

April 13-19, 2020

# Mosiah 1–3

“FILLED WITH LOVE TOWARDS GOD AND ALL MEN”

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**Summary:** *King Benjamin teaches his sons the language and prophecies of their fathers—Their religion and civilization have been preserved because of the records kept on the various plates—Mosiah is chosen as king and is given custody of the records and other things. [About 130–124 B.C.]*

*King Benjamin addresses his people—He recounts the equity, fairness, and spirituality of his reign—He counsels them to serve their Heavenly King—Those who rebel against God will suffer anguish like unquenchable fire. [About 124 B.C.]*

*King Benjamin continues his address—The Lord Omnipotent will minister among men in a tabernacle of clay—Blood will come from every pore as He atones for the sins of the world—His is the only name whereby salvation comes—Men can put off the natural man and become Saints through the Atonement—The torment of the wicked will be as a lake of fire and brimstone. [About 124 B.C.]*

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## Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

### What does the “learning of the Jews” teach me?

The opening statements of both

King Benjamin and Nephi have such similarity when seen side by side. The chiasmus pattern emphasizes their roots and their connection to revelation. They indicate that their scriptures and records are being kept in a different language (Egyptian) than their spoken language (Hebrew). It may just be a possibility that ancient Joseph, reared in Egypt, may have started his family records/scriptures in the Egyptian tongue and it was continued that way by his descendants. The center point of the chiasmus is the word “mysteries,” which refers to the spirit of God as explained in **(1 Nephi 10:19)**.

**Nephi** “I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the **learning of my father**; and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days, nevertheless, having been **highly favored of the Lord** in all my days; yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and the

**mysteries of God**, therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days. Yea, I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the **learning of the Jews** and the language of the Egyptians.” **(1 Nephi 1:1-2)**

**King Benjamin** “And it came to pass that he had three sons; and he called their names Mosiah, and Helorum, and Helaman. And he caused that they should be taught in all the **language of his fathers**, that thereby they might become men of understanding; and that they might know concerning the prophecies which had been spoken by the mouths of their fathers, which were delivered them by the hand of the Lord. And he also taught them concerning the records which were engraven on the plates of brass, saying: My sons, I would that ye should remember that were it not for these plates, which contain these records and these commandments, we must have suffered in ignorance, even at this present time, not knowing the **mysteries of God**. For

it were not possible that our father, Lehi, could have remembered all these things, to have taught them to his children, except it were for the help of these plates; for he having been taught in the **language of the Egyptians** therefore he could read these engravings, and teach them to his children, that thereby they could teach them to their children, and so fulfilling the commandments of God, even down to this present time.”

(Mosiah 1:2-4)

### **How Jewish was King Benjamin's conference or holy convocation?**

The culture, religion and customs of the Children of Israel is evident as we see the pattern of collecting the families of the communities in a “holy convocation.” The erection of tents or temporary shelters to listen to a review of their history and be instructed in the prophesies of the future is precisely what the Biblical/Jewish holiday of Sukkot is all about. It is celebrated at the full moon closest to the autumn equinox. One builds a tabernacle, booth, bowery, hut or otherwise what is known as a Sukka. It is always facing toward the temple of Jerusalem. The book of Ecclesiastes is read during Sukkoth. There seems to be a similarity in what King Benjamin is saying to his people to what is taught during Sukkoth.

### **What is the purpose of a conference or holy convocation?**

“Ecclesiastes or Kohelet, is one of the five Megillot. It has won enduring popularity because of its wise maxims and its counsel on life. "Ecclesiastes" from the Greek and 'Kohelet' in Hebrew, means leader or teacher of a group.” “The Book reveals the wisdom acquired by Kohelet on his journey through life. He experiences joy and sorrow, faith and doubt, vanity and humility, hypocrisy and truth. The struggle to find meaning and purpose in life was as baffling for him as it

is for us today. Kohelet arrives at the conclusion that the true joy of life lies not in wealth nor in vain pleasure but in the spiritual riches of fulfilling mitzvot, God's commandments. Love and reverence for the Almighty help man to accept his fate and to overcome the obstacles and temptation that continually beset him.”

(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

### **What are the similarities of King Benjamin's address and the subject of Sukkot?**

Let's take a few moments to reflect on the rich cultural heritage of the festival of Sukkot and imagine something similar to King Benjamin's convocation with his people. Even the account of King Benjamin's visit by an angel has similarity to Sukkot with its expectation of heavenly visitors. “Sukkot (Hebrew for 'huts' or 'tabernacles'), [is] a seven-day festival beginning on the 15th day of the month of Tishrei, which falls in September or October. (In the Diaspora an extra eighth day is celebrated.) One of its main observances is living temporarily in huts, called sukkot, resembling those in which the Children of Israel dwelt during their forty years in the wilderness after the Exodus from Egypt. “This autumn festival was the last of the three 'pilgrim' festivals connected with the farming year. From all corners of the Land of Israel throngs of pilgrims used to make their way up to Jerusalem carrying the gaily decorated baskets of fruit and grain which they brought to the Temple as a thanksgiving offering. At the gates of the city the townsfolk greeted them with music. The pilgrims then ascended the broad marble staircase that led from the City of David to the summit of the Temple Mount, where they would present their offerings to the Priests.” “This holiday was also the occasion for the consecration of the Temple built by Solomon and every seventh year on Sukkot, the Torah was read by the king before the assembled

people. In his vision of the end of days, the prophet Zechariah foretells that all the nations of the world will assemble for the festival of Sukkot in Jerusalem to worship God.” ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

### **How do the “Sukkahs” resemble the “tents?”**

“The sukkah is a structure with at least three walls, made of any material. It must be at least ten handbreadths in height, and in area at least seven handbreadths square. The roof covering, or sekhakh, is usually leafy branches, and these must be arranged so that there is more covered than open space.” “In present-day Israel, as in other countries, Jews construct sukkot in their gardens, on the sidewalks, and on the roofs and balconies of their houses, just as they did at the time of the return from the Babylonian exile, as described in the Book of Nehemiah: ‘So the people went forth... and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God... and there was very great gladness.’”

([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#)) “Though the sukkah is only a temporary dwelling for the week of the festival, it is used as if it were one's permanent home. Thus it is customary to beautify the sukkah with all sorts of decorations, such as hanging fruit from the ceiling, and adorning the walls with paper cut-outs and pictures of festival motifs and biblical scenes. And for the meals eaten there, the family's best china and silverware are used. Caucasian Jews build the walls of their sukkot with fir branches, while the Mountain Jews of Daghestan decorate their sukkot walls with tapestries and carpets. The Kurdish Jews sit on rugs in the sukkah as they do at home and in the synagogue, and in Aden, Jews were accustomed to decorate their sukkot with ornate glass lamps.”

([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

### **How do Jews use the Sukkah and whom do they expect to visit?**

“On the first night of the festival, a person is obliged to eat his festive meal in the sukkah. During the remainder of the festival, any full meal should be eaten in the sukkah, and the blessing ‘who commanded us to dwell in the sukkah’ is recited, usually after the blessing over bread. However, if rain is likely to spoil one's food (the sekhakh must not be rainproof), one may continue the meal indoors. Living in the sukkah instead of in the security of one's home is thus a reminder that we are dependent on God's favors. Where the climate allows it, some people sleep in the sukkah. Synagogues usually build a sukkah for the benefit of members who have none of their own. The world over, the festive meals in the sukkah are accompanied by the happy singing of the family and its guests. Hospitality to the needy, which is always encouraged, is especially praiseworthy during this festival. Indeed, the Midrash states that the Children of Israel were divinely protected by ‘clouds of glory’ during their 40-year wanderings in the wilderness, because the Patriarch Abraham had given shelter to three strangers in need.” ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#)) “When a family performs the mitzvah of the sukkah joyfully, they are said to be visited in the sukkah by seven ‘guests of the festival’ (the ushpizin) who are present in spirit. Each day it is customary to invite and welcome one of these seven guests - -- Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron and David --- by an appropriate recitation.” ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

### **How does the festival of Sukkoth teach about “Living Waters?”**

“In the days of the Temple, each day during the last six hol ha-mo'ed days of the festival (though not on the Sabbath), the priests used to fill a golden flagon with

water drawn from the beautiful spring of Siloam in the valley to the south of the Temple Mount, and carry it up the hill for a ceremony at the altar. This ceremony was called Simhat Bet ha-Sho'evah (the joy of the water-drawing) . . . golden candlesticks, 50 cubits high, were lit with wicks made out of worn-out garments of the priests, and the light emitted was so bright that 'there was not a courtyard in Jerusalem that did not reflect the light of the Bet ha-Sho'evah.' Men of piety and good deeds used to dance before the candlesticks with burning torches in their hands, singing songs and praises. And countless Levites played on harps, lyres, cymbals, trumpets and other musical instruments, on the 15 steps leading from the Court of the Israelites to the Court of the Women." ([Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.](#))

### **How ancient are General Conferences?**

In the Bible we read of holy convocations occurring in the spring and in Autumn, (Passover and Sukkot). Apparently, King Benjamin wanted this particular holy convocation to be heard and experienced by all, so he built a tower and had the words written and distributed throughout the people. Latter-day Saints have holy convocations in the spring and in autumn

(general conferences). The modern-day prophets use the broadcasting antenna towers and the written word to bring the messages to all the people.

### **How can I understand the difference between responsibility and entitlement?**

King Benjamin's sermon also reminds us how the Children of Israel compromised with God's word, preferring a standard of explicit do's and do not's rather than relying on the spirit to guide them. They may have preferred to remain in a "slave mentality" rather than "serve each other" as prompted by the mystery (spirit) of God. One of the timeless messages (and personal examples) of King Benjamin is about service. He repeats the legacy given to his forefathers by Joseph in Egypt who learned that being a slave is "mental." He simply decided to be the best "slave" and became a servant instead. He learned what the Savior would say later in mortality. "Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

([Matthew 23:10-12](#))