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His Stewardship Was Fulfilled

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HIS STEWARDSHIP WAS FULFILLED

*"Ye see that ye have not power to slay me,
therefore I finish my message." (Mosiah 13:7)*

When Abinadi testified before King Noah and his priests, they "attempted to lay their hands on him" (Mosiah 13:2), but he warned them, "Touch me not, for God shall smite you if ye lay your hands upon me, for I have not delivered the message which the Lord sent me to deliver" (Mosiah 13:3). Knowing that "the Spirit of the Lord was upon him," "the people of king Noah durst not lay their hands on him" (Mosiah 13:5), and Abinadi went on to tell them about the coming of the Messiah. "I finish my message," he declared, "and then it matters not whither I go, if it so be that I am saved" (Mosiah 13:9). Only after he had delivered the words of the Lord were they able to slay him (see Mosiah 17:1).

A similar story is found in the pseudepigraphic book known as *4 Baruch* or "The Things Omitted from Jeremiah the Prophet."¹ "And as Jeremiah was saying these things about the Son of God, that he is coming into the world, the people became angry and said, 'These (once) again are the words spoken by Isaiah the son of Amos, saying, "I saw God and the son of God." Come, therefore, and let us not kill him by that (same) death [as Isaiah], but let's stone him

with stones'" (*4 Baruch* 9:21–22).² But Jeremiah declared, "they will not kill me until I have described to you everything that I saw" (*4 Baruch* 9:24). He then asked the Lord to protect him, and his life was spared by divine intervention when the Lord blinded their eyes and made them think that a large stone was Jeremiah. "Jeremiah delivered all the mysteries that he had seen . . . and then he simply stood in the midst of the people, desiring to bring his stewardship to an end" (*4 Baruch* 9:29). The people then "saw him, [and] they immediately ran at him with many stones, and his stewardship was fulfilled" (*4 Baruch* 9:31).

On several occasions, as Jesus testified of himself and his relationship with the Father, those who heard him sought to slay him. On two of these occasions, he simply went "through the midst of them" and escaped unharmed (Luke 4:30; compare John 8:58–59). On two other occasions, we read that "no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come" (John 7:30; see 8:20; compare John 2:4; 7:6, 8). Only when he had completed his mortal ministry did he declare that "the hour is come; [and] the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners" (Mark 14:41; compare John 12:23; 13:1; 17:1).

These ancient accounts from the Book of Mormon, *4 Baruch*, and the New Testament reflect a consistent attitude found among the words of Jesus Christ and his early prophets. Interestingly, in October 1844, Brigham Young articulated this as a divine principle: "The Lord never let a prophet fall on the earth until he had accomplished his work."³

Research by John A. Tvedtnes, originally published in the Journal of Book of Mormon Studies 5/2 (1996): 169–70.

NOTES

1. The text used herein is the English translation by S. E. Robinson, in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1985), 2:418–25.

2. Similarly, when Lehi told the people about his vision “of the coming of a Messiah, and also the redemption of the world . . . the Jews . . . were angry with him; yea, even as with the prophets of old, whom they had cast out, and stoned, and slain; and they also sought his life, that they might take it away” (1 Nephi 1:19–20; compare Helaman 8:22). The Lord saved Lehi by telling him to flee Jerusalem. In this, Lehi’s story resembles that of Abinadi in Mosiah 11:26. When Nephi was threatened by his brothers, the Lord protected him as he protected Abinadi, by making it impossible for them to lay their hands on him until he had finished speaking (1 Nephi 17:48–55; compare Lehi in 1 Nephi 2:13–14).

3. *History of the Church*, 7:302.