

A Study of Nephite, Lamanite, and Jaredite Governmental Institutions and Policies as Portrayed in the Book of Mormon

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A Study of Nephite, Lamanite, and Jaredite Governmental Institutions and Policies as Portrayed in The Book of Mormon

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Abstract

Nephite government was essentially theocratic, with both the monarchy and reign of the judges paralleling the similar institutions of the ancient Israelites. Ultimate political authority resided in the prophet. The laws were given by the Lord, and the principle of popular consent was recognized. The role of government was primarily national defense and the punishment of crime, not social reform.

Lamanite government was monarchical and despotic, with notable exceptions when the nation was converted to the gospel. The Jaredites theoretically lived under a theocratic monarchy, but intrigue, tyranny, and oppression were the rule rather than the exception.

In all three cases, righteousness was more important to the well-being and security of the people than the form of government. The greatest danger to free institutions was the rise of secret combinations with public tolerance and support. The authors of the Book of Mormon wrote in part to warn their readers of the dangers of such combinations and to enable them to profit from the political experiences of their predecessors on the American continent.

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MA

College and Department

Religious Education; Ancient Scripture

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