

# “Alma . . . Did Judge Righteous Judgements”

Lesson  
21  
Summary

*Mosiab 29; Alma 1–4*

## Scripture Summary:

*Mosiab proposes that judges be chosen in place of a king—Unrighteous kings lead their people into sin—Alma the younger is chosen chief judge by the voice of the people—He is also the high priest over the Church—Alma the elder and Mosiab die. [About 92–91 B.C.]*

*Alma: Nehor teaches false doctrines, establishes a church, introduces priestcraft, and slays Gideon—He is executed for his crimes—Priestcrafts and persecutions spread among the people—The priests support themselves, the people care for the poor, and the Church prospers. [About 91—90 B.C.]*

*Amlici seeks to be king and is rejected by the voice of the people—His followers make him king—The Amlicites make war on the Nephites and are defeated—The Lamanites and Amlicites join forces and are defeated—Alma slays Amlici. [87 B.C.]*

*The Amlicites had marked themselves according to the prophetic word—The Lamanites had been cursed for their rebellion—Men bring their own curses upon themselves—The Nephites defeat another Lamanite army. [87 B.C.]*

*Alma baptizes thousands of converts—Iniquity enters the Church, and the Church’s progress is hindered—Nephibah is appointed chief judge—Alma, as high priest, devotes himself to the ministry. [Between 86 and 83 B.C.]*

## Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

**Model Government:** The model of government in the Book of Mormon parallels the desired governmental system in modern times. In ancient times the Israelites went from a system of Judges to Kings, a path of secularism that drew away from God (because they forgot that kings were to be models of The King of Kings). In this section of The Book of Mormon, the people went from Kings to Judges.

**Who Wants a Monarchy/Theocracy?** Nowadays, the religious Jews, Bahais and Latter-day Saints anticipate an eventual theocracy. This is in stark contrast to the secularism and materialism so prevalent in modern society. “In biblical times . . . the monarch was accepted as the sole ruler, with complete authority over his subjects. The status of kings varied from emperor to vassal as the kingdoms varied in size from a tribe like Midian to a vast empire such as Egypt. But the idea common to all was that the direct relationship between the king and the deity was part of the natural order.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Another King?** “The primary feature of the coronation was the anointing of the king’s head with oil by a priest or prophet, the sign of the divine covenant . . .” “In the northern kingdom of Israel there were many rebellions and frequent changes of dynasty. In the southern kingdom of Judea the monarchy remained in the house of David. Prophecies of the future declare that in the ‘end of days’ the kingdom of the Jews will be returned to a descendant of the House of David.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*) Look at Jer 30:9, Ezek. 34:24, Hosea 3:5, all prophesying of the coming of the Lord and His servant David.

**Jews and Mormons in a World Community:** “Within the non-Jewish world . . . the Jews always constituted a distinct religious grouping . . . it was this type of corporate structuring of society that made possible the expulsions, en masse, of whole communities of Jews from specific territories. But this same social structuring also had positive results in the preservation of Jewish life in the Diaspora, for it allowed the Jews an extraordinary measure of freedom to live within their own circles in accordance with their own laws and religious requirements.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*) Note the similarity to the historical and present LDS religious and community structure.

**Role of a Judge:** Both in the Bible and in The Book of Mormon the term judge has an ecclesiastical connection. They were the leading elders of the people. Latter-day Saints have Elders who are the Judges of Israel. “Now the confessed offender is not left without hope, for he can obtain forgiveness by following the course outlined, and by forsaking sins comparable . . . and living before the Church and the Lord in such manner as to win approbation of both. The offender who has brought stigma and affront to the ward, the stake or the mission should seek the forgiveness of those he has thus offended. That may be had at times through the presiding authorities of the various divisions of the Church. At other times it may be appropriate and quite necessary to make amends for public offenses and seek forgiveness before organizations of the people. The judges of Israel will determine this matter. (Conf. Rep., Apr., 1954, pp. 10-13.)” (*Bruce R. McConkie, Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, Vol.3, p.278*)

**“Elder” Known as Judge:** “Because of the experience of the aged, old age and wisdom are sometimes regarded as going together. Thus, throughout the Bible and Talmud, the word ‘elder’ means judge, leader, or sage. On the other hand, the Book of Job also stresses that there are young men who are wiser than old men.” “The *shofet*, or judge, had to meet strict qualifications, besides just knowing the law. Among these qualifications were piety, wisdom, humility, gentility and human understanding. When Moses set up the first courts, he looked for ‘able men such as fear God, men of truth, hating unjust gain’ (Exodus 18:21) and ‘wise men, and understanding and full of knowledge’ (Deuteronomy 1:13). They were charged to ‘hear the causes between your brethren and judge righteously between a man and his brother and the stranger,’ not to be partial in judgment but to ‘hear the small and the great alike, fear no man, for judgment is God’s’ (Deuteronomy 1:16--17).” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*) The Latter-day Saints have an ecclesiastical legal system that includes “Judges in Israel.” They are the Branch Presidents, Bishops and the Stake Presidents.

**Called by Revelation not Mere Impressions:** “Whenever God has . . . authorized men to perform a work in any age or dispensation, it has been done by revelations, and not by mere impressions, or some undefinable, internal feelings . . . Noah was called by the . . . Lord to be a preacher of righteousness, and to build an ark. Abraham, Lot, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, were called by revelation to perform a great variety of duties. Moses and Aaron were called to the priest’s office by the word of the great Jehovah. Seventy elders of Israel were called by revelation to assist Moses. Joshua was appointed by the word of the Lord through Moses to be his successor in leading Israel. The successors of Aaron were appointed to the priesthood by revelation. The Judges of Israel were called by visions, by angels and by the inspiration of the Spirit. And finally, all their officers, wise men and prophets, down to the days of Malachi, were called by new revelation.” (*Orson Pratt Divine Authenticity of BofM, No. 2 (1850), p.17*)

**“President” in a Religious Sense:** The modern Hebrew word for president is “nasi.” “In biblical use, *nasi* refers to a person of importance, a leader, a tribal ruler or a king. Under the Roman occupation of Erez Israel toward the end of the period of the second Temple, when there was no independent Jewish leadership, the term *nasi* was used by Jewish rulers to show their authority while not claiming kingship.”

**Justice Is the Fair Administration of the Law** “. . . A judge must not show special favor to a litigant or a defendant for any reason at all, and that nobody --- not even the king --- is above the rule of the law. This concept of even-handedness is, in the Jewish view, absolutely essential for the existence and progress of society. The Bible quite clearly states ‘Justice, justice shall you pursue, that you may thrive and occupy the land that the Lord your God is giving you’ (Deuteronomy 16:20). The prophets castigated Israelite society for its lack of justice and described most of the troubles the Jews suffered as divine punishment for the rampant injustice.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

**Israeli Government - Unique in Middle East:** The underlying considerations in establishing the modern State of Israel and its legal system go back to ancient times and the biblical system while embracing the principles of democracy. Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East. That probably justifies the government of the United States of America to be as protective and supportive of Israel as it is.

**The King of Kings must Rule:** For the religious Jews, the varied opinions of the Jewish society, as noted above, lead to one conclusion. Eventually, the Lord, the King of Kings must rule. The conflicts posed by enemies, usually driven by dictatorial mentalities, challenge the prophetic future of modern Israel just as Amlici, the Lamanites and others challenged the people of Nephi and their prophets, judges and leaders. The Book of Mormon presents an account of success over enemies based on following the Lord’s counsel through his appointed leaders. Their rule gives us a model for our anticipated rule by the King of Kings. It will be a rule of love with equality, justice and mercy. The will of the people will be tied to their will to obey the higher laws of heaven, a theocracy.

Daniel Rona, born in Israel and living in Jerusalem has authored Old & New Testament and Book of Mormon Supplement Study Materials to be used in conjunction with the weekly LDS Gospel Doctrine Lesson study. NOTE: Three versions of the supplemental study materials are available *FREE* at [www.HolyLandsRevealed.com](http://www.HolyLandsRevealed.com). (Just click “LDS SUPPLEMENTS”)

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