

Come Follow Me Podcast  
Elo Viz Production  
Week 21  
Mosiah 18-24

Before we dive into some very important doctrines there is one topic I would like to address. One that has caused some questions and debate. The question is: Where did Alma get his authority to baptize. Of course, we believe that one must be ordained by one having authority in order to speak or act in the name of God for these salvific ordinances. And the Book of Mormon does not clearly state who it was that ordained Alma to this call. Some have speculated that he must have snuck in to see Abinadi before his execution, and Abinadi gave him the authority being the messenger from God that sparked Alma's change of heart, but that is unclear and probably unrealistic. If you will humor me for just a moment I will share with you my observation and belief on this topic.

Starting in chapter nine we have a record of the people of Zeniff. As you recall Zeniff was a righteous man that was a Nephite. He was sent in to spy on the Lamanites because the Nephites wanted to destroy them. But he saw that they were a righteous people and didn't want them to be killed so this mutiny broke out and there was a division among them. To make a long story short, they move in next to the Lamanites and after many wars and bloodshed, the King of the Lamanites dies, his name being Laman. And also a little later Zeniff the righteous king of the Nephites passes away. During his reign he establishes a church, with teachers and leaders and get this....high priests. Well, when he dies and his son, king Noah takes over the kingdom, he replaces his fathers high priests with his own. This is in chapter 11 of Mosiah starting in verse 9: "9 And he also built him a spacious palace, and a throne in the midst thereof, all of which was of fine wood and was ornamented with gold and silver and with precious things.

10 And he also caused that his workmen should work all manner of fine work within the walls of the [temple](#), of fine wood, and of copper, and of brass.

11 And the seats which were set apart for the [high priests](#), which were above all the other seats, he did ornament with pure gold; and he caused a breastwork to be built before them,"

See, just because a people or a King turns from righteousness with an operating temple to a wicked King that uses the temple for his own purpose, this does not immediately remove the authority of God from them. Alma was one of king Noah's high priests that replaced his fathers Zeniff's high priests. And I believe that most likely they were ordained to this office by one having authority even though they may have not been worthy of it. So when Alma escapes and starts to teach and baptize he is already holding the priesthood ordained upon him while serving as a high priest under king Noah.

Now, why is this important? Well, As we understand the teaching of Jesus there are four parts to the nature of salvation. That once we come to a knowledge and acceptance of the Lord Jesus Christ there is something for us to admit. We admit that we are flawed, sinful and that we are in need of a Savior. Also, that there is something for us to believe. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Savior and redeemer of the world and our personal Savior that we need. There is something that we need to consider. We consider that there is a cost involved in saying no to our sin, our vices, saying no to our secrecy to hide those sins. And a cost involved in turning our faith to the Lord Jesus. And lastly there is something to do. It is not enough to simply acknowledge these things but there is a motivator behind these beliefs that drives us to action. A turning to Jesus in repentance and in faith.

We see this process very clearly in chapter 18 of Mosiah. Where we find Alma teaching a large group in secret at the waters of Mormon. Starting in Verse 7 it says:

“Yea, all were gathered together that believed on his word, to hear him. And he did **teach** them, and did preach unto them repentance, and redemption, and faith on the Lord.

**8** And it came to pass that he said unto them: Behold, here are the waters of Mormon and now, as ye are **desirous** to come into the **fold** of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light;

**9** Yea, and are **willing** to mourn with those that **mourn**; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as **witnesses** of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the **first resurrection**, that ye may have eternal life—

**10** Now I say unto you, if this be the desire of your hearts, what have you against being **baptized** in the **name** of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a **covenant** with him, that ye will serve him and keep his commandments, that he may pour out his Spirit more abundantly upon you?

**11** And now when the people had heard these words, they clapped their hands for joy, and exclaimed: This is the desire of our hearts.”

These new Christians move quickly from their state of ignorance to an acceptance, and embracing the gospel of Jesus Christ. And their outward commitment to this change of heart was their willingness to be baptised. It was a wonderful moment in their lives. This powerful spiritual witness moved upon them and caused them to have a desire to enter the waters of baptism.

Can I ask you a serious question? I'm almost certain that most if not all that are listening to this have been baptised. The question I would like you to consider is, Why? And there are many answers to this. From the obvious ones like: Because it is a commandment from Jesus,

or because I wanted a remission of my sins. These are good answers. We are baptised because it is a commandment and because Jesus is our Lord we must obey Him, and because He is our Savior we want to obey Him. But there are some misconceptions about baptism that I believe it is important that we straighten out. In order to understand what baptism is, we must first understand what baptism is not: It is not the washing away of sin. Nor, is it a way of becoming a Christian. Now, before you lose your minds and protest that in primary you were taught the opposite, please let me explain: Many people have the idea that you are made a Christian by having something done to you. Most of us have had these ordinances performed to us but that doesn't change who we are. There is typically no change that takes place at that time. We have in our minds of the cleaning of sin being pictured but it is not in many cases performed. The scriptures make it clear that it is only the blood of Jesus that deals with our sins. That it is only in and through the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ can we be saved from our sins. And that it is not until Jesus becomes our personal Savior that this forgiveness can take place. Do you recall in Mosiah 4 when the baptised, church going, temple attending people heard King Benjamin's words?

“2 And they had **viewed** themselves in their own **carnal** state, even **less** than the dust of the earth. And they all cried aloud with one voice, saying: O have mercy, and apply the **atoning** blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins, and our hearts may be **purified**; for we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who **created** heaven and earth, and all things; who shall come down among the children of men.

3 And it came to pass that after they had spoken these words the Spirit of the Lord came upon them, and they were filled with joy, having received a remission of their sins, and having peace of **conscience**, because of the exceeding **faith** which they had in Jesus Christ who should come,” (Mosiah 4:2-3)

What I am saying is that; sure a remission of sins can take place during baptism. It can also take place at other times in our lives. But, just because someone is baptised it does not mean that they have received a remission of sins and they instantly become a Christian.

So that leads us to the all important question: what does baptism mean? Baptism is a confession of personal faith. It is a covenant with God that you are going to live a life with Him as our Master. Baptism is the gate that we must enter in order to start the path of discipleship. And I intentionally emphasized the word “start”. That is the beginning place. That is the covenant that we make with God that we are going to quit literally leave behind our old self and take up a new life centered in Christ. Or using the symbolism of baptism: killing or burying our old selves and being resurrected or born again in Christ Jesus.

But here is the dilemma. Being that most of us have already been baptised and made that covenant to be a new creature in Christ, have we kept that covenant? Have we done what we have promised at the waters of baptism? And do we even remember what that promise was? Could you at the drop of a hat tell a non-believer who you are as a Christian and what you have covenanted to do because of your belief in Jesus? Well, in case you have forgotten let me give you a quick reminder. It is found in Mosiah chapter eighteen, starting in verse eight:

“Behold, here are the waters of Mormon and now, as ye are **desirous** to come into the **fold** of God, and to be called his people, and are willing to bear one another’s burdens, that they may be light;

**9** Yea, and are **willing** to mourn with those that **mourn**; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as **witnesses** of God at all times and in all things, and in all places that ye may be in, even until death, that ye may be redeemed of God, and be numbered with those of the **first resurrection**, that ye may have eternal life—

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This is the baptismal covenant. To break it down a little clearer.

If you have a desire to enter into the fold of God and be baptised. He is asking that you:

- Bear one another's burdens.
- Mourn with those that mourn.
- Comfort those that stand in need of comfort.
- stand as a witness of God at all times.

These four actions mean; that you are empathetic. That you respond to others that are in a challenge as Christ would. That you reserve your judgment for God and allow Him to do his work. That you make the burden of those around you lighter to bear. That you give comfort to those that are in a rough spot in their life. And that you stand for the right and the defense of God and His love for all of His children. In short He is asking that we become a new person in Christ and in time we become like Christ.

I could go on and on about what this means but I think it would be more impactful to show you in a song. It is one of my favorite songs written by Phil Wickham. I'll play just a part of it for you and I hope you listen very carefully to the lyrics and please, if you are able, reach out and let me know what it means to you. It is called “The Jesus way”.

Ideas and quotes taken from a talk presented by Alistair Begg:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ZwMKd6o5ro&t=367s>

The Jesus way- by Phil Wickham:

<https://amzn.to/4bi6ToE>