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KnoWhy #68 - Why Do Church Leaders Frequently Testify of the Book of Mormon?

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Abstract: During General Conference, prophets, apostles, and other leaders frequently teach and testify of the Book of Mormon. They have taught about how the Book of Mormon strengthens faith in the Bible, Joseph Smith and the Restoration, and ultimately Jesus Christ. The Book of Mormon is the “keystone of our religion” and offers a rich feast of doctrinal and spiritual insight. Pay attention to what Church Leaders say about the Book of Mormon this weekend during General Conference.



General Conference Center via Wikipedia

Why Do Church Leaders Frequently Testify of the Book of Mormon?

“Search the prophets, for many there be that testify of these things.”
3 Nephi 23:5

The Know

This weekend is the 186th Annual General Conference of The Church Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Every General Conference the Lord’s prophets and apostles teach, exhort, testify, and bear witness of Him and His truth. This often includes teaching from and testifying of the Book of Mormon. In doing so, they often speak of the different ways the Book of Mormon builds testimony of central doctrines of the Restoration.

In 2007, for example, Elder Russell M. Nelson, now the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, testified that the Book of Mormon upholds biblical teachings: “Love for the Book of Mormon expands one’s love for the Bible and vice versa. ...The Book of Mormon restores and underscores biblical doctrines such as tithing, the temple, the Sabbath day, and the priesthood.”¹

The late Elder L. Tom Perry, also of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, bore witness to the Book of Mormon’s role in Joseph Smith’s prophetic ministry and the Res-

toration during the October 2005 conference: “The Book of Mormon provides convincing evidence of the Prophet Joseph’s ministry and of the Restoration of the Church of Jesus Christ.”²

President Thomas S. Monson, Prophet and President of the Church, bore similar testimony at a BYU devotional in 2011: “Once you know that the Book of Mormon is true, then it will follow that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. You will have that burning testimony and knowledge that this church is true.”³

The most important role for the Book of Mormon is its witness of Jesus Christ. In 2011, Elder Tad R. Callister, then among the Presidency of the Seventy, boldly affirmed:

Would you like to have emblazoned on your soul an undeniable witness that the Savior descended beneath your sins and that there is no sin, no mor-

tal plight outside the merciful reach of His Atonement—that for each of your struggles He has a remedy of superior healing power? Then read the Book of Mormon. It will teach you and testify to you that Christ’s Atonement is infinite because it circumscribes and encompasses and transcends every finite frailty known to man.⁴

No other book of scripture so powerfully testifies of the Savior’s life, ministry, and Atonement.

The Why

The Book of Mormon builds faith in the Bible, Joseph Smith and the Restoration, and ultimately Jesus Christ. This is the main reason why Church leaders so frequently draw upon it and testify of it. It is also why the Book of Mormon has long been considered the “keystone of our religion.”

In a recent fireside at Utah State University, Elder Neil L. Anderson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles invited everyone to personally make the Book of Mormon “the keystone of your faith.”⁵ As shown above, it can be

the “keystone” in a wide variety of ways. To underscore all that the Book of Mormon has to offer, Elder Anderson taught that the book is “like an exquisite banquet table, 1,000 feet long” with a great feast which will “take [him] a lifetime and more to enjoy.”⁶

It is understandable why Church leaders draw frequently from this rich smorgasbord of gospel teaching. Church leaders testify of the Book of Mormon out of a great love for its power and its teachings. “I love this Book of Mormon,” the late President Boyd K. Packer declared in 2001. “In a world ever more dangerous ... the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ has the nourishing power to heal starving spirits of the world.”⁷

This weekend, the world once again has an opportunity to hear the testimonies of the Lord’s prophets and apostles as they bear witness of Him, His gospel, the Restoration, and of course, the Book of Mormon.

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Notes

1. Elder Russell M. Nelson, “Scriptural Witnesses,” October 2007 General Conference Address, online at lds.org.
2. Elder L. Tom Perry, “Blessings Resulting from Reading the Book of Mormon,” October 2005 General Conference Address, online at lds.org.
3. President Thomas S. Monson, “Be a Light to the World,” BYU Speeches, November 1, 2011, online at https://speeches.byu.edu/talks/thomas-s-monson_be-a-light-to-the-world/.
4. Elder Tad R. Callister, “The Book of Mormon—a Book from God,” October 2011 General Conference Address, online at lds.org.
5. Julie Dockstader Heaps, “Elder Anderson addresses USU students about the Book of Mormon—‘the keystone of your faith,’” *Deseret News*, February 1, 2016; online at <http://www.deseretnews.com/article/865646639/Elder-Andersen-addresses-USU-students-about-the-Book-of-Mormon-2-the-keystone-of-your-faith.html?pg=all>.
6. Heaps, “Elder Anderson addresses USU students.”
7. President Boyd K. Packer, “The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ,” October 2001 General Conference Address, online at lds.org.