

CHAPTER 18

Alma preaches in private—He sets forth the covenant of baptism and baptizes at the waters of Mormon—He organizes the Church of Christ and ordains priests—They support themselves and teach the people—Alma and his people flee from King Noah into the wilderness. About 147–145 B.C.

1 And now, it came to pass that Alma, who had fled from the servants of king Noah, ^arepented of his sins and iniquities, and went about privately among the people, and began to teach the words of Abinadi—

2 Yea, concerning that which was to come, and also concerning the resurrection of the dead, and the ^aredemption of the people, which was to be brought to pass through the power, and sufferings, and ^bdeath of Christ, and his resurrection and ascension into heaven.

3 And as many as would hear his word he did teach. And he taught them privately, that it might not come to the knowledge of the king. And many did believe his words.

4 And it came to pass that as many as did believe him did go forth to a ^aplace which was called Mormon, having received its name from the king, being in the ^bborders of the land having been infested, by times or at seasons, by wild beasts.

5 Now, there was in Mormon a fountain of pure water, and Alma resorted thither, there being near the water a thicket of small trees, where he did hide himself in the daytime from the searches of the king.

6 And it came to pass that as many as believed him went thither to hear his words.

7 And it came to pass after many days there were a goodly number gathered together at the place of Mormon, to hear the words of Alma. Yea, all were gathered together that believed on his word, to hear him. And he did ^ateach 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 (for thus were they called) and now, as ye are ^adesirous to come into the ^bfold 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 ^awilling to mourn with those that ^bmourn; yea, and comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as ^cwitnesses 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 ^dfirst 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 ^abaptized in the ^bname of the Lord, as a witness before him that ye have entered into a ^ccovenant 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.

12 And now it came to pass that Alma took Helam, he being one of the first, and went and stood forth in the water, and cried, saying: O Lord, pour out thy Spirit upon thy servant, that he may do this work with holiness of heart.

13 And when he had said these words, the ^aSpirit of the Lord was upon him, and he said: Helam, I baptize thee, having ^bauthority from the Almighty God, as a testimony that ye have entered into a ^ccovenant to serve him until you are dead as to the mortal body; and may the Spirit of the Lord be poured out upon you; and may he grant unto you eternal life, through the redemption of Christ, whom he has prepared from the ^dfoundation of the world.

14 And after Alma had said these words, both Alma and Helam were ^aburied in the water; and they arose and came forth out of the water rejoicing, being filled with the Spirit.

15 And again, Alma took another, and went forth a second time into the water, and baptized him according to the first, only he did not bury ^ahimself again in the water.

16 And after this manner he did baptize every one that went forth to the place of Mormon; and they were in number about two hundred and four souls; yea, and they were ^abaptized in the waters of Mormon, and were filled with the ^bgrace of God.

17 And they were called the church of God, or the ^achurch of Christ, from that time forward. And it came to pass that whosoever was baptized by the power and authority of God was added to his church.

18 And it came to pass that Alma, having ^aauthority from God, ^bordained priests; even one priest to every fifty of their number did he ordain to preach unto them, and to ^cteach them concerning the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.

19 And he commanded them that ^athey should ^bteach nothing save it were the things which he had taught, and which had been spoken by the mouth of the holy prophets.

20 Yea, even he commanded them that they should ^apreach nothing save it were repentance and faith on the Lord, who had redeemed his people.

21 And he commanded them that there should be no ^acontention one with another, but that they should look forward with ^bone eye, having one faith and one baptism, having their hearts ^cknit together in unity and in love one towards another.

22 And thus he commanded them to preach. And thus they became the ^achildren of God.

23 And he commanded them that they should observe the ^asabbath day, and keep it holy, and also every day they should give thanks to the Lord their God.

24 And he also commanded them that the priests whom he had ordained ^ashould ^blabor with their own hands for their support.

25 And there was ^aone day in every week that was set apart that they should ^bgather themselves together to teach the people, and to worship the Lord their God, and also, as often as it was in their power, to ^cassemble themselves together.

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

27 And again Alma commanded that the people of the church should impart of their substance, ^aevery one according to that which he had; if he have more abundantly he should impart more abundantly; and of him that had but little, but little should be required; and to him that had not should be given.

28 And thus they should impart of their ^asubstance of their own free will and good desires towards God, and to those priests that stood in need, yea, and to every needy, naked soul.

29 And this he said unto them, having been commanded of God; and they did ^awalk uprightly before God, imparting to one another both temporally and spiritually according to their needs and their wants.

30 And now it came to pass that all this was done in Mormon, yea, by the ^awaters of Mormon, in the forest that was near the waters of Mormon; yea, the place of Mormon, the waters of Mormon, the forest of Mormon, how beautiful are they to the eyes of them who there came to the knowledge of their Redeemer; yea, and how blessed are they, for they shall ^bsing to his praise forever.

31 And these things were done in the ^aborders of the land, that they might not come to the knowledge of the king.

32 But behold, it came to pass that the king, having discovered a movement among the people, sent his servants to watch them. Therefore on the day that they were assembling themselves together to hear the word of the Lord they were discovered unto the king.

33 And now the king said that Alma was stirring up the people to rebellion against him; therefore he sent his ^aarmy to destroy them.

34 And it came to pass that Alma and the people of the Lord were ^aapprised of the coming of the king's army; therefore they took their tents and their families and ^bdeparted into the wilderness.

35 And they were in number about ^afour hundred and fifty souls.