

Benjamin's and Mosiah's Covenant Ceremonies Compared with Old Testament Rituals

Key Scriptures Mosiah 1–6; Exodus 19:3–8; 20–24; Joshua 24; Deuteronomy 1–31

Explanation In Mosiah 1–6 and 25, Benjamin and Mosiah each direct a ceremony of spiritual renewal among the Nephite population. These ceremonies are similar to many other formal covenant-making ceremonies found in the Old Testament, beginning with the ceremony at Sinai (see Exodus 24) and including the ceremonies at Shechem (see Joshua 24) and Mizpeh (see 1 Samuel 10). In each of these, the king or religious leader of the people directs the ceremony, for ancient Hebrew kings were seen as mediators between God and the people. Other similar elements include gathering an assembly of the people by royal decree to make covenants, publicly reading the law or basis of the covenant, establishing or expounding upon a legal document, writing the speech down, and participating in cultic acts (ranging from building an altar to being baptized) to physically demonstrate acceptance of the covenant made. These similarities are further evidence of the Book of Mormon's Old Testament roots and strongly suggest that the Nephites conscientiously followed established laws and customs brought with them from Jerusalem.

Sources Todd R. Kerr, "Ancient Aspects of Nephite Kingship in the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 1/1 (1992): 110–11. See Stephen D. Ricks, "Treaty/Covenant Patterns in King Benjamin's Address," *BYU Studies* 24 (spring 1984): 151–62.

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Elements	Exodus 24	Joshua 24	1 Samuel 10	Mosiah 1–6	Mosiah 25
Leader	Moses	Joshua	Samuel	Benjamin	Mosiah
Assembly	read in the audience of the people (v. 7)	gathered all the tribes of Israel to Shechem (v. 1)	called people together unto the Lord at Mizpeh (v. 17)	the people gathered themselves throughout all the land (2:1)	caused that all the people should be gathered together (v. 1)
Legal Document	book of the covenant (v. 7)	set them a statute and an ordinance (v. 25)	manner of the kingdom (v. 25)	my, my father's, my son's, and God's commandments (2:31)	
Public Reading	read in the hearing of the people	said unto the people (v. 22)	told the people the manner of the kingdom (v. 25)	opened his mouth and began to speak (4:4; cf. 2:9)	read and caused to be read (v. 5)
Writing	wrote all the words of the Lord (v. 4)	wrote the words in the book of the law of God (v. 26)	wrote it in a book (v. 25)	words which he spake should be written (2:8)	
Cultic Act	built an altar (v. 4)	took a stone and set it under an oak by the sanctuary of the Lord (v. 26)	laid it up before the Lord (v. 25)	sacrifices and ordinances according to law of Moses (2:3); names recorded (6:1)	baptism (v. 17)