ABINADI'S LEGACY

Tracing His Influence through the Book of Mormon

John L. Hilton III

John L. Hilton III is an associate professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University.

INTRODUCTION

Eminent author Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote, "All minds quote. Old and new make the warp and woof of every moment. There is no thread that is not a twist of these two strands. By necessity, by proclivity, and by delight, we all quote."[1] Identifying these instances of textual weavings is one aspect of a literary field known as intertextuality, an area that holds great promise for Book of Mormon research. Grant Hardy has suggested that it would be fruitful for our understanding of the Book of Mormon "to track various phrases throughout the Book of Mormon to determine which Nephite prophets were particularly influenced by their predecessors."[2] Abinadi is one of the first prophets quoted in the extant abridgment of the large plates, and as such has potential to be an influential predecessor. Moreover, Abinadi was directly connected with Alma$_1$'s conversion, which created a subsequent lineage of record keepers, all of whom likely had intense

interest in the words of the person who converted their ancestor and shaped the doctrinal understanding of the Nephite church. The purpose of this essay is to focus on the words of Abinadi[3] and explore how they are utilized by later Book of Mormon individuals. Before examining Abinadi's words, I first discuss intertextuality as a broad concept, with its use in biblical scholarship, and intratextuality, a related term. Biblical scholars have explored areas related to both intertextuality and intratextuality for centuries; utilizing some of their methods can provide fruitful analysis for studying the Book of Mormon.

While intertextuality is a much-debated term,[4] at its basic level it can be defined as the connections between two or more texts. In some instances, the borrowing is intentional and clear, in others it may be the work of an author's unconscious or perhaps even an unintentional coincidence. Identifying instances of intentional intertextuality can be useful in interpreting and reinterpreting literature, including sacred writ. Indeed, in the past decades many researchers have worked to find intertextual connections between the Old and New Testaments.[5]

An underlying premise of this biblical research is that learning how New Testament authors alluded to Old Testament writers can expand our understandings of both texts. For example, Paul writes to the Corinthians seeking financial contributions to assist others in need: "For I mean not that other men be eased, and ye burdened: but by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality: as it is written, *He that had gathered much had nothing over; and he that had gathered little had no lack*" (2 Corinthians 8:13–15; emphasis added).

The phrase "as it is written" is a quotation formula signaling to the reader that Paul is utilizing another text. In this case it appears Paul is referencing Exodus 16:16–18: "Gather of [the manna] every man according to his eating, an omer for every man. . . . And the children of Israel did so, and gathered, some more, some less. And when they did mete it with an omer, *he that gathered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack*" (emphasis added). By recognizing the context of this quotation, Paul's argument becomes much stronger. Paul is stating that just

as those who had more shared their resources with others in the days of Moses, so should they in Paul's time.

In order to determine whether textual connections can enhance our understanding, these connections must first be discovered and validated.[6] Indeed, one of the difficulties in uncovering deliberate intertextual connections is in discerning whether one author was in fact intentionally referring to another individual or whether the apparent quotation could more feasibly be explained in a different way. In the instance just cited, the reference to Exodus is readily recognizable. In other cases, it may not be clear; thus biblical scholars have debated several criteria for validating proposed allusions.[7] Having criteria to determine whether two passages are related to each other is important because "little or no consensus has emerged regarding what distinguishes a quotation from a mere verbal coincidence or vague reminiscence or which criteria are most useful for correctly identifying, explaining the origin of, and assessing the significance of literary borrowing."[8]

While there are a variety of debates regarding the appropriate criteria, Richard Hays provides seven generally accepted guidelines for distinguishing between real and illusory allusions. Four of these are particularly relevant to the present study, as follows:

1. Availability. Was the proposed source of the echo available to the author and/or original readers?

2. Volume. The volume of an echo is determined primarily by the degree of explicit repetition of words or syntactical patterns, but other factors may also be relevant [such as] how distinctive or prominent is the precursor text within Scripture.

3. Recurrence. How often does [the author] elsewhere cite or allude to the same scriptural passage?

4. Thematic Coherence. How well does the alleged echo fit into the line of argument that [the author] is developing?[9]

Although Hays's criteria were specifically designed for biblical intertextuality, the same principles apply to the Book of Mormon.[10] When

speaking of textual connections within the Book of Mormon, it may be helpful to distinguish between intertextuality and intratextuality. Intratextuality is similar to intertextuality, but it is defined by internal relationships within a text rather than external relations to other texts.[11] With respect to the Book of Mormon, one could posit a variety of arguments about whether the relationships between various books (e.g., 1 Nephi and Alma) are intertextual or intratextual. In the present study, I will utilize the term *intratextual* to describe the relationship between various words and phrases within the Book of Mormon,[12] and utilize the same criteria for determining intertextuality (discussed previously) with intratextuality.

For example, consider the availability criterion. Abinadi's words were recorded (see Mosiah 17:4), thus implying that later prophets could access Abinadi's words. When we see a unique phrase appear only in the words of Abinadi and Alma$_2$, or multiple textual connections between Abinadi and Alma$_2$ in a small pericope, it is plausible that Alma$_2$ is referring to Abinadi (see "Volume," the second of Hays's criteria).[13] When Mormon utilizes Abinadi's words on multiple occasions, it demonstrates recurrence. And when King Benjamin and Abinadi use the same lines of reasoning, it increases the likelihood of intentional intratextuality (see "Thematic Recurrence," the fourth of Hays's criteria).

While some debate continues to exist regarding specific scriptural passages, the criteria described above have helped scholars identify multiple instances of intertextuality between the Old and New Testaments. In contrast, The Book of Mormon remains to be completely investigated in this manner. While some work has been done,[14] much more needs to be accomplished.

This essay seeks to add to the current body of research by examining the words of Abinadi and how his words reverberate through later generations of Book of Mormon prophets. As stated previously, Abinadi is a pivotal prophetic figure in the Book of Mormon. His words were carefully recorded by Alma$_1$ (see Mosiah 17:4) and formed a key part of Alma$_1$'s teachings (see Mosiah 18:1). I first focus on Amulek and Alma$_2$'s use of Abinadi's words while preaching in Ammonihah. I next discuss Abinadi's influence on Alma$_2$'s words to Corianton and then Mormon's use of Abinadi's phraseology. As stated previously, it is clear that Amulek, Alma$_2$, and

Mormon all had access to Abinadi's words, fulfilling Hays's first criterion. In the final section of the paper, I provide an extended discussion of the relationship between the words of Abinadi and those of King Benjamin. It is not immediately apparent how these two discourses could be connected, or if King Benjamin could have accessed Abinadi's words, a subject which I will discuss toward the conclusion of the paper.

AMULEK AND ALMA₂ PREACHING IN AMMONIHAH

While on trial in King Noah's court, Abinadi[15] testified that the Father and the Son "are one God, yea, *the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth*" (Mosiah 15:1–4; emphasis added). A few verses later, Abinadi concludes his message, saying that "redemption cometh through Christ the Lord, who is *the very Eternal Father*" (Mosiah 16:15; emphasis added). It is difficult to determine exactly what Abinadi meant with these words, but it seems clear that what he was teaching was unorthodox. In fact, it formed the basis of his death sentence (see Mosiah 17:7–8).[16]

Whatever controversy was embedded in this statement, it appears to have been repeated when, while preaching in the land of Ammonihah, Amulek was confronted by Zeezrom, who asked, "Is the Son of God *the very Eternal Father*? And Amulek said unto him: Yea, *he is the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth*, and all things which in them are" (Alma 11:38–39; emphasis added). The phrase *very Eternal Father* is utilized in only these two pericopes, thus it may be that Amulek appeals to Abinadi's authority as he responds to Zeezrom.[17] Following this allusion to Abinadi's words, Amulek utilizes a similar structure as did Abinadi by focusing on Christ's Atonement (Mosiah 15:15–6; Alma 11:40), death (Mosiah 15:7; Alma 11:42), and resurrection (Mosiah 15:8–9; Alma 11:42–44). In addition to teaching with thematic coherence, Amulek also uses phrases that originated with Abinadi. This example of significant connecting volume is illustrated in table 1.

TABLE 1. PARALLEL PHRASES BETWEEN ABINADI AND AMULEK

ABINADI	AMULEK
But remember that he that persists in his own carnal nature . . . *is as though there was no redemption* made. . . .	And he shall *come into the world* to *redeem* his people; and he shall take upon him the transgressions of those who believe on his name . . . and salvation cometh to none else.
If Christ had not *come into the world*, speaking of things to come as though they had already come, there could have been no *redemption*. . . . And if Christ had not risen from the dead, or have *broken the bands of death* that the grave should have no victory . . .	Therefore the wicked remain *as though there had been no redemption made*, except it be the *loosing of the bands of death*; for behold, the day cometh that all shall rise from the dead and stand before God . . .
(Mosiah 16:5–7; emphasis added).	(Alma 11:40–41; emphasis added).

Some of these phrases are unique and indicate intentional borrowing. For example, the words *though* and *redemption* only appear together in six verses of scripture, and Abinadi is the first to use these words together in the Book of Mormon. Moreover, the phrase *bands of death* originates with Abinadi.[18] Amulek may be attempting to bolster his own authority by utilizing Abinadi's words, or perhaps manifesting his acceptance and belief of Abinadi's words.[19]

After Amulek finished speaking, Alma$_2$ began to further establish the points Amulek had made. He likewise utilized Abinadi's words in teaching the people of Ammonihah, echoing both Amulek and Abinadi in teaching that the wicked "shall be as though there had been no redemption" (Alma 12:18; compare Mosiah 16:5–6, Alma 11:41). Abinadi had also taught that "this *mortal shall put on immortality*, and this corruption shall put on incorruption, 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" (Mosiah 16:10, emphasis added). Alma$_2$ utilizes Abinadi's words, teaching that humankind would be "raised from this *mortality to a state of immortality*, and *being brought before the bar of God, to be judged according to our*

works" (Alma 12:12; emphasis added). While the concepts of resurrection and judgment appear throughout scripture, these two chapters are the only places where these specific textual phrases are found.[20]

The example just cited compares Alma 12:12 with Mosiah 16:10. Additional textual similarities are found within this same cluster of scriptures, as illustrated in table 2.

TABLE 2. PARALLEL PHRASES BETWEEN ABINADI AND ALMA$_2$

ABINADI	ALMA$_2$
All mankind were *lost*; and behold, they would have been endlessly *lost* were it not that God redeemed his people from their *lost and fallen* state. . . . And *if* Christ *had not* risen from the dead, or have broken the bands of death that the grave should have no victory, and that death should have no sting, *there could have been no resurrection. But there is a* resurrection" (Mosiah 16:4, 7–8; emphasis added).	"By [Adam's] fall, *all mankind* became a *lost and fallen* people. . . . Now, *if it had not* been for the plan of redemption, which was laid from the foundation of the world, *there could have been no resurrection of the dead but there was a* plan of redemption laid" (Alma 12:22, 25; emphasis added).

The phrase *could have been no resurrection* appears only in these two passages.[21] The structure of "if . . . then . . . but" also indicates intentional borrowing. Both Alma$_2$ and Abinadi immediately negate their use of the phrase *could have been no resurrection* by testifying that God's plan had been put into effect. Thus in form and text, Alma$_2$ utilizes Abinadi's words as part of his message to the people of Ammonihah.

Both Amulek and Alma$_2$ incorporate multiple phrases from Abinadi while preaching in Ammonihah. Why do they do this? Is there a connection between Ammonihah and Noah's court? Or are they simply quoting one who stands at the head of the Nephite church's doctrinal position? While the text itself is silent on the issue, one potential clue stems from Zeezrom's question, "Is the Son of God the very Eternal Father?" (Alma 11:38). Why does Zeezrom bring up this issue? Given Zeezrom's general rhetorical strategy attempting to trap Amulek in his words, it is plausible

the particular issue of Christ being the Eternal Father was an important and controversial theological issue for some people at that time. Indeed, Abinadi is put to death in connection with his teachings regarding Christ being the Eternal Father (compare Mosiah 15:1–4; 17:8). Perhaps Zeezrom was attempting to lead Amulek down a path that could lead to the charge of blasphemy. If this were the case, it would make sense for Amulek and Alma$_2$ to utilize Abinadi's words to rectify misconstrued meanings of Abinadi's teachings.

Another possible reason that Amulek and Alma$_2$ referred to Abinadi was that they wanted to appeal to what for them might have been scriptural authority that they hoped would speak to the hearts of the people. Very few words of Alma$_1$ are recorded in the Book of Mormon; perhaps the only recent prophets that Amulek and Alma$_2$ could appeal to would be King Benjamin and Abinadi. A connected possibility is that Abinadi's words formed a significant part of Amulek and Alma$_2$'s understanding of the principles they were teaching.

ALMA$_2$'S USE OF ABINADI WHILE TEACHING CORIANTON

Corianton had at least three major issues that concerned him at the time his father counseled him. These concerns were regarding the resurrection (Alma 40:1), the restoration (Alma 41:1), and the justice of God in punishing the sinner (Alma 42:1). As Alma$_2$ provided doctrinal clarification to help his son see more clearly, he frequently turned to the words of Abinadi. There are at least thirteen instances in which Alma$_2$ appears to have utilized Abinadi's words when teaching Corianton.[22] For example, phrases such as "carnal, sensual, devilish" or "stand as a testimony against you at the last day" only appear in those two pericopes within the Book of Mormon. Most of Alma$_2$'s usage of Abinadi's words cluster around Corianton's specific doubts.

The clearest example of this comes when Alma$_2$ addresses Corianton's concern regarding the resurrection. Alma$_2$ states, "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; emphasis added). Alma$_2$ makes it

clear that he has a source for his words; note his statement, "It hath been spoken" (Alma 40:16). While he does not identify a specific source, it is clear that it is Abinadi who had 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; emphasis added). Not only are there several key linked words in the two passages, there is also a key, relatively unique phrase—*first resurrection*. This phrase appears ten times in the Book of Mormon, six times in the words of Abinadi, once in the words of Alma$_1$, and three times in the words of Alma$_2$.[23] Because Corianton was concerned about the resurrection, it seems intuitive that Alma$_2$ would turn to the words of a previous prophet to explicate an issue that troubled Corianton. It also seems possible that alternate interpretations on Abinadi's words were in circulation and that Corianton may have had incorrect understandings of Abinadi's words.[24]

This vignette illustrates the influence that Abinadi's teachings had on Alma$_2$. It may suggest other possibilities as well. For example, Corianton appears to be concerned about the meaning of the word *restoration,* and Alma states that "some have wrested the scriptures, and have gone far astray because of this thing" (Alma 41:1). It may be that Abinadi's use of *restoration* contributed to Corianton's confusion and Alma$_2$ used Abinadi's teachings to correct Corianton's misconceptions. It is evident from the text that Alma$_2$ had deeply pondered the concepts he presented to Corianton. Alma$_2$'s use of Abinadi's words in this pericope suggest that Alma had carefully studied what Abinadi had taught on the subject and was thus motivated to use Abinadi's words when teaching others.

MORMON'S USE OF ABINADI'S WORDS

As the editor of the Book of Mormon, Mormon clearly was aware of Abinadi's words and teachings. Indeed, Mormon's specific reference to Abinadi more than four hundred years after Abinadi's death illustrates Abinadi's impressive influence (see Mormon 1:19). In this section, I will demonstrate three specific instances in which Mormon utilizes Abinadi's words.

First, as Mormon summarizes Aaron's teachings to the father of King Lamoni, he states that Aaron "did expound unto him the scriptures from

the creation of Adam . . . and also the plan of redemption, which was prepared from the foundation of the world, through Christ, . . . that he *breaketh the bands of death*, that *the grave shall have no victory*, and that *the sting of death should be swallowed up* in the hopes of glory" (Alma 22:13–14; emphasis added). This passage appears to be a direct quote from Abinadi, who taught that "if Christ had not risen from the dead, or have *broken the bands of death* that the *grave should have no victory*. . . . But there is a resurrection, therefore the *grave hath no victory, and the sting of death is swallowed up* in Christ" (Mosiah 16:7–8; emphasis added).[25] In the Book of Mormon the phrase *sting of death* appears only in three passages (these two and one other that will be discussed shortly).[26]

Why does Mormon use Abinadi's words when summarizing Aaron's teachings? It may be that Mormon is simply reflecting Aaron's actual teachings, and that Aaron himself was originally referring to Abinadi's teaching. Alternatively, perhaps Mormon uses a phrase that Abinadi said when preaching to King Noah to draw a contrast between the receptivity of Noah and the father of King Lamoni. Both kings received similar messages; the king of the Lamanites' acceptance of this prophetic word illustrates the humility that King Noah lacked.

Another possibility, admittedly speculative, is that Mormon is indirectly illustrating the significance of Abinadi's mission. In essence, the whole narrative of the Book of Mormon from Mosiah 12 forward hinges on Abinadi's word. Abinadi is the central figure in the narrative of the Zeniffites, and his words convert Alma$_1$. Every record keeper for the next three centuries is directly related to this convert of Abinadi. It is possible that the sons of Mosiah would not have gone on a mission to the Lamanites had their associate Alma$_2$'s father not been converted by Abinadi. Thus by using Abinadi's phraseology in describing Aaron's teachings, Mormon may be reminding us of the connection between Abinadi and the mission to the Lamanites.[27]

One passage illustrating the extent to which Abinadi influenced Mormon's text is found in Abinadi's teaching that all men will "*stand before the bar of God, to be judged of him according to their works whether they be good or whether they be evil—if they be good, to the resurrection of endless life and happiness; and if they be evil, to the resurrection of endless damnation*"

(Mosiah 16:10–11; emphasis added). Mormon utilizes these words almost verbatim as he records that all will "*stand before God, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil—If they be good, to the resurrection of everlasting life; and if they be evil, to the resurrection of damnation*" (3 Nephi 26:4–5; emphasis added). The sheer volume of related words in the parallel passages indicates intentional use by Mormon.

In this instance Mormon is paraphrasing the resurrected Jesus. Does this textual connection stem from Mormon, or the Savior himself? This question cannot be answered with certainty. It is possible that Christ alluded to Abinadi as he expounded all scripture in one, and that Mormon is reflecting this usage in his summary of Christ's words. If so, this would indicate a pattern on the part of Christ in referring to Abinadi's words.[28] If this is not the case, and Mormon is simply utilizing these words of his own accord, it may indicate the extent to which Abinadi's words influenced Mormon's thoughts and writing.

The premise that Abinadi strongly influenced Mormon is also illustrated in Mormon's use of Abinadi phraseology in his final words. Speaking to the remnant who would be spared, Mormon urged them to know that Christ had "gained the *victory over the grave*; and also in him is the *sting of death swallowed up*" (Mormon 7:5; emphasis added). Surely Mormon took seriously the prospect of writing his concluding comments in the book to which he had dedicated his life. Thus, Mormon's intense feelings about the importance of Abinadi's words may be shown through his use of Abinadi's phraseology in his final farewell. While Abinadi's words represent a relatively small portion of the text of the Book of Mormon, these foregoing passages illustrate the influence Abinadi had on its chief editor.

TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN ABINADI AND KING BENJAMIN

In terms of textual influence, it may be that Abinadi's strongest influence was actually upon King Benjamin. Both King Benjamin and Abinadi give extended discourses in the book of Mosiah. King Benjamin delivers his farewell address in Mosiah 2–5, and Abinadi testifies before King Noah's court in Mosiah 12–17. Though close in sequence, these sermons take place in two different locations: Benjamin's in the land of Zarahemla, and

Abinadi's in the land of Nephi. John Sorenson estimates that it is 180 miles between these locations[29] and would take approximately 22 days to travel between them—if one knew the way.[30]

It appears that there was no communication between the Nephites in the land of Zarahemla and those in the land of Nephi at the time of Benjamin. Amaleki, in reporting on a brother who went to the land of Nephi said, "I have not since known concerning" him (Omni 1:30). Decades later, King Mosiah "was desirous to know concerning the people who went up to dwell in the land of Lehi-Nephi, . . . for his people had heard nothing from them from the time they left the land of Zarahemla" (Mosiah 7:1).

Given the distance that separated the two groups of Nephites and the explicitly recorded lack of communication between them, it would seem that the discourses of King Benjamin and Abinadi would have no relationship. Furthermore, Mormon (in abridging and creating the text we have today) likely had access to ancient versions of both speeches. Alma$_1$ wrote down "all the words of Abinadi" (Mosiah 17:4) shortly after hearing them,[31] and King Benjamin "caused that the words which he spake should be written" (Mosiah 2:8). Because we are told that separate primary documents exist for each of the discourses, it seems less likely that in composing his abridgment Mormon would have altered the addresses to create textual similarities between them.[32]

Notwithstanding the foregoing, previous researchers have pointed to textual connections between these two speeches and wondered whether Benjamin and Abinadi had contact with each other.[33] Lew Cramer, writing in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, states, "Similarities between [Abinadi's] and Benjamin's words . . . could mean that he spent some time in Zarahemla with King Benjamin and his people," thus implying that Abinadi was influenced by Benjamin's speech. Was it Benjamin who influenced Abinadi, or was it the reverse? Or do they both draw on a similar text or prophetic voice? Before discussing these questions, we must first establish the textual connections between the two sermons.

Table 3 lists fourteen phrases that appear exclusively (or nearly so) in these two discourses.[34]

TABLE 3. CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE SERMONS OF KING BENJAMIN AND ABINADI

CASE #	WORDS FROM KING BENJAMIN AND HIS AUDIENCE	WORDS FROM ABINADI AND HIS AUDIENCE	ALLUSION	TIMES EXACT PHRASE IS USED ELSE-WHERE IN SCRIPTURE
Case 1	Mosiah 1:13; 2:29; 3:17; 3:20	Mosiah 13:28	*And moreover I say unto you*	1 (Alma 5:47)
Case 2	Mosiah 2:38; 3:19	Mosiah 16:5	*Enemy to God*	0
Case 3	Mosiah 3:5; 4:2	Mosiah 13:34; 15:1; 7:27; 17:8	*Come down . . . children of men*	1 (Genesis 11:5)
Case 4	Mosiah 3:8	Mosiah 15:2	*He shall be called . . . Son of God*	0 (1 John 3:1 is very similar)
Case 5	Mosiah 3:12	Mosiah 15:27	*Salvation cometh to none such*	0
Case 6	Mosiah 3:15	Mosiah 13:32	*The law . . . except it were through . . .*	0
Case 7	Mosiah 3:17	Mosiah 16:13	*Only in and through . . . Christ*	1 (Alma 38:9), (2 Nephi 10:24 is also similar).
Case 8	Mosiah 3:20	Mosiah 16:1	*Time shall come . . . every nation, kindred, tongue and people*	0
Case 9	Mosiah 3:24	Mosiah 16:10	*Judged . . . according to their works whether they be good or whether they be evil*	1 (Alma 11:44)

CASE #	WORDS FROM KING BENJAMIN AND HIS AUDIENCE	WORDS FROM ABINADI AND HIS AUDIENCE	ALLUSION	TIMES EXACT PHRASE IS USED ELSE- WHERE IN SCRIPTURE
Case 10	Mosiah 3:24	Mosiah 17:10	*Stand as a . . . testimony against you*	3 (2 Nephi 25:28; Alma 39:8; Ether 5:4), (D&C 98:27 is also similar).
Case 11	Mosiah 3:25	Mosiah 16:11	*And if they be evil . . . damnation*	1 (3 Nephi 26:5), (John 5:29; Alma 9:28; and Helaman 12:26 are similar).
Case 12	Mosiah 4:6–7	Mosiah 15:19	*Prepared from the foundation of the world*	8 (Mosiah 18:13; Alma 12:30; 13:3, 5; 18:39; 22:33; 42:26; Ether 3:14), (Matthew 25:34; 1 Nephi 10:18 and 2 Nephi 9:18 are similar).
Case 13	Mosiah 4:23	Mosiah 12:26	*I say unto you wo be unto*	1 (D&C 10:28)
Case 14	Mosiah 4:30	Mosiah 13:10	*But this much I tell you*[35]	0

Not only are there multiple matching phrases, they often occur closely in sequence, a strong indication of volume. For example, cases 3 and 4 above appear in close proximity (compare Mosiah 3:5, 8 and Mosiah 15:1–2) as do cases 9 and 11 (compare Mosiah 3:24–25 and Mosiah 16:10–11). In addition, a high level of thematic coherence exists between the two speeches. Themes of fallen humankind being an enemy to God, the absolute necessity of Christ, the efficacy of the Atonement for igno- rant sinners, the salvation of little children, judgment according to our works, and the damnation that awaits the evil all figure prominently in both discourses. Both speak of opportunities available to those who sin in

ignorance. These parallels are particularly concentrated in just a few verses in Mosiah 3 and 16. Table 4 illustrates how, when rearranged and slightly modified, selected phrases from Mosiah 3:17–25 closely resemble phrases from Mosiah 16:1–15.

TABLE 4. SELECTED PHRASES FROM MOSIAH 3:17–25 AND MOSIAH 16:1–15

BENJAMIN'S WORDS	ABINADI'S WORDS
"The natural man is an *enemy to God . . .* [and] at the *judgment day . . . every man . . . shall be judged . . . according to his works, whether they be good, or whether they be evil. And if they be evil . . .* they have drunk *damnation* to their own souls. *[But] the time shall come when the knowledge of a Savior shall spread throughout every nation, kindred, tongue and people . . .* [for] *salvation can come . . . only in and through the name of Christ, the Lord . . .*"	"He that persists in his own carnal nature . . . is . . . an *enemy to God . . .* [and all] *shall . . . be judged . . . according to their works whether they be good or whether they be evil . . .* and *if they be evil* [they receive] the resurrection of endless *damnation. . . . [But] the time shall come when . . . every nation, kindred, tongue, and people . . . shall see the salvation of the Lord, . . .* [for] *only in and through Christ can ye be saved . . . redemption cometh through Christ the Lord . . .*"

Based on the information in tables 3 and 4, it seems evident that these two sermons are related.[36] If we accept this premise, the natural question is "Who influenced whom?" While no explicit answers are found in the text, there are enough clues to at least rule out certain possibilities. Let us begin to answer this question by trying to ascertain which discourse came first in terms of chronology.

Based on the Nephite timeline presented by Mormon, King Benjamin gave his address in about 124 BC (Mosiah 6:4).[37] In contrast, no explicit dating information is given about when Abinadi spoke. Nevertheless, through contextual clues we can approximately determine this information. Alma$_1$ died in 91 BC at the age of eighty-two (see Mosiah 29:46). Thus, Alma$_1$ was born in 173 BC. He was a "young man" at the trial of Abinadi (Mosiah 17:2). Unless the definition of "young man" is stretched to include one who is fifty years old, Abinadi clearly spoke before King Benjamin's address in 124 BC. If we assume "a young man" was about

twenty years old, Abinadi would have spoken in 153 BC, approximately thirty years before King Benjamin.[38]

Accepting the premise that Abinadi spoke before King Benjamin eliminates the possibility that Abinadi heard Benjamin's address and used it as he spoke in King Noah's court. The fact that thirty years elapsed between Abinadi's speech and Benjamin's speech does allow for the possibility that there was contact between the Zeniffite and Zarahemla populations. However, it seems unlikely that Benjamin heard Abinadi's words and later used them in his speech, given that the people in Zarahemla had no knowledge of what had happened to Zeniff's descendants (Mosiah 7:1–2).[39]

THE POSSIBLE INFLUENCE OF AN ANGEL

When we revisit the textual connections previously demonstrated, another possible explanation for the parallels emerges. Eleven of the fourteen textual connections (cases 1–11 in table 3) between the two discourses come not between King Benjamin's words but from the words of an angel who spoke to King Benjamin. In Mosiah 3:3, King Benjamin states, "And he [an angel] said unto me" (Mosiah 3:3) and commences a lengthy quote. While it is not entirely clear where the quotation ends, given that Mosiah 4:1 says, "And now, it came to pass that when king Benjamin had made an end of speaking the words which had been delivered unto him by the angel of the Lord" (Mosiah 4:1), it seems most likely that the quote ends with Mosiah 3:27.[40]

The strongest connections between King Benjamin's and Abinadi's discourses presented in table 3 and all of the allusions in table 4 occur when Abinadi's words are compared with Benjamin's quotation of an angel. This lessens the possibility that the connections stem from some common text, unless the angel was quoting texts to both prophets, such as unknown writings of Zenos or Mosiah$_1$.

The cluster of parallels surrounding the voice of the angel prompts the question, did the same angel appear to Abinadi as appeared to King Benjamin? While we cannot know for certain, some have speculatively suggested another possibility—that Abinadi may have been the angel that appeared to King Benjamin.[41] While such an assertion must be extremely tentative, it is interesting to note that King Benjamin frequently refers to the

angelic messenger (see Mosiah 3:2–3; 4:1, 11). In addition, those in King Benjamin's audience specifically reference the words of the angel, further emphasizing the importance of the angel in King Benjamin's discourse (see Mosiah 5:5). In contrast, there is no mention of angels anywhere in the pericope surrounding Abinadi and those who heard his message, suggesting that an angelic messenger may not have played an important role in Abinadi's ministry. If Abinadi was the angel who appeared to Benjamin, his words have an additional influence in the Book of Mormon through King Benjamin's important speech. This potential influence is not tangential in understanding Book of Mormon teachings. If Abinadi did teach King Benjamin (or another angel taught Abinadi's words to King Benjamin), then Abinadi is the first prophetic witness found in Mormon's abridgement of the large plates of Nephi, influencing all prophetic voices after him.

CONCLUSION

In this essay, I have reviewed numerous ways in which Abinadi's voice reverberates throughout the Book of Mormon. Amulek and Alma$_2$ both utilize Abinadi's phraseology when teaching the people in Ammonihah. Alma$_2$ clearly alludes to Abinadi when talking with his son Corianton and Mormon also references Abinadi's words, including both lengthy and unique phrases. While we cannot establish that Abinadi directly influenced King Benjamin, there is an unmistakable textual connection between the two discourses, and it is clear that Abinadi's speech came first.

Abinadi's influence on the text of the Book of Mormon may be underestimated by some. As a pivotal prophet who spoke 450 years after Lehi left Jerusalem, he is responsible for the conversion of Alma$_1$. Alma$_1$ and his posterity would keep the sacred records and guide the Church for the next 470 years. Abinadi, living chronologically halfway between Lehi and Mormon, thus radically shaped the second half of Nephite history. The textual connections I have described in this paper illustrate instances in which multiple phrases from Abinadi appear in connection with specific later pericopes.[42] Abinadi's testimony of Christ affected generations and clearly had an important textual influence on later Book of Mormon individuals.

NOTES

1. Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The Complete Words of Ralph Waldo Emerson: Letters and Social Aims*, Vol. 8 (New York: W. H. Wise, 1920 [1875]), 178. Cited in Richard L. Schultz, *The Search for Quotation: Verbal Parallels in the Prophets* (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

2. Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon* (Oxford University Press, 2010), 134.

3. The extent to which Mosiah 11–17 accurately represents the words of Abinadi is debatable given the various levels of transcription and translation, and the same could be said for other passages discussed in this paper. For my present purposes, I take the text at face value, bracketing issues of redaction, translation, and so forth. For an extended discussion on the authorship of Mosiah, and the Abinadi pericope specifically, see John W. Welch, *The Legal Cases in the Book of Mormon* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2008), 140–45.

4. Graham Allen covers the origins and different frameworks surrounding intertextuality in his work, *Intertextuality* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

5. For example, see G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, eds., *Commentary on the New Testament use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 775.

6. Not all instances of intertextuality are clearcut. As Hays states, "Quotation, allusion, and echo may be seen as points along a spectrum of intertextual reference, moving from the explicit to the subliminal. As we move farther away from overt citation, the source recedes into the discursive distance, the intertextual relations become less determinate, and the demand placed on the reader's listening power grows greater. As we near the vanishing point of the echo, it inevitably becomes difficult to decide whether we are really hearing an echo at all, or whether we are only conjuring things out of the murmurings of our own imaginations." Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 23.

7. The meanings of distinct terms such as *allusion*, *quotation*, and so forth are also debated. See Jeffery M. Leonard, "Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions: Psalm 78 as a Test Case," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127, no. 2 (2008): 241–65. For my purpose in the present study, I am focusing on what appear to be intentional textual connections, whether they be termed allusions or quotations.

8. Schultz, *The Search for Quotation*, 18.

9. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul*, 29–30. Hays's other criteria includes "Historical Plausibility. Could [the author] have intended the alleged meaning effect? . . . History of Interpretation. Have other readers, both critical and precritical, heard the same echoes? . . . Satisfaction. With or without clear confirmation from the other criteria listed here, does the proposed reading make sense?" (30–31).

10. Nicholas J. Frederick has argued that similar criteria can be used in evaluating textual links between the New Testament and the Book of Mormon. "Evaluating the Interaction between the New Testament and the Book of Mormon: A Proposed Methodology," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 24, no. 1 (2015): 1–30. Precise definitions of exactly what constitutes "volume," "distinctive," etc. are difficult to determine. For example, in response to the issue of length (volume), Kenneth Litwak points out that while "some studies find echoes based on a single word, such as 'holy' or 'overshadow'" one word is typically not sufficient to argue for intertextuality. Kenneth D. Litwak, *Echoes of the Scriptures in Luke–Acts* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2005), 64. Christopher A. Beetham, in his analysis of scriptural echoes in the Colossians employed numerical criteria, stating that a reference "back to a previous text of six words or more will be considered a quotation. A reference of five words or less—even though verbatim—will be labeled an allusion." *Echoes of Scripture in the Letter of Paul to the Colossians* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2010), 16–17.

11. See Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, *A Dictionary of Media and Communication* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011; John R. Donahue and Daniel J. Harrington use these distinctions in *The Gospel of Mark*, Sacra Pagina Series, vol. 2 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005), 1).

12. One key reason the connections in the present study can be considered intratextual is that the same individual is the author of all the chapters that are analyzed (whether that person is considered to be Mormon or Joseph Smith).

13. A question may arise, "What if a word or phrase rarely appears in the Book of Mormon but is also found in the New Testament (a source not available to Book of Mormon authors)?" Unique connections between Book of Mormon passages should be considered in their relationship with each other. If phrases appear two times in the Book of Mormon but also in the New Testament, their presence in the New Testament phraseology does not explain why such phrases only occurred in those two particular instances in the Book of Mormon, nor does it analyze the possible connection between those two Book of Mormon

phrases. In other words, the question, "How did New Testament phraseology appear in the Book of Mormon?" is a valid one, but should not obscure the question, "Why is this phraseology uniquely used in these two passages?" In this present study, I focus on the latter question; however, Nicholas J. Frederick has an essay in the present volume examining New Testament connections with the words of Abinadi.

14. Intertextuality in the Book of Mormon is a burgeoning area of study. See for example, *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1992), 21–23; John W. Welch, "Benjamin, The Man: His Place in Nephite History," in *King Benjamin's Speech: "That Ye May Learn Wisdom"* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1998), 44; Grant Hardy, *Understanding the Book of Mormon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 235, 248–67; Benjamin L. McGuire, "Finding Parallels: Some Cautions and Criticisms, Part One and Part Two," *Interpreter: A Journal of Mormon Scripture* 5 (2013): 1–104, http://www.mormoninterpreter.com/finding -parallels-some-cautions-and-criticisms-part-one/, http://www.mormoninterpr eter.com/finding-parallels-some-cautions-and-criticisms-part-two/.

15. I acknowledge the work of Jaron Hansen and Taze Miller, BYU students who helped identify many of the phrases discussed in this section.

16. For additional discussion on this point, see Welch, *The Legal Cases in the Book of Mormon*, 193–95.

17. It also seems likely that Zeezrom's question indicates that Zeezrom is familiar with the words of Abinadi.

18. The phrase *bands of death* first appears in Mosiah 15:8 and is utilized thirteen times in the Book of Mormon and once in the Doctrine and Covenants. In addition, the words *band* and *death* appear together in Psalms 73:4; 107:14; and Ecclesiastes 7:26.

19. Amulek revisits some of these same themes when speaking to the Zoramites in Alma 34. On that occasion he also echoes Abinadi, although not to the extent to which he does in Ammonihah. For example, Amulek states that the Atonement brings "about the *bowels of mercy*, which overpowereth justice, and bringeth about means unto men that they may have faith unto repentance. And thus mercy can *satisfy the demands of justice*" (Alma 34:15–16; emphasis added). This is reminiscent of Abinadi's words, that Christ would have "*bowels of mercy*; being filled with compassion towards the children of men; standing betwixt them and justice; having broken the bands of death, taken upon himself

their iniquity and their transgressions, having redeemed them, and *satisfied the demands of justice*" (Mosiah 15:9, emphasis added).

20. The phrase *before the bar of god to be* appears only in these two verses. The more generic phrase, *before the bar of God* appears in two additional verses (Jacob 6:9 and Alma 5:22). Even the words *mortal* and *immortal* appear together relatively infrequently in scripture (fourteen total verses in all scripture contain these two words).

21. Note also that before the phrase *could have been no resurrection* occurs is the phrase *lost and fallen*. This latter phrase, while perhaps sounding common, is used only three times in the Book of Mormon. Nephi₁ provides the other use (2 Nephi 25:17); however, he is talking about the gathering and scattering of Israel, not the effects of the fall.

22. For a more complete discussion regarding the textual connections between Alma 39–42 and Mosiah 12–17, see John Hilton III, "Textual Similarities in the Words of Abinadi and Alma's Counsel to Corianton." *BYU Studies Quarterly* 51, no. 2 (2012): 39–60. This section is largely drawn from the analysis in that paper.

23. It also appears twice in Revelation 20:5–6 and six times in the Doctrine and Covenants.

24. For additional discussion of this possibility, see Hilton, "Textual Similarities," 39–60.

25. While key phrases in these passages appear in Isaiah 25:8 and 1 Corinthians 15:54–55, within the Book of Mormon the words *victory* and *death* appear together originally in the words of Abinadi and appear rarely thereafter. Abinadi uses these terms together in Mosiah 15:8 and Mosiah 16:7–8. Mormon uses them in Alma 22:14; 27:28; and Mormon 7:5. Outside of Isaiah 25 and 1 Corinthians 15, these two words never appear together in any other passage of scripture.

26. The phrase *sting of death* also appears in 1 Corinthians 15:56. See Nicholas J. Frederick, herein.

27. Another indication that Mormon connects the work of the sons of Mosiah with the labors of Abinadi is found in his use of Isaiah 52:7 to describe their work—a passage that Abinadi had interpreted for the priests of King Noah (see Mosiah 12:20–21; Mosiah 15:11–18; Mosiah 27:32–37).

28. In the Book of Mormon, the phrase *light and the life of the world* is first spoken by Abinadi and later echoed by the Savior. The specific phrase *light and the life of the world* appears in Mosiah 16:9; 3 Nephi 9:18; 3 Nephi 11:11; and Doctrine

and Covenants 12:9; 34:2; 39:2; and 45:7. The key words *light*, *life,* and *world* also appear in John 8:12 and Alma 38:9.

29. John L. Sorenson, *Mormon's Map* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2000), 57.

30. Ammon and the fifteen men who came with him took forty days to make the journey as they did not know the way (Mosiah 7:4). Given that the Lamanites also became lost in the same wilderness (Mosiah 22:16), it may have been difficult terrain to navigate.

31. Note that Alma$_1$ recorded Abinadi's words (thus creating a source document for Mormon) before Alma$_1$ had returned to Zarahemla and gained access to King Benjamin's address.

32. As will be shown, there are a number of phrases that appear only in these two sections. It seems unlikely that Mormon would have modified these speeches, employing phraseology that was then never used elsewhere in the Book of Mormon.

33. Cramer, "Abinadi," 5. Todd Parker has similarly referred to several connections between Abinadi and King Benjamin. In contrast to Cramer, Parker clearly states that Abinadi's speech came first. Todd Parker, "Abinadi: The Man and the Message," Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship, http://maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/publications/transcripts/?id=41).

34. For additional discussion of intertextual connections between some of these phrases and the New Testament, see Nicholas J. Frederick, herein.

35. These words (even when not used together as a phrase) appear together only in Mosiah 4:30 and Mosiah 13:10.

36. While some of these connections are clearer than others, taken together they make a robust case for a relationship between the sermons. Many of these connections are stronger than they might initially appear. For example, Abinadi alludes to prophets who had said that "God himself should come down among the children of men, and take upon him the form of man, and go forth in mighty power upon the face of the earth" (Mosiah 13:34). This statement was apparently so provocative that it caused his death and was cited almost verbatim by King Limhi (see Mosiah 7:27), leading us to believe that we are getting an actual account of Abinadi's words. This statement is almost identical to King Benjamin's, that "the Lord Omnipotent . . . shall come down from heaven among the children of men, and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay, and shall go forth amongst men, working mighty miracles" (Mosiah 3:5).

37. It is curious that Mormon, in reporting on the beginning of Mosiah$_2$'s reign says that this event makes "in the whole *about* four hundred and seventy-six years from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem (Mosiah 6:4; emphasis added). On the two other occasions that Mormon uses similar phraseology (Mosiah 29:46 and Mormon 3:4), he does not include the word *about*. Nevertheless, the exact dating of King Benjamin's speech is not germane to the present chapter. As it will be shown, it is the time period of the events relative to Benjamin's speech that is important.

38. I gratefully acknowledge Heather Hardy for sharing this observation with me when she reviewed an earlier draft of this paper. Because Limhi's people arrived in Zarahemla between 121 and 120 BC and King Benjamin spoke in 124 BC, all of the events in Mosiah 17–22 would have had to have happened in less than three years—a very unlikely occurrence. Another indicator that Benjamin spoke first is found in the fact that "Amulon began to exercise authority over Alma and his brethren, and began to persecute him, and cause that his children should persecute their children" (Mosiah 24:8). Amulon and his fellow priests leave their Nephite wives and children behind when they flee with King Noah (Mosiah 19:13, 20:3). However, after abducting the daughters of the Lamanites, they marry and have children with their kidnapped brides (Mosiah 23:33; Mosiah 24:8; Alma 25:7). How much time would need to elapse before the children of Amulon would be capable of persecuting Alma's children? If we assume that Amulon's children had to be at least four years old to be able to persecute other children, a minimum of five years would be needed between the kidnapping of the daughters of the Lamanites and Alma$_1$'s captivity.

39. Another possibility is that in the two years between Abinadi's first and second appearance (see Mosiah 12:1), he went to the land of Zarahemla. Although he would not have heard King Benjamin's address at that time, perhaps he collaborated with "the holy prophets who were among his people" (Words of Mormon 1:16). While this idea cannot be completely ruled out, given the reported complete lack of communication between the two groups of Nephites, it seems unlikely that Abinadi's presence in the land of Zarahemla would have gone unnoticed.

40. In Mosiah 3:23, we read the phrase *and now I have spoken the words which the Lord God hath commanded me*. It is possible that this signals the end of Benjamin's quotation of the angel (or they may be the words of the angel). However, even if the words in Mosiah 3:23 are King Benjamin's, he immediately begins

another quotation (see Mosiah 3:24). Thus, either way, the words in Mosiah 3:24–27 should not be attributed to Benjamin.

41. Todd Parker offers this conclusion in "Abinadi: The Man and the Message."

42. In addition to these instances in which multiple textual connections appear in short succession, there are additional phrases that appear to originate with Abinadi in the Book of Mormon that later appear throughout the text. For example, "vultures of the air" (Mosiah 12:2; compare Alma 2:38), "driven and scattered" (Mosiah 17:17; compare Alma 28:3 and Mormon 5:20), and "filled with compassion towards [people]" (Mosiah 15:9, compare 3 Nephi 17:6 and D&C 101:9).