into the hands of their enemies and he will be slow to hear their cries to deliver them from their afflictions.

The word *deliver* plays a repeated role in Abinadi's first visit. Four times it is used: with a warning about delivering them into the hands of their enemies (11:21); the declaration that no one will be able to deliver them except God (11:23); another warning that God will not deliver them

from their afflictions unless they repent (11:25); and then the deliverance of Abinadi out of the hands of the angry people, which serves as the Lord's physical witness to his words (see 11:26). The narrator's summary of Abinadi's teachings' effect on the people is brief, but strong: "They were wroth with him, and sought to take away his life; but the Lord delivered him out of their hands" (11:26). Thus, with Abinadi's departure, the people are left with a choice: turn to the Lord their God or be turned over to their enemies, resulting in bondage and afflictions.

When King Noah first hears about Abinadi preaching among his people, he becomes angry and questions, "Who is Abinadi, that *I* and *my* people should be judged of him . . . ?" (11:27; emphasis added). Noah's speech, like God's earlier speech, uses the first-person pronoun *I* four times in two verses and uses a possessive determiner, *my*, a similar number of times, highlighting his self-centered worldview and his claim that the people are "his," almost as if they were objects he owns. Rhetorically, King Noah's stance sets up a direct contest between God and King Noah for the people's loyalty. For example, Abinadi asserts, "Except they [the people] repent *I* will visit them [the people] in mine anger," and King Noah responds, "*I* command you to bring Abinadi hither, that *I* may slay him" (Mosiah 11:20, 28; emphasis added). The two statements are inherently contradictory: the people can repent or bring Abinadi to be slain, but they cannot do both. Thus, this pericope sets up a contest in which the commands of only one *I*—Noah or God—can be followed. The opposition hinted at with the contradictory first-person commands becomes blatantly obvious in King Noah's defiant challenge, "Who is the Lord, that shall bring upon my people such great affliction?" (11:27). King Noah's statement heretically questions the Lord and implicitly assumes that "his" people do likewise. But do they? "This people" has a choice: it can obey the king's command to deliver Abinadi to him or obey God's command to repent. The first episode climaxes with this pivotal dilemma: Will the people follow King Noah and be "his" people, or will they follow the words of Abinadi and be the Lord's people?

The uncertainty does not last long, as the narrator ends Abinadi's first visit by giving a general summary of this encounter's effect on both the people and on King Noah: "Now the eyes of the people were blinded;

therefore they hardened their hearts *against the words of Abinadi*, and they sought from that time forward to take him. And king Noah hardened his heart *against the word of the Lord*, and he did not repent of his evil doings” (11:29; emphasis added). Although a slight change, it may be significant that the people harden their hearts against *Abinadi’s words* because they actually hear them, yet from that point on they seek to capture Abinadi in obedience to their king rather than repent in obedience to God. In contrast, the king hardens his heart against the *Lord’s word* because he hears it only secondhand from the people, not straight from Abinadi. The narrator also states that the people are “blinded,” a term designating lack of full responsibility or knowledge, in this case because of the wicked teachings and examples of their leaders, whereas King Noah more directly and independently hardens his heart. The narrative also builds upon the conflict between King Noah and the Lord by directly specifying that Noah is rejecting the Lord’s word.

ABINADI’S SECOND VISIT

ABINADI PREACHES TO THE PEOPLE

When Abinadi returns two years later, the focus is on prophesying *against* the people because they have not used the intervening time to hearken to Abinadi’s previous call to repentance. The punishment is fixed because the people have forfeited their opportunity to heed the warnings Abinadi gave during his first visit (“except this people repent . . .”). The structure of the second visit to the people is similar to the first. (A) Abinadi shows up among the people (this time in disguise) and (B) begins to prophesy the words the Lord had commanded him. (C) Abinadi’s message is full of the rhetoric of indictment given in God’s first-person speech, leaving no question that God is behind Abinadi’s message and will exact justice on the people. (In 12:1–8, the first-person subject *I* is used twelve times, and the first-person possessive *my* is used five times.)

Abinadi’s opening words from the Lord reflect the harsh sentiment of the entire message: “Go and prophesy unto this my people, for they have hardened their hearts against my words; they have repented not of their evil doings; therefore, I will visit them in my anger, yea, in my fierce anger

will I visit them in their iniquities and abominations” (12:1). Strong woes are declared upon “this generation” because of their iniquities, prophecies fulfilled later when their society was overrun by the Lamanites and many were killed or placed under bondage (see Mosiah 20:21; 21:1–15). Complete annihilation is decreed unless they repent, the only hope offered (“except they repent I will utterly destroy them from off the face of the earth” (12:8)).¹⁰

The Lord’s speech specifically targets absent King Noah as the contest between God and King Noah deepens. (Later, the people relay Abinadi’s words from the Lord to the king.) Abinadi tells the people in the Lord’s voice that Noah’s life will be “valued even as a garment in a hot furnace; for he shall know that I am the Lord” (12:3).¹¹ Noah had earlier questioned, “Who is the Lord?” (11:27); now he would learn the answer the hard way.

(D) The effect of Abinadi’s prophecies is similar to his first visit: the people become angry. The difference this time, however, is that the Lord does not deliver Abinadi out of their hands, but the people capture Abinadi and deliver him to the king, setting up the fateful and apparently necessary encounter between Abinadi and King Noah and his priests. Abinadi later states that he suffered himself to fall into their hands so that they would know of a surety of his words (see 17:9). (E) The people condemn Abinadi to the king in first-person dialogue, sharing what he had taught mingled with their judgment of those teachings. They first state, “We have brought a man before thee who has prophesied evil concerning *thy people*, and saith that God will destroy them. And he also prophesieth evil concerning *thy life*, and saith that thy life shall be as a garment in a furnace of fire” (12:9–10; emphasis added). The people perceive Abinadi’s words as a two-pronged attack on the king and on *his* people. By not accepting Abinadi’s words as coming from the Lord for *his* people, they reject their relationship to God (“my people” in the earlier words relayed by Abinadi) and instead affiliate themselves directly with the king (“thy people”). They also twice repeat that Abinadi was “prophesying evil.” Though they did not accept Abinadi’s words, they recognized them as evil tidings rather than good tidings.

The people reject Abinadi’s judgment of the king’s or their own wickedness and throw out the accusation that “he *pretendeth* the Lord hath

spoken it” (see 12:12; emphasis added). Instead of the vain words of the priests to the people described by the narrator in 11:11, now the people claim that Abinadi’s prophecies are vain (see 12:14). In a series of *behold* declarations, they state that Abinadi has prophesied in vain, since they are too strong to come into bondage and the king’s prosperity is evidence of his righteousness. In an ironic twist of words from the Lord’s warning given earlier in 11:21, the people then deliver Abinadi into the king’s hands. Thus, instead of Noah’s people being delivered into the hands of their enemies, Abinadi is now delivered into the hands of his enemy (but because of the people’s actions here, the Lord’s warning would be fulfilled to the people later). The wording is reminiscent of Pilate’s infamous future *ecce homo* announcement in John 19:5 (“behold the man!”) as he presents Jesus to the crowds who cry out for Jesus’s crucifixion. But in this case, the roles are reversed: the people are the ones declaring, “Behold, here is the man, we deliver him into thy hands; thou mayest do with him as seemeth thee good” (12:16), and then turning over the victim to the ruler for final condemnation. From this point on in the story, the people fade into the background, having sealed their fate with their rejection and handing over of Abinadi. Breaking from the shared structure with Abinadi’s first visit to the people, a lengthy dialogue about true prophecy and the role of Christ vis-à-vis the law of Moses ensues as the primary antagonist role turns to the priests and, to a lesser extent, King Noah.

DIALOGUE IN KING NOAH’S COURT

In order to discuss the rest of the second episode of Abinadi’s ministry without getting bogged down in summary, some general statements may provide a framework for the material through which specific points can be highlighted. What primarily drives the rhetoric of this portion of the story can be seen in 13:3, when Noah’s court attempts to lay their hands on Abinadi after his initial opening words. Abinadi states, “I have not delivered the message which the Lord sent me to deliver; neither have I told you that which ye requested that I should tell.” Thus, Abinadi’s dialogue throughout this section is twofold: (1) to give the Lord’s message and his call to repentance specifically to the king and the priests, since he has already given his message to the people (perhaps the reason he allowed himself to be taken

into the king's court), and (2) to answer the priests' question about how to interpret the Isaiah passage the priest quoted (Isaiah 52:7–10). Admittedly, it can be difficult to distinguish between these two strands because they are interwoven throughout these chapters, in which Abinadi uses the interpretation of Isaiah to call the priests to repentance and in which he teaches that the end result of both repentance and Isaiah's prophecy is salvation through Christ. However, there are times when it is clear Abinadi is addressing his present audience because he condemns their false teaching and disobedience and warns them of the consequences if they do not change (see 12:29–37; 13:7–28; 15:26–27; 16:13–15). There are also points when Abinadi is noticeably discussing and interpreting the Isaiah passage (see 12:20–27; 15:14–18, 28–31). Significant transitions related to the law of Moses and Christ's role in salvation develop Abinadi's train of thought between these two major topics.

I. Discussion of Isaiah passage (12:20–27). The priests' request for Abinadi's interpretation of the Isaiah passage initiates Abinadi's teachings in King Noah's court. Although Abinadi is not directly quoting a first-person message from the Lord, he is still acting as a prophet by giving prophecies of Christ and of what will happen to the priests if they reject him. The Isaiah passage (52:7–10; Mosiah 12:21–24) extols the beauty of those that bring glad tidings and peace and recounts the subsequent rejoicing and singing when the Lord shall bring again Zion. The priests imply that since Abinadi has preached only evil tidings and doom, he must not be a true prophet.¹² In response, Abinadi claims the priests only pretend to teach the people and to understand the spirit of prophesying (see 12:25), an echo of the people's earlier accusation that Abinadi "*pretendeth* the Lord hath spoken it" (see 12:12; emphasis added). Instead, the priests pervert the ways of the Lord by not applying their hearts to understanding or teaching these things (see 12:26–27).

II. Call to repentance (12:29–37). Abinadi's message to the priests is strong and condemnatory—the priests¹³ "*cause* this people to commit sin"; therefore, "the Lord has *cause* to send me [Abinadi] to prophesy against this people, yea, even a great evil¹⁴ against this people" (12:29; emphasis added). The priests set their hearts upon riches, commit whoredoms, and spend their strength with harlots (12:29). Thus, Abinadi declares that the

priests promote false behavior to salvation by disobeying and not teaching the commandments while rebelling against God and that they promote a false means of salvation through the law of Moses without Christ. The “truth,” which cuts them to their hearts, becomes Abinadi’s rhetorical weapon: truth about their iniquities, which leads them to anger. Abinadi rhetorically asks if they know that he is speaking the truth, then proclaims that they do know and thus they “ought to tremble before God” (12:30), a desired response to his call to repentance that he repeats several times later (see 15:26–27; 16:13). But in the end, Abinadi’s call to repentance falls on deaf ears, with the exception of one of the priests, Alma, who “believed the words which Abinadi had spoken, for he knew concerning the iniquity which Abinadi had testified against them” (17:2).

Although Abinadi gives lengthy teachings in the presence of the priests, the priests have practically no voice in the interchange: only one brief, direct quotation and one summary quotation by the narrator, both dealing with the law of Moses. More frequently, Abinadi answers his own questions when he poses them to the priests (see 12:30, 37; 13:25–26). Thus, the narrative emphasizes how Abinadi judges the priests’ reliance on the law of Moses without their believing in a salvific Christ figure. This highlights the priests’ false notion that their actions and behaviors are justified because they teach the law of Moses and believe that salvation will come from it. Abinadi’s lengthy dialogue answering the Isaiah passage is meant to be a corrective to show the priests how their misunderstood doctrine and misapplied conduct relate to that passage. They have taken the Messiah out of their teachings and practice and thus cannot fully realize the blessings the Isaiah passage is foretelling.

III. King Noah’s interruption and God’s power (13:1–6). An interruption to the narrative’s rhetoric takes place at the beginning of chapter 13, when in the midst of Abinadi’s dialogue with the priests and particularly after Abinadi accuses the priests of not being obedient to the commandments and not teaching them to the people, King Noah turns to his priests and says, “Away with this fellow, and slay him; for what have we to do with him, for he is mad” (13:1). Being “mad” is the only adjective given for Abinadi in the entire story, but from an unreliable source, King Noah. Because of the power of God that comes upon Abinadi, they cannot touch

him, an indication that God is more powerful than the king. Abinadi's "face shone with exceeding luster, even as Moses' did while in the mount of Sinai, while speaking with the Lord" (13:5). Moses is the prophet most alluded to in the Book of Mormon for demonstrating the power that can be received from God. Moses was able to part the Red Sea (see 1 Nephi 4:2-3; Helaman 8:11-12); he could smite a rock and bring forth water (see 1 Nephi 17:29); he could heal those bitten by poisonous serpents who looked upon the brass serpent (see 2 Nephi 25:20); and, alluded to in this episode, Moses received spiritual power and glory while in the presence of God on Mount Sinai.

As part of the contest of power between God and King Noah and the priests, they are forced to listen as Abinadi continues to speak "with power and authority from God" (13:6). Because of God's power and authority, Abinadi can claim that they have not power to slay him until he finished his message, "and then it matters not whither I go, if it so be that I am saved" (13:9). But whatever they do to him, Abinadi prophetically warns, "shall be as a type and a shadow of things which are to come" (13:10). By causing many believers to suffer the pains of death by fire, the seed of the priests later fulfills Abinadi's words, which is recounted in an intertextual allusion many chapters and decades later (see a repetition of Abinadi's prophecy in Mosiah 17:15 and its fulfillment in Alma 25:4-5; 7-12).

IV. Call to repentance (13:7-28). As further indication of Abinadi's prophetic status, he can perceive the thoughts and feelings of his audience. Abinadi points out that his words cut the priests to their hearts "because I tell you the truth concerning your iniquities. Yea, and my words fill you with wonder and amazement, and with anger" (13:7-8). He also remarks that the commandments are not written on their hearts: "I perceive that ye have studied and taught iniquity the most part of your lives" (13:11). Thus, Abinadi, the main character, confirms the narrator's early statements in chapter 11 about the wicked nature of the priests and their grievous effect on the people. As a result of Abinadi's words, the priests grow angrier. Interestingly, Abinadi speaks against the king when preaching to the people, but most of his dialogue in the presence of Noah is directed against the priests. Thus, it sets up the conflict between Abinadi as the

true messenger of God and the false ministers who have been leading the people astray.

Abinadi returns to his reading¹⁵ of the commandments (13:12–24) as evidence that they are not written on the priests' hearts. Among these commandments, he repeats what was given in his first visit, that the Lord is a jealous God (see 13:13; 11:22), to emphasize again the need to repent and worship the true God and to denounce Noah's and the priests' rejection of God. Abinadi concludes the retelling of the commandments with this question and observation: "Have ye taught this people that they should observe to do all these things for to keep these commandments? I say unto you, Nay; for if ye had, the Lord would not have caused me to come forth and to prophesy evil concerning this people" (13:25–26). Abinadi thus reiterates that due to their wickedness, he bears the evil tidings decreed by the Lord.

V. First Transition (13:29–15:13). One lengthy transition between Abinadi's call to repentance and his interpretation of Isaiah 52 occurs in 13:29–15:13 as Abinadi discusses the initial giving of the law of Moses to the Israelites, which was meant as a type of things to come (see 13:29–35). Abinadi is transitioning from the evil tidings he must give the people to the good tidings of Christ's mission and Atonement.¹⁶ To strengthen the point of the need for a divine savior figure, Abinadi clarifies a previous question raised with the priests (see 12:33), whether salvation came from the law of Moses. He states that "it is expedient that ye should keep the law of Moses as yet," but there will come a time when it is no longer expedient (see 13:27). He then moves on to explain that salvation does not come from the law alone, for "were it not for the atonement, which God himself shall make for the sins and iniquities of his people, that they must unavoidably perish, notwithstanding the law of Moses" (13:28). The Israelites, like Noah's priests, did not understand that the law was not the sole means of salvation even though Moses and other prophets prophesied of the coming of the Messiah to redeem his people. The prophets taught that no one could "be saved except it were through the redemption of God" (13:32). The doctrine that "God himself should come down among the children of men, and take upon him the form of man" (13:34) led to Abinadi quoting Isaiah 53 (Mosiah 14).¹⁷ The narrative frame before

and after this chapter is repeated in reverse order. Whereas in 13:33–34 it emphasizes that (a) God shall redeem his people and that (b) God himself should come down among the children of men, in 15:1 these concepts are reversed: “I would that ye should understand that [b'] God himself shall come down among the children of men, and [a'] shall redeem his people.”

Abinadi next explains the divine nature of the Redeemer as Son and Father (15:1–9). Perhaps Abinadi wants his listeners to avoid the false interpretation that the suffering servant is simply a mortal.¹⁸ Rather, it is God himself—the Father and the Son—“The Father, because he was conceived by the power of God; and the Son, because of the flesh; thus becoming the Father and Son” (15:3). Abinadi explains this divine relationship as one of *subjection*: “Flesh to the will of the Father,” “flesh becoming subject to the Spirit,” “Son to the Father,” “flesh becoming subject even unto death,” “the will of the Son being swallowed up in the will of the Father” (see 15:2, 5, 7). Jesus’s fulfillment of his atoning mission would give him power in two aspects highlighted by Abinadi, one in this first transition and one in the second. First, the Son would be given “power to make intercession for the children of men” (15:8) so that he can stand between them and justice until the demands of justice are satisfied (see 15:9). Second, he would have “power over the dead; therefore, he bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead” (15:20). Abinadi emphasizes these atoning powers in his efforts to convince the priests that salvation does not come by the law of Moses alone but needs the redemption of a divine being and to show that ultimately God’s power will prevail over any other.

VI. Discussion and interpretation of the Isaiah passage (15:14–18). The transition in 15:10–13 provides Abinadi the immediate link between what he has just taught and his interpretation of the Isaiah 52 passage. By interweaving phrases from Isaiah 53, Abinadi explains who is “the seed”—the prophets who have prophesied the Lord would redeem his people and those who believed in their words. These are the ones who bring good tidings and publish peace as described in the initial Isaiah 52 passage. The priests believe that unlike Abinadi they bring glad tidings to Noah’s people, but they do not. There is a difference between so-called messengers of good news and the good news itself: Christ. The priests fail to see that without believing that salvation comes through Christ, they cannot fulfill

Isaiah's prophecy, yet Abinadi and other prophets are fulfilling and would fulfill this prophecy because they preach of salvation through Christ. Abinadi also includes Christ as one who fulfills this passage: "And behold, I say unto you, this is not all. For O how beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that is the founder of peace, yea, even the Lord, who has redeemed his people; yea, him who has granted salvation unto his people" (15:18).

VII. Second Transition (15:19–25). In this transition between the interpretation of Isaiah and calling the priests to repentance yet again, Abinadi talks in general terms about the necessary redemption Christ will make. "For were it not for the redemption which he hath made for his people, which was prepared from the foundation of the world, I say unto you, were it not for this, all mankind must have perished" (15:19). This phrase sets up Abinadi's later contention that though the law of Moses was good, without the redemption of Christ it would have been insufficient for salvation. (The word *redeem* or *redemption* appears nineteen times in Abinadi's words.) Abinadi also teaches that Christ would break the bands of death and bring forth the First Resurrection. Abinadi further explains who will be recipients of the First Resurrection, which leads to his warning to the priests that in their current rebellious state they will not qualify for such redemption.

VIII. Call to repentance (15:26–27). Following the brief section on Christ's power of resurrection, Abinadi sternly warns the priests that they should fear and tremble because the Lord will not redeem those who rebel against him. "Therefore ought ye not to tremble? For salvation cometh to none such; for the Lord hath redeemed none such; yea, neither can the Lord redeem such; for he cannot deny himself; for he cannot deny justice when it has its claim" (15:27). Abinadi is warning against the theological trap some fall into when they overemphasize God's mercy or justify their own behavior to the point that they deny God's justice.

IX. Discussion and interpretation of the Isaiah passage (15:28–31). Abinadi returns to part of the Isaiah passage under question by emphasizing that Christ's redemption is the message that will be proclaimed "to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people." This good news is what Isaiah meant would be declared by the watchmen and which would lead God's

people to great rejoicing. “All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God” (15:31).

X. Third transition (16:1–12). At the beginning of this section, the narrator describes a small, but perhaps significant, gesture: “After Abinadi had spoken these words *he stretched forth his hand*” (16:1; emphasis added). The meaning of Abinadi stretching forth his hand may be for emphasis or to gesture to the future, but in light of what he just had quoted, “the Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations,” perhaps Abinadi is making bare his arm to his audience to testify that “the time shall come when all shall see the salvation of the Lord; when every nation, kindred, tongue, and people shall see eye to eye and shall confess before God that his judgments are just” (16:1).¹⁹ In any case, it fulfills God’s command shared by Abinadi when he initially preaches among the people the second time: “And the Lord said unto me: *Stretch forth thy hand* and prophesy” (12:2; emphasis added).

The alternative to Christ’s redemption and rescue is next spelled out by Abinadi: subjection to the devil. Rather than benefit from Christ’s atoning power, the devil—the old serpent who leads people to know evil from good (rather than good from evil)—gains power over them (see 16:3). If one persists in carnal nature, sinning and rebelling against God, that person “remaineth in his fallen state and the devil hath all power over him. Therefore he is as though there was no redemption made, being an enemy to God; and also is the devil an enemy to God” (16:5). Abinadi then testifies that all would have been in such a state had not a redemption been made, but thankfully a redemption has been made (“speaking of things to come as though they had already come”) and there is endless life (16:6). Abinadi emphasizes the necessity of Christ’s mission in the next few verses, which leads each resurrected being to stand before the judgment bar of God. Abinadi stresses that agency leads to two drastically different outcomes, including the possibility of being delivered up to the devil (recalling the earlier uses of *deliver* discussed above) if agency is misused: “If they be good, to the resurrection of endless life and happiness; and if they be evil, to the resurrection of endless damnation, being delivered up to the devil, who hath subjected them, which is damnation” (16:11). Abinadi seems to address a general audience while also applying his sentiments to

those in his presence: “The arms of mercy were extended towards them, and they would not;²⁰ they being warned of their iniquities and yet they would not depart from them; and they were commanded to repent and yet they would not repent” (16:12).

XI. Call to repentance (16:13–15). Abinadi closes his speech in the king’s court with a final call to repentance to the priests as he returns to some of his main points about the necessity of Christ for salvation: “And now, ought ye not to tremble and repent of your sins, and remember that only in and through Christ ye can be saved? Therefore, if ye teach the law of Moses, also teach that it is a shadow of those things which are to come—Teach them that redemption cometh through Christ the Lord, who is the very Eternal Father. Amen” (16:13–15). If only the priests understood the true significance of the law of Moses, taught that understanding to the people, and obeyed God’s commandments, then they could receive all the blessings of Christ’s redemption. If, however, they remain in their current state, then they will eventually tremble in the presence of God’s justice.

FINAL SENTENCING OF ABINADI

When Abinadi finishes his message and interpretation of the Isaiah passage, the king commands the priests to “take him and cause that he should be put to death” (17:1). But first a three-day prison stay follows for Abinadi, while the king counsels again with his priests. When Abinadi returns before the king, the king pronounces an alleged accusation worthy of death against Abinadi, that Abinadi claimed God should come down among mankind, but he offers Abinadi the opportunity to recant the “evil” he had spoken concerning Noah and his people (17:8). It is important to note that Noah is more concerned that Abinadi stop speaking evil of himself and his people than that he change his doctrine. In response and at the threat of death, Abinadi bears a strong first-person witness in the presence of the king, refusing to back down from his previous teachings (see 17:9–10). Abinadi’s testimony almost convinces the king to release him, for he “feared his word” (as Abinadi said the priests should), but the priests stir the king to anger again with a brief charge against Abinadi meant to embarrass the king if he lets Abinadi free, saying “he has reviled the king” (17:12), and Abinadi is delivered up to be slain. Whereas earlier

King Noah wanted Abinadi delivered to him so he could slay him (see 11:28), now Noah delivers up Abinadi so others would slay him. Perhaps he still fears directly taking Abinadi's life because he fears the judgment of God that would come upon him. Therefore, in the end, the priests are the driving force that led to Abinadi's death.²¹

Abinadi's death is described in somewhat gruesome detail as he is bound, scourged²² (or scorched by bundles of sticks),²³ and eventually burned to death (17:13). In the midst of the flames, Abinadi cries out that other believers will also suffer death at the hands of the seed of the priests; in other words, the seed of Christ would suffer from the wicked seed of the priests, who would carry on their wicked and murderous ways. (Remember also Abinadi's prophecy in 13:10 that what they do with him would be a "type and a shadow of things which are to come.") Abinadi warns that, because of their iniquities, they will suffer many diseases, will be smitten and hunted, and will suffer the pains of death by fire (perhaps a direct reference to King Noah). These punishments are demonstrations of the justice of God that he executes with "vengeance upon those that destroy his people," which Abinadi warns about throughout his teaching (17:19). Abinadi's closing words are "O God, receive my soul" (17:19), the messenger returning to his master.

The story of Abinadi ends with the narrator's summary statement: "And now, when Abinadi had said these words, he fell, having suffered death by fire; yea, having been put to death because he would not deny the commandments of God, having sealed the truth of his words by his death" (Mosiah 17:20).²⁴ The mark of a true prophet is his willingness to seal his testimony with his blood because he knows his message comes from God and he cannot deny it.

CONCLUSION

A narrative study looks at all the components that go into the telling of a story in order to not only appreciate how the story is told but also better understand the writer's purpose and emphasis. These narrative pieces have narratological purpose, and, because it is a religious text, they usually have theological purposes also. Reviewing information from the setting, characterization, repetition, dialogue, and narrative structure helps us to see

the narrator's efforts to demonstrate Abinadi's true prophetic role against the false teachings and conduct of King Noah and his priests.

Rather than a simple retelling of a prophet's visit, this study shows how the Abinadi story is a well-crafted account full of inner wordplay and repartee. Alma, based on his personal experiences as the one priest who heeded Abinadi's words, seems to be the primary narrator of this story, as he attempts to show the contrast between God's true messenger, Abinadi, and the false ones, the priests, who had negatively influenced King Noah's people. The first part of the story involves the interaction between Abinadi and the general population. In Abinadi's two visits among the people, a similar narrative structure is discernible with similar results. Standing at the crossroads of returning to God as his people and continuing their current lifestyle as King Noah's subjects, the people align themselves with Noah and his wicked priests. In the buildup to this fateful decision, the narrator leaves little doubt that King Noah and his priests are wicked and corrupt, leading the people to follow their wicked ways. Thus, when the people harden their hearts both against God's warnings (Abinadi's "evil tidings") and against the need for repentance to access the salvation of the Lord (Abinadi's good tidings), much of the blame rests on their having been blinded by King Noah and his priests. By rejecting the deliverance offered through God's messenger, the people would be delivered to the demands of justice both in the short term, as they are captured or destroyed by their enemies, as well as in the long term, risking eternal judgment.

The second part of the Abinadi account becomes a contest in King Noah's court primarily between God's true messenger and the perverters of God's true religion over issues of true prophecy, means to salvation, and power. Although King Noah breathes out threats against Abinadi's life, in several instances Noah functions as a puppet to the priests. In the end, Noah is dependent on the priests, withholding actions until after consulting with them and succumbing to their vindictive desires to kill Abinadi. As additional support for Abinadi's conflict primarily being against the priests, whenever Abinadi speaks judgments against the king it is to the people, but most of his condemnations against the priests are spoken directly to them, a stronger rhetorical effect.

The second part of the Abinadi account also demonstrates narrative structure, but because it follows dialogue, it weaves back and forth between Abinadi's efforts to share his message of repentance to King Noah's priests and Abinadi's interpretation of the Isaiah 52 passage. The plot advances as Abinadi develops this two-pronged objective, and the attempt to stop Abinadi's speech is decisively thwarted by God's power. Abinadi's conflict with the priests of Noah revolves around the interpretation of Isaiah 52:7–10 found in Mosiah 12, as the priests reject Abinadi as a true messenger because he is not bringing the good tidings the Isaiah passage describes. Abinadi accuses the priests of not understanding the spirit of prophecy and hence the true role of messengers of God: sometimes they are commanded to prophesy evil against a people. An examination of the priests' few words in the dialogue quickly shows that they also misunderstand the role of the law of Moses as a type and shadow of the redemption provided by a divine, suffering servant, so Abinadi gives a lengthy theological discourse to explain the role of Christ in the plan of salvation. Based on their conduct and teachings, the priests cannot bring salvation to themselves or the people, and a difference is drawn between the seed of the priests, who will continue to practice wickedness, and the seed of Christ, who will hearken to the prophets. The end result of these groups' choices determine what kind of power can come into their lives, either the power of Christ's intercession or the subjection of Satan's power.

In the end, God's true messenger is rejected by the three opponents in the story. The people feel that Abinadi only pretends to speak for the Lord and that his prophecies are vain. Noah berates Abinadi as mad. The priests, Abinadi's strongest opponents, denounce Abinadi and ultimately ensure his death. Abinadi, however, repeatedly demonstrates the veracity of his calling as God's true messenger by sharing prophecies of Christ, explaining how salvation comes through Christ, warning of punishments if changes are not made, prophesying of future events for the people, perceiving the thoughts and feelings of his audience, and being willing to seal his testimony with his death. Like Elijah facing the false priests of Baal, Abinadi boldly accuses Noah's priests of perverting the Lord's ways and teaching iniquity most of their lives. In the end, King Noah's kingdom rejects God's true messenger, and, instead of a fire that consumed Elijah's

sacrifice, a fire consumes God's sacrificial messenger who "would not deny the commandments of God" but rather "sealed the truth of his words by his death" (17:20). In the same spirit of the good tidings Abinadi shared about Christ's redemption, Abinadi becomes a type of Christ: a suffering servant sacrificing his life in service of *the* Suffering Servant. Thus, as a true prophet delivering God's words, Abinadi wholly exemplified a messenger of both good and evil tidings.

NOTES

1. Scripture writing tends to deemphasize extensive, detailed narrative description, so whatever information is included can prove to be significant to understanding a character, the setting, or the plot.
2. From Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon: A Reader's Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), xv. For other examples of narrative theoretical models and methods, see Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981); Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978); Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, trans. Jane E. Lewin (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980); Thomas G. Pavel, *The Poetics of Plot: The Case of English Renaissance Drama*, Theory and History of Literature, vol. 18 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985); Mark Allan Powell, *What Is Narrative Criticism?* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990); Meir Sternberg, *Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).
3. Grant Hardy has stated, "The pervasive presence of narrators can make the Book of Mormon more engaging and literary than is often assumed." From *Understanding the Book of Mormon*, xv. See also, "Because they rarely read the text with the narrators in mind, Mormons have largely missed the literary coherence and aesthetic qualities of the book." *Understanding the Book of Mormon*, xix. In addition, Grant Hardy has noted that Book of Mormon narrators are not reticent, unlike Hebrew Bible narrators, but rather are very open and willing to share their judgments about the narrated events with the reader. Book of Mormon narrators "reveal their identities from the beginning and exercise strict control over their material. They write from limited, human perspectives—that is, they give us their personal view of what happened and why it is important

(though for those within the faith, the prophetic authority of these men makes them uniquely qualified to render such judgments). They do not hesitate to address readers directly to explain their intentions, their writing processes, their editorial decisions, and their emotional responses to the events they recount. They demarcate textual units for our consideration. They interrupt the narrative to offer explicit judgments.” *Understanding the Book of Mormon*, 15.

4. All parenthetical references to scripture will be from the book of Mosiah unless otherwise indicated.
5. John W. Welch, *The Legal Cases in the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press and Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 2008), 141. In addition, a close examination of the narrative lends itself to the idea that the narrator is someone who was present for much of the discussion in King Noah’s court, most likely a priest. One reason for this supposition is that often the king’s commands are given in indirect speech, while the priests’ words are given directly. For example, following Abinadi’s deliverance to the king, he commanded that Abinadi be put into prison and that his priests should gather for a council on what to do with Abinadi. But then the next verse includes the priests’ actual words: “Bring him hither that we may question him” (12:17–18). This characteristic fits with someone who knows the end result of what the king commanded but was not there for the exact wording yet was present for the priests’ dialogue. Of course, the most likely candidate for such a narrator is Alma, who was King Noah’s priest before being chased away for accepting Abinadi’s teachings.
6. When Limhi’s group and Alma’s group all successfully find their way to Zarahemla, Mosiah caused the records of Zeniff to be read to his people (see 25:5).
7. After Abinadi’s story, the record of Zeniff continues in third-person narration in recounting events associated with both Alma and Limhi, so it seems that Mormon has abridged the entire record but left Zeniff’s initial account (Mosiah 9–10) largely unabridged. For a detailed discussion on the possible authorship of this section, see Welch, *The Legal Cases in the Book of Mormon*, 140–45.
8. Grant Hardy sees the first-person speech as indicative of Abinadi being like a Moses figure, “giving the law once again (as when he recites the Ten Commandments) and standing up to a recalcitrant, faithless ruler. The verbal correspondences become more distinctive as the story progresses, though it adds yet another layer of complexity to note that the narrator never reports God’s words

directly; we always hear them as quoted by Abinadi.” *Understanding the Book of Mormon*, 157. For other allusions to the Exodus story, see pages 158–60.

9. “My people” is a phrase found through the account of the Exodus as Moses freed God’s people from the Egyptians.
10. If they do not repent, the Lord would still preserve a record about their wickedness as a warning to other nations (see 12:8).
11. The assessment of King Noah’s life being “valued even as a garment in a hot furnace” (12:3) is later fulfilled when Noah is killed by fire (see 19:20). This foreshadowing of Noah’s later death by fire may also be the reason why they burned Abinadi to death for his fiery threats against the king.
12. See the additional points made by Jack Welch for why the priests asked Abinadi about this particular Isaiah passage in “Isaiah 53, Mosiah 14, and the Book of Mormon,” in *Isaiah in the Book of Mormon*, ed. Donald W. Parry and John W. Welch (Provo, UT: Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, 1997), 297–98.
13. As discussed above, in the initial descriptions of the priests of Noah leading up to the Abinadi episodes, the priests are lumped together with Noah in his wickedness. Thus, the narrator was very clear through his descriptions that the priests aided in creating the wicked condition of the people. The priests did not, however, have any contact with Abinadi during his first visit among the people, but they came to play the predominant role as chief antagonists during Abinadi’s second appearance in their efforts to discredit Abinadi in the eyes of the people. As the priests enter the Abinadi episodes, they are the ones who suggest the idea of summoning Abinadi so they could question him and “cross him, that thereby they might have wherewith to accuse him” (12:19). Thus, even though King Noah holds ultimate power as king, he counsels with the priests and acquiesces to their desire to question Abinadi themselves.
14. The 1828 Noah Webster’s dictionary defines *evil* as something which produces sorrow or distress or disturbs peace and impairs happiness. Thus, when the people and court of Noah oppose Abinadi’s evil tidings, it is to resist this disturbance of their peace, contentment, and belief that all was well. The priests seem to be falling into the common fallacy warned against in scripture: to remain popular, one should say only good words (flattery) and ignore sin and repentance. Ann Madsen stated the priests’ perspective this way: “Prophets—including Abinadi—are to speak beautiful, joyful messages of peace and good tidings. An ‘all is well in Zion’ message would be appropriate, not a call to

- repentance.” “‘What Meaneth the Words That Are Written?’ Abinadi Interprets Isaiah,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 10, no. 1 (2001): 7. See also Samuel the Lamanite’s warnings about false teachers in Helaman 13:27–28.
15. The use of the word *read* by Abinadi leaves one wondering if perhaps he had a copy of the commandments with him from which he was reading.
 16. “Abinadi’s answer before the priests and presumably the king is not a short one. . . . He turns the tables by asking them questions over and over again in an almost Talmudic manner. His response is methodical, carefully crafted, inspired, and ultimately sublime.” Ann Madsen, “‘What Meaneth the Words That Are Written?’” 8. Jack Welch describes his lengthy response as “an elaborate midrash or explanation of the text quoted to him by the priests from Isaiah 52, especially in light of Isaiah 53.” From “Isaiah 53, Mosiah 14, and the Book of Mormon,” 294.
 17. Jack Welch sees the concepts found in the verses between the Isaiah passage questioned by the priest (52:7–10) and Isaiah 53—in other words 52:11–15—as touched on by Abinadi in his dialogue even if he did not directly quote from them. See John W. Welch, “Isaiah 53, Mosiah 14, and the Book of Mormon,” 296–97.
 18. For a helpful article dealing with this issue—particularly in light of Isaiah 53, which Abinadi had just quoted—see Jared T. Parker, “Abinadi on the Father and the Son: Interpretation and Application,” in *Living the Book of Mormon: Abiding by Its Precepts*, ed. Gaye Strathearn and Charles Swift (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2007), 136–50.
 19. In an informative article on hand gestures in the Book of Mormon, David Calabro argues that Abinadi’s actions here probably reflect an intensification or emphasis of speech. Calabro also wonders if Abinadi’s stretched-forth hands should be juxtaposed with the Lord’s extended arms of mercy that are rejected later (16:12). “It is as if Abinadi, through his own intensifying and pleading gesture of stretching forth the hands, is providing an illustration of the Lord’s extended arms of mercy.” It is also a gesture seeking contact and acceptance, but Abinadi’s subsequent death shows how this gesture was not reciprocated. See “‘Stretch Forth Thy Hand and Prophecy’: Hand Gestures in the Book of Mormon,” *Journal of the Book of Mormon and Other Restoration Scripture* 21, no. 1 (2012): 46–59.

20. This haunting phrase of missed opportunity is also found in Jesus's analogy of a hen gathering her chickens, yet "ye would not" (see 3 Nephi 10:5; cf. Matthew 23:37).
21. Abinadi had at least one important convert from King Noah's court, Alma, who was able to write down the words he had given. Alma's descendants became very significant for the next several centuries of Book of Mormon history and record keeping. As some commentators have noted, "It is with painful but striking irony that before Abinadi faces the flames of a martyr's fire, his prophetic witness kindles the fires of testimony within the heart of another. Conversion is always a miraculous matter, particularly in the midst of gross wickedness and among a people who are smitten with hardheartedness as a result of their iniquity." Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 2, *Jacob through Mosiah* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988), 248.
22. The scourging of the Messiah was earlier mentioned in 15:5.
23. See chapter 8 by Mark Wright and Kerry Hull regarding the scourging of Abinadi.
24. Abinadi is the first reported martyr in the Book of Mormon.