

Comments on Mosiah 6

1 And now, king Benjamin thought it was expedient, after having finished speaking to the people, that he should take the names of all those who had entered into a covenant with God to keep his commandments. 2 And it came to pass that there was not one soul, except it were little children, but who had entered into the covenant and had taken upon them the name of Christ.

v1-2 Benjamin decides to take the names of all of those who made this covenant (v. 1), and there were none among the audience who didn't covenant except little children (v. 2).

3 And again, it came to pass that when king Benjamin had made an end of all these things, and had consecrated his son Mosiah to be a ruler and a king over his people, and had given him all the charges concerning the kingdom, and also had appointed priests to teach the people, that thereby they might hear and know the commandments of God, and to stir them up in remembrance of the oath which they had made, he dismissed the multitude, and they returned, every one, according to their families, to their own houses.

v3 Benjamin sets the kingdom in order for the last time. He consecrates Mosiah to be king and sets up priests to go out and teach the people, and remind them of the covenant they have made. He then dismisses everyone and sends them home.

"appointed priests", in Words of Mormon 1:16-18 it says King Benjamin had the assistance of "holy men...many holy prophets" who assisted him in keeping the people in line. Perhaps these "appointed priests" are the next generation brought in to assist his son Mosiah, or the number of religious people has increased because of King Benjamin's farewell address, so they need more priests and prophets to minister to the people of Zarahemla.

Priests and prophets are two separate groups which rarely overlap (e.g., Ezra, Jeremiah, Ezekiel) and are frequently at odds (e.g., everyone else) in the OT history, owing to the priests being exclusively of the lineage of Levi and Aaron. Among the Nephites and Mulekites that is clearly not the case as there are no Levites among them. How exactly this is sorted out is not documented in the text, other than righteous men being appointed in a patriarchal line when things go well. Whether king Benjamin's labels identify two different groups or not is impossible to discern. My guess is the massive conversion experience of ch. 2-5 results in increased demand for services at the temple, so they need to recruit more professional priesthood.

4 And Mosiah began to reign in his father's stead. And he began to reign in the thirtieth year of his age, making in the whole, about four hundred and seventy-six years from the time that Lehi left Jerusalem. 5 And king Benjamin lived three years and he died. 6 And it

came to pass that king Mosiah did walk in the ways of the Lord, and did observe his judgments and his statutes, and did keep his commandments in all things whatsoever he commanded him. 7 And king Mosiah did cause his people that they should till the earth. And he also, himself, did till the earth, that thereby he might not become burdensome to his people, that he might do according to that which his father had done in all things. And there was no contention among all his people for the space of three years.

v4-7 Mormon takes care of some basic timekeeping and history (v. 4-5). He then comments on Mosiah's kingship informing us that Mosiah walks in his father's footsteps (v. 6-7, cp. 2:12-14).

v7 King Benjamin's public discussion of laboring with his own hands in 2:13-15 makes it clear to the people and his son that he expects Mosiah to labor with his own hands as well. In the event Mosiah started getting arrogant and lazy, the people could remind him of his father's example and admonition when he called Mosiah was appointed king. Benjamin is telling the people he was a beneficent king, and telling Mosiah he needed to be one also. Mosiah apparently was.

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