

Mosiah 1–3: King Benjamin

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Resource: *KBS = King Benjamin's Speech Made Simple*, edited by John W. Welch and Stephen D. Ricks.

1. What does “mysteries of God” mean?

Open your ears that ye may hear, and your hearts that ye may understand, and your minds that the mysteries of God may be unfolded to your view. (Mos 2:9)

2. How do we learn the mysteries of God?

3. Ancient Holy Days (Law of Moses)

Every male was to appear “before the LORD” (at the temple) three times a year: feast of unleavened bread (Passover), feast of weeks (Pentecost), and feast of tabernacles. (Dt 16:16–17)

- Spring (Mar/Apr): **Passover** (1/15). New barley sheaves (first fruits). Moses led Israelites out of Egypt.
- Summer (May/June): **Feast of Weeks**. Moses received Ten Commandments. Beginning of new wheat harvest.
- Fall (Sept/Oct): New Year (7/1), Day of Atonement (7/10) and **Feast of Tabernacles** (7/15-22). Fall harvest.

Fall or New Year Festivals

4. New Year (Rosh Hashanah)

The New Year was on the 1st day of the 7th month (early autumn). It began with horns blowing and sacrifices. According to the Talmud, the New Year is when God created the world and is the day of judgment for all mankind as sheep pass for examination before the shepherd. The preceding month and the following ten days before the Day of Atonement was a time of self-examination and repentance. The New Year festivals included the celebration of the creation and the kingship of God.

Themes: admonitions, attributes of God, being sealed to God, covenant making, creation, divine judgment, forsaking sin, God’s involvement in history, guilt before God, judgment, kingship of God, law, long-suffering of God, Lord Omnipotent, man’s nature and nothingness, preaching and prophecy, rebirth and resurrection, remembrance, reverence and fear of God, sacrifice, testimony against the people, warnings against sin, wisdom.

5. Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)

The Day of Atonement was on the 10th day of the 7th month. Sacrifices, scapegoat, High priest entered Holy of Holies. “Traditionally, Yom Kippur is considered the date on which Moses received the second set of Ten Commandments. It occurred following the completion of the second 40 days of instructions from God. At this same time, the Israelites were granted atonement for the sin of the Golden Calf, hence its designation as the Day of Atonement.” (Yom Kippur, Wikipedia)

Themes: atonement (7 times), balancing order and diligence, being made free from sin, belief in God, belief in Messiah, blessings, blood, blotting out names of transgressors, commandments of God, confession and repentance, conversion, eternal rewards and punishments, faith, fall of Adam, fallen state of humanity, foundation of the world, giving to the poor, goodness of God, humility, ignorant sin, indebtedness to God, inscribing names of righteous, joy and blessings, knowing the divine name, left hand, means of salvation, name of God, preparations, pride, purification, rebellion against God, repentance, right hand, sacrifice and purifications, scapegoat and driving ass out, service to God and fellowman, submission, sufferings and works of the Messiah, unintentional sin.

6. Feast of Tabernacles (Sukkot)

The Feast of Tabernacles began on the 15th and lasted a week. It included going up to the temple, sitting in tents/booths facing the temple, reading the law, renewing the covenant, the proclaiming or sustaining the king or high priest.

“The people gathered themselves together ... that they might go up to the temple ... And they also took of the firstlings of their flocks, that they might offer sacrifice and burnt offerings according to the law of Moses; And also that they might give thanks to the Lord. ... They pitched their tents round about, every man according to his family, consisting of his wife,” children, and grandchildren. And “every man having his tent with the door thereof towards the temple.” (2:1–6)

Themes: becoming sons and daughters of God, booths/tents, coronation, covenant, deliverance, earthly king, effect of knowing God, family, giving thanks and praise, heavenly king, joy in and keeping the commandments, kingship, knowing God by serving God, law and order, one’s accountability after being warned, pilgrimage, praise, rejoicing and thanksgiving, remembrance, sacrifice, temple assembly, thanksgiving and praise.

Coronation: The (re)coronation of a king occurred during the New Year festivals. The coronation of Mosiah followed the pattern of ancient coronation rituals of kings in Israel and other Near Eastern countries. (1 Kgs 1:34, 39; 2 Kgs 11:12, 14, 17; 23:3; 2 Chr 6:13)

- Sanctuary or temple was site of coronation. (1:18; 2:30)
- The king stood on a royal dais or platform. (2:7)
- Installed in office with royal insignia. (1:15–16; 28:13)
- Anointed king. (6:3)
- Presentation of new king to the people. (2:30; 4:2; 5:2–4)
- Received a throne name. (Jac 1:10–11)
- Divine adoption of the king (5:6–12)

7. Sabbatical and Jubilee Years (Lev 25)

Every 7th year was a sabbatical year when the land was not to be tilled, the yield was given to the poor, and debtors and slaves (or servants) were released from their obligations. The fall rituals came at the end of a sabbatical year when the people could begin to “till the earth” (6:7) again.

Every 7th sabbatical year was a jubilee year. It offered a new economic beginning for the poor and spiritual renewal for all. Parts of Lev. 25 and Mos. 2 and 4 are very similar.

Themes: blessings, debt recognition, forgiveness, freedom, land, love, peaceful living, prosperity, purification and renewal, reading of the law, render to each his due, return things borrowed, riches and generosity, service and servants, slaves released.

8. Overview of King Benjamin’s Speech

| Support | Words of Speech |
|---------------------------|---|
| Preparations (1:1–2:8) | A. All are indebted to God (2:9–28) |
| 1-Interruption (2:29–30) | B. Consequences of obedience or disobedience (2:31–41) |
| 2-Interruption (2:41–3:1) | C. Angel testifies of Christ’s deeds (3:2–10) D. Sanctification by atonement (3:11–27) |
| 3-Interruption (3:27–4:4) | C. Benjamin testifies of God’s goodness (4:4–12) B. Righteous behavior of redeemed (4:13–30) |
| 4-Interruption (4:30–5:6) | A. Sons and daughters of God (5:6–15) |
| Final acts (6:1–3) | |

9. Ancient Temple Endowment

“King Benjamin’s people received an endowment of spiritual knowledge and power which took them from being good people to Christlike people—all in a temple setting. ... They experienced through the power of the priesthood ... a revelation of Christ’s nature and the power to be assimilated to his image.” (KBS, 212)

1. Angel (heavenly messenger) comes down to answer prayer
2. Benjamin invites all to temple to make a covenant, and to “rid my garments of your blood”
3. Benjamin (king and priest) represents heavenly king and stands on a tower near the temple/altar. He invites all to open their ears, hearts, and minds to learn the mysteries of God
4. Make covenant
 - a. **Author** (who and why we worship or covenant with): LORD Omnipotent, fall, atonement, indebtedness to God who has created, blessed, prospered, and preserved us.
 - b. **Blessings:** will bless, prosper, preserve; eternal life (enter God’s presence, sealed and “brought into heaven” 5:15, “dwell with God” 2:41)
 - c. **Curses:** consequences of breaking covenant; cut off
 - d. **Duties:** love God and neighbor; “continue in faith” (be obedient, abound in good works) to the end of mortal life
 - e. **Enter covenant:** “they all cried with one voice, saying:” yes ... “we are willing to enter into a covenant with our God ... to be obedient to his commandments” (5:2,5)
 - f. **New name:** “take upon you the name of Christ” (5:8)
 - g. **Endowed with power:** spiritually begotten or born again (mighty change of heart, filled with joy and Holy Ghost, knowledge)
 - h. **Remember:** names recorded, priests appointed to teach and “stir them up in remembrance of the oath” (6:3)

10. Unprofitable servant, “less than dust of the earth”

11. Service to men is no reason to boast

- a. If we serve men, then we are only in the service of God. (2:17)
- b. If we serve God with our whole souls, we are yet unprofitable servants (2:21)
- c. We do not serve God to get ahead with God or man, but to know the master whom we serve. (5:13)

12. Angel: “Glad tidings of great joy” (3:2–22)

“The time cometh, and is not far distant, that with power, the Lord Omnipotent ... shall come down from heaven ... and shall dwell in a tabernacle of clay, and shall go forth amongst men, working mighty miracles” (3:5)

“Blood cometh from every pore, so great shall be his anguish for the wickedness and the abominations of his people.” (3:7)

“After all this they shall consider him a man, and say that he hath a devil, and shall scourge him, and shall crucify him.” (3:9)

“He shall rise the third day from the dead; and behold, he standeth to judge the world” (3:10)

13. Natural Man is an Enemy to God (3:18–20)

¹⁸ For behold he judgeth, and his judgment is just; and the infant perisheth not that dieth in his infancy; but men drink damnation to their own souls except

^A they humble themselves

^B and become as little children,

^C and believe that salvation was, and is, and is to come, in and through the atonement blood of Christ, the Lord Omnipotent.

¹⁹ ^D For the natural man

^E is an enemy to God,

^F and has been from the fall of Adam,

^F and will be, forever and ever,

^E unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit,

^D and putteth off the natural man

^C and becometh a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord,

^B and becometh as a child,

^A submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father. ...

²⁰ The time shall come when the knowledge of a Savior shall spread throughout every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

14. Natural Man is Carnal, Sensual, Devilish

After the fall of Adam, mankind became “carnal, sensual, and devilish, by nature” (Al 42:10). “The devil ... did beguile our first parents, which was the cause of their fall; which was the cause of all mankind becoming carnal, sensual, devilish, knowing evil from good, subjecting themselves to the devil.” (Mos 16:3)

“The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Cor 2:6)

a. **Carnal:**

b. **Sensual:**

c. **Devilish:**

Disobedient; unkind, angry, unforgiving; proud, boasters; impatient; full of hate, lack of love (see Hel 12:4–6)

15. How are we changed by:

- (a) yielding to the “enticings of the Holy Spirit”?
- (b) obedience, sacrifice, law of gospel, chastity, consecration?
- (c) Accepting and fulfilling church callings?

16. Liahona and Holy Ghost

“Ye do withdraw yourselves from the Spirit of the Lord, that it may have no place in you to guide you in wisdom’s paths that ye may be blessed, prospered, and preserved” (2:36)

The Liahona “led our fathers through the wilderness, ... As they were unfaithful they did not prosper nor progress ... and ... they were smitten with famine and sore afflictions, to stir them up in remembrance of their duty.” (1:16–17)

“They that are wise and have received the truth, and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide, and ... not been deceived ... shall not be ... cast into the fire.” (D&C 45:57)

What are alternate guides to the Holy Ghost?