

ENGAGING GOSPEL DOCTRINE (EPISODE 194)

LESSON 21

“Alma ... Did Judge Righteous Judgments”

Hook	In this reading, we are wise to pay as much attention to what Mormon does not say as to what he does
Manual Goal	To help class members understand righteous principles of government and avoid priestcraft and pride.
EGD Goal	To help class members take into account their own biases and constructively engage with those who believe differently; and to encourage them to act as responsible citizens

3 episodes left!

Fundraising: got a few cancelled payment notifications. Even though the four years is up, we aren't "done". I will remain engaged and keep the podcast a helpful resource for Sunday School. This podcast still needs your support! I will keep this podcast valuable as I add other exciting projects. And remember, if you are in a position to give a thank you donation for completing the four year cycle, I would appreciate. (getting notifications of cancelled subscriptions as I work to get the podcast recorded is the opposite of motivating!

“Righteous government” Oh boy... that’s a hard one, and very pertinent these days as we gear up for the presidential election.

VOTE. Participate in local elections. I am embarrassed to admit I don't keep up on politics.

**Really focus on differences in beliefs, how to communicate across barriers/ideology, etc.

I. Sunday School

- a. Framing: I thought these were going to be boring, skim through chapters, but I was surprised by how much a close reading revealed.
- b. Two minute take home
 - i. Responsible citizenship
 - ii. Communicating across differences (be aware of how we work, how others work, how to bridge that)
 - iii. Three levels: Love, Respect, Understand/be converted (being open to another's influence is a powerful way to show love and respect and openness, treating them as a person, worthy to be taken seriously).
 - iv. Close reading example: Mormon as a biased narrator
- c. Reading commentary
- d. Lesson

- i. How can we constructively learn from the story of Nehor?
- ii. How can we be aware of our biases?
- iii. How can we respect others who believe differently than we do?
- iv. How can we communicate effectively across ideological divides? (Get into what Randall talked about)
- v. First, love, then respect, then understand (share Andrew's parents email)
 - 1. Love: caring, consideration, willingness to extend yourself for the benefit of others
 - 2. Respect: give benefit of the doubt, remember the person's character, see the good, even if you disagree
 - 3. Understand: open up
- vi. What was the Church of Nehor? (Universalism, hedonism, probably believed that religion misdirected emphasis and resources)
- vii. Two Churches:
 - 1. True church: humble, shared, labored, cared for each other. Were prosperous when they didn't allow that prosperity to prevent them from working hard and helping others
 - a. Response to opposition, becoming more humble, patient
 - 2. Proudful: wasteful, indulgent, distracted, selfish

Being a responsible citizen ()

<http://uselections.voxe.org/>

<https://www.isidewith.com/>

Also these:

https://ballotpedia.org/Main_Page

<http://votesmart.org/>

- viii.
- ix. The hidden story of the Almicites (seems like they are Mulekites who resent not having a chance to be represented by one of their own as king, so they use the approved channels, vote for the king, Almic gets enough votes, and then the Nephites get aggressive. This does not seem like a war of self-defense, but one of annihilation).
- x. Relatedly, look at how hard Mosiah argues to get rid of kings, yet he is also biased

II. Scripture Study

III. Study Notes

- a. Humanism and Religion (benefits and critiques and caricatures)
- b. Why do people leave the Church?
- c. How best to talk to those who have left the church?
- d. How can those who have left constructively talk to active members?
- e. Is there an ideal form of government?

Dale G. Renlund

March 28 ·

We can stand firm in our beliefs and have a loving relationship with those who hold differing opinions. For example, I believe drinking alcohol is a violation of God's law. So what do I do when I am hosting friends who do not believe as I do? My wife and I arrange to go to a restaurant with them where they can order as they choose to. And when they order wine with their meal, I do not get in their faces and call them out as sinners.

Similarly, can I be friends with individuals who are living together without the benefit of marriage? Absolutely. And when I am with them, do I stand up in great indignation and call them to repentance, even though they are presently engaged in behavior I do not agree with? No, of course not.

We can stand firm in our beliefs and have a loving relationship with those who hold differing opinions. Let us not forget that the plan of salvation offers the love and mercy of our Savior Jesus Christ to all.

A friend of mine sent his parents a letter to inform them that he had left the LDS Church. I was deeply touched by their response, and most impressed that they expressed love and respect for their child *while simultaneously* holding to and respecting their own faith and belief. It really can be done. I don't see why it can't be the norm.

"From Mom: 'I am proud of you for doing this, I respect you as a person and I respect your decision. I will never let you go, no matter what. I love you. I think getting this out in the open is actually a really good idea for you. It will make everything more comfortable and you won't feel like you have to go through the motions for anyone or put on a show.

'Everyone has to find their own way, that's what life is all about. We talk a lot about "the gospel" but what we really need to care about is the truth. The truth is that each person has to find themselves and progress in whatever way they can. You are a man, you have made your own decision, how could I think to take that from you?'

From Pop: 'I was here for you before you were even born, and I'll be here for you when you exit your mortal coil. Nothing could ever change that. My greatest sadness has been that you're unhappy and I cannot fix that. If this contributes to helping fix that problem then so be it. I love you.'

"I explained to each of them that I've joined a support group and that, unfortunately, positive responses like theirs are rare exceptions to the rule. I gave some examples of hurtful things family and friends have said to people like us, here are their responses to that:

Mom: 'Well, those people obviously don't understand a thing about the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christ is love, he never shunned anyone, he never said an unkind word, and he certainly never demonized or berated them for making informed decisions.'

"Pop: 'That's absurd. My feelings for you are like the ocean beneath a ship, vast and constant. You will always be my son and I'll always love you. Besides, the first two commandments are to love God and your neighbor, how can you fulfil that by disowning or demeaning your children?'"

<http://signaturebookslibrary.org/anti-universalist-rhetoric-in-the-book-of-mormon/>

<http://rationalfaiths.com/say-friend-leaving-church/>

<http://magazine.byu.edu/article/the-necessity-of-compromise/>

- <http://magazine.byu.edu/article/a-democrat-and-a-republican-are-stranded-on-an-island/>

Maybe making the point that both contemporary liberals and conservatives can find support for their idea of "righteous government" in the Book of Mormon, just as anyone can proof-text any book of scripture to support whatever they want. smile emoticon

Conservatives look to these passages: <http://www.ldsliberty.org/liberty-and-government-principles-taught-in-the-book-of-mormon-an-extensive-list/>

Liberals can look to these passages and emphasize these points:

<http://www.withoutend.org/wealth-disparity-social-decline-perspectives-book-mormon/>

<http://ldsmag.com/article-1-7677/>

<http://squaretwo.org/Sq2ArticleDeckerInequality.html>

Richard Bushman on politics in the Book of Mormon:

<http://www.millennialstar.org/richard-bushmans-commentary-on-politics-and-the-book-of-mormon/>

http://eom.byu.edu/index.php/Book_of_Mormon_Government_and_Legal_History_in_the

<http://www.amazon.com/Justice-Whats-Right-Thing-Do/dp/0374532508/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBdfcR-8hEY>

http://www.ted.com/talks/michael_sandel_what_s_the_right_thing_to_do

<http://prospect.org/article/liberalism-socialism-and-democracy>

7:06pm

Benjamin Knoll

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_k-bHigM (Crash Course on Political Ideology)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B3u4EFTwprM> (Capitalism and Socialism)

http://www.greatneck.k12.ny.us/gnps/shs/dept/special_ed/nystrom/documents/politicalsystems.pdf

<http://www.villanovau.com/resources/public-administration/types-of-political-systems/#.V0JYduSLVsM>