Cycles

in the Book of Mormon
Nowhere is the cycle of righteousness more apparent in the Book of Mormon than during the reign of the judges. The judges governed from 91 B.C. until A.D. 31, when the chief judge was murdered and the government overthrown. During the reign of the judges, the Nephites constantly fluctuated in their level of righteousness. Other factors, such as degrees of peace, political unity, and prosperity no doubt affected their commitment to the gospel; however, the righteousness of the people affected the other factors in a more direct way. This overview of the Nephite cycle of righteousness can be used to identify general trends in the complex examples presented by the following graphs in this section. Beginning at the top of the chart, the scriptures in each cycle can be followed around the circle clockwise until the final destruction recorded in Mormon 4–6, after which no repentance occurred.
Nephite Cycle of Righteousness
Mormon’s Warning for Us Today

1. Righteousness
   Helaman 3:24–32
   Helaman 4:15
   3 Nephi 5:3
   4 Nephi 1:10

2. Blessing and Prosperity
   Helaman 3:25, 32
   Helaman 4:15
   3 Nephi 6:4–9
   4 Nephi 1:20

3. Pride
   Helaman 3:33–36
   Helaman 7:23–24
   3 Nephi 6:10–16
   4 Nephi 1:24

4. Wickedness
   Helaman 3:33–36
   Helaman 10:3
   3 Nephi 6:15–18
   4 Nephi 1:27

5. Destruction and Suffering
   Helaman 4:5
   Helaman 11:4
   3 Nephi 7:1–8
   Mormon 4:19–21

6. Humility and Repentance
   Helaman 4:15
   Helaman 11:17–19
   3 Nephi 10:8–10

Chart 144
Nephite Cycles
Years 1–49 of the Reign of the Judges (90–40 B.C.)

Key Scripture  Alma 1–Helaman 3

Explanation  Based on information gleaned from Alma 1–Helaman 3, this chart plots the general trends of prosperity, political unity, righteousness, and peace of the Nephite people. Notable here is the relative prosperity and contrasting wickedness of the people, as well as the fluctuations in peace and political unity. Each trend moves somewhat idiosyncratically, which is what one would expect of authentic politico-historical experience.
Nephite Cycles
Years 1–49 of the Reign of the Judges (90–40 B.C.)

Levels of Righteousness

Political Unity
Righteousness
Prosperity
Peace

Years of Reign of Judges

Charting the Book of Mormon, © 1999 Welch, Welch, FARMS
Chart 145
Nephite Cycles
Years 50–90 of the Reign of the Judges (39–1 B.C.)

Key Scripture Helaman 3–16

Explanation While prosperity fluctuates between medium and high during 39 and 1 B.C., the righteousness of the people dips into major downward trends. Continuous prosperity during these years shows that the dire results of wickedness do not necessarily come immediately. Levels of peace and political unity correlate for a decade as they drop and then recover before political unity stabilizes at a moderate level and peace soars to a twenty-year high, plummets, and increases again.
Nephite Cycles
Years 50–90 of the Reign of the Judges (39–1 B.C.)

Levels of Righteousness

Years of Reign of Judges

50 55 60 65 70 75 80 85 90

Political Unity
Righteousness
Prosperity
Peace
**Nephite Cycles**

**Years A.D. 1–34**

**Key Scripture** 3 Nephi 1–8

**Explanation** In this composite chart representing general trends, the first fifteen years following the birth of Jesus Christ show a decline in all areas. Then, with the advent of the wars with the Gadianton robbers, righteousness and political unity increase significantly. Interestingly, between A.D. 20 and 28 prosperity, peace, and political unity increase together while righteousness decreases. It can be argued that the low points of prosperity and political unity are caused by the people’s unrighteousness, as the Lord declares would happen in Alma 37:13.
Nephite Cycles
Years A.D. 1–34

Levels of Righteousness

Years A.D.

Political Unity

Righteousness

Prosperity

Peace