

April 22-28, 2024

# Mosiah 1–3

“FILLED WITH LOVE TOWARDS GOD AND ALL MEN”

**Summary:** *Mosiah 1. 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.]*

*Mosiah 2. 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 shall suffer anguish like unquenchable fire. [About 124 B.C.]*

*Mosiah 3. King Benjamin continues his address—The Lord Omnipotent shall minister among men in a tabernacle of clay—Blood shall 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 shall be as a lake of fire and brimstone. [About 124 B.C.]*

## Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

### How can “words” center on the Lord?

The opening statements of both King Benjamin and Nephi in the Book of

Mormon have such similarity that it helps to show them side by side. They speak in a chiasmic pattern that emphasizes their roots and their connection to revelation. The Father and Son should be the center of our attention. The Book of Mormon Prophets also seem to indicate that their scriptures and records are being kept in a different language (Egyptian) than their spoken language (Hebrew). It may be a likelihood 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.

<p><b>Nephi writes:</b> (1 <b>Nephi 1:1-2</b>) (1) I, Nephi, having been born of goodly parents, therefore I was taught somewhat in all the <b>learning of my father</b>; and having seen many afflictions in the course of my days,</p>	<p><b>King Benjamin writes:</b> (Mosiah 1:2-4) (2) 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 <b>language of</b></p>
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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** (1 **Nephi 10:19\***), therefore I make a record of my proceedings in my days.

\*[For he that diligently seeketh shall find; and the **mysteries of God** shall be unfolded unto them, by the power of the Holy Ghost, as well in these times as in times of old,] (1 **Nephi 10:19**) (2) Yea, I make a record in the language of **my father**, which

**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 (3) 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 commandments, we must have suffered in ignorance, even at this present time, not knowing the **mysteries of God**. (4) For it were not possible that **our father, Lehi**, could have remembered all these things, to have taught them to his

<p>consists of the learning of the Jews and the <b>language of the Egyptians</b>. (1 Nephi 1:1-2)</p>	<p>children, except it were for the help of these plates; for he having been taught in <i>the language of the Egyptians</i> 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)</p>
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### How similar is King Benjamin's gathering to a biblical convocation?

The culture, religion and customs of the Biblical Children of Israel is evident among the Nephites 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 prophecies of the future is precisely what the Biblical/Jewish holiday of *Sukkot* is all about. It is lunar based, celebrated at the full moon after the autumn equinox. It is a sequel to a spring holiday of Passover (*Pesach*) which happens at the first full moon after the spring equinox. (There are solar calendar adjustments like "leap year" from time to time.) 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*. Note the similarity in what King Benjamin is arraying as well as what he is saying to his people.

### What is the subject material being taught?

"The biblical reading for this biblical holiday is "Ecclesiastes or *Kohelet*, (and) is one of the five *Megillot* (five short books

of Song of Songs, Book of Ruth, the Book of Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Book of Esther). 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 (same word as blessings). 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.*)

### How helpful is it to recognize the deliverance holy weeks and their beginning and ending "High-Days with four of the seven extra annual Sabbaths?"

Let's take a few moments to reflect on the rich cultural heritage of the festival of *Sukkot* and imagine something like 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* (beyond Israel) 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.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.) The music, singing and praising are reflected in the “Psalms of Ascent, 120-134.” “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.” (Zechariah 14) The other deliverance festival and holy convocation, Passover, is described shortly.

### **How similar are the Book of Mormon “tents” to the Jewish “Succot?”**

“The *Sukkah* is a structure with at least three walls, (open side is toward the temple) 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 Go . . . and there was very great gladness.’” “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 celebratory are the “deliverance” festivals?**

“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* [roof covering] 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* (interpretations of *Talmudic* biblical elucidations or traditions) 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

### **How ready am I for angels and heavenly visitors?**

“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, Joseph, Moses, Aaron and David --- by an appropriate recitation.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

Notice in the Book of Mosiah that an Angel visited King Benjamin! “And the things which I shall tell you are made known unto me by an angel from God.” (Mosiah 3:2)

### **How appropriate are hymns and psaltery?**

“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.)

shelter to three strangers in need.” (Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)

### **What may be the modern-day fulfillment of biblical Spring and Fall conferences?**

In the Bible we read of holy convocations occurring in the spring and in Autumn, (Passover and Sukkot). Apparently, King Benjamin wanted this 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, internet, and the written word to bring the messages to all the people.

### **How well do I comprehend the advantages of “choice” versus “commandments?”**

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)