

LESSON 7

The Book of Mormon and the Bible

Introduction

As a companion to the Bible, the Book of Mormon is a witness of Jesus Christ's divinity and His role as the Savior of the world. The Book of Mormon restores plain and precious

truths that have been lost from the Bible. When we study the Book of Mormon, our understanding of the doctrines in the Bible is clarified.

Background Reading

- Russell M. Nelson, "Scriptural Witnesses," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 43–46.
- Tad R. Callister, "The Book of Mormon—a Book from God," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 74–76.

Suggestions for Teaching

Ezekiel 37:15–19; 2 Nephi 3:11–12; 29:3–10

The Bible and the Book of Mormon are united witnesses of Jesus Christ

Ask students what they might say to someone who expresses doubts about the Book of Mormon because God has already given us the Bible.

Invite students to silently read 2 Nephi 29:3–10 and mark phrases that indicate the Lord's reasons for providing more than one book of scripture.

- What did the Lord say about those who react with doubt to scripture in addition to the Bible?
- According to verse 8, what did the Lord say was His purpose for revealing scripture in addition to the Bible? (Students may give a variety of answers, but they should identify the following truth: **The Bible and the Book of Mormon together bear witness of Jesus Christ.**)
- What do you learn from this passage that helps you understand the importance of having additional scriptural witnesses?

To deepen students' understanding of how the Bible and the Book of Mormon work together to testify of Jesus Christ, display the following statement by President Russell M. Nelson of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, and ask a student to read it aloud:



"Scriptural witnesses authenticate each other. This concept was explained long ago when a prophet wrote that the Book of Mormon was 'written for the intent that ye may believe [the Bible]; and if ye believe [the Bible] ye will believe [the

Book of Mormon] also' [Mormon 7:9]. Each book refers to the other. Each book stands as evidence that God lives and speaks to His children by revelation to His prophets.

"Love for the Book of Mormon expands one's love for the Bible and vice versa. Scriptures of the Restoration do not compete with the Bible; they complement the Bible" ("Scriptural Witnesses," *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 43).

- What stands out to you in President Nelson's description of the relationship between these two books of scripture, and why?

Remind students that the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel prophesied that the stick of Judah and the stick of Joseph would be joined together. Explain that a "stick" can refer to either a wooden tablet or a scroll that was rolled around wooden rods (see Boyd K. Packer, "Scriptures," *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 51). Invite a student to read Ezekiel 37:15–19 aloud.

- What do these sticks represent? (As necessary, explain that the "stick of Judah" refers to the Bible and the "stick of Ephraim" to the Book of Mormon.)
- What do you think it means that these two sticks or books of scripture "shall become one in thine hand"? (verses 17, 19).

To help answer this question, share the following statement by President Boyd K. Packer (1924–2015) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. Explain that shortly before President Packer made this statement, the Church had published new editions of the Book of Mormon and the Bible. Each book contained footnotes and other scripture helps that referred to the other book, thereby uniting the two in a new way. Invite students to listen for blessings that are available to those who study the Bible and the Book of Mormon together.



"The stick or record of Judah ... and the stick or record of Ephraim ... are now woven together in such a way that as you pore over one you are drawn to the other; as you learn from one you are enlightened by the other. They are indeed one in our hands. Ezekiel's prophecy now stands fulfilled.

"With the passing of years, these scriptures will produce successive generations of faithful Christians who know the Lord Jesus Christ and are disposed to obey

His will. ...

"... The revelations will be opened to [new generations] as to no other in the history of the world. Into their hands now are placed the sticks of Joseph and of Judah. They will develop a gospel scholarship beyond that which their forebears could achieve. They will have the testimony that Jesus is the Christ and be competent to proclaim Him and to defend Him" ("Scriptures," *Ensign*, Nov. 1982, 53).

- What blessings are available when we study the Book of Mormon and Bible together as one? (Students should identify the following principle: **When we study the Bible and the Book of Mormon together, we receive a greater witness that Jesus is the Christ.**)
- How has studying the Book of Mormon and Bible together deepened your knowledge and testimony of Jesus Christ?

Ask a student to read 2 Nephi 3:11–12. (It may be helpful to clarify that these verses are part of a prophecy by Joseph of Egypt. In these verses Joseph mentioned two books—the book written by the descendants of Joseph is the Book of Mormon, and the book written by the descendants of Judah is the Bible.)

- What impact will the Book of Mormon and Bible have on the world as these two books “grow together”? (Students should identify these ideas: The books will confound false doctrines, lay down contentions, and establish peace.)

Ask students to ponder how they might use the Book of Mormon and Bible together to strengthen their testimonies and faith in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ. Invite students to share their thoughts and impressions. Also invite them to act on the promptings they receive.

1 Nephi 13:23–29, 35–36, 38–41

Plain and precious truths have been restored

Remind students that the Prophet Joseph Smith was commanded by the Lord to make an inspired revision of the King James Version of the Bible. This revision is known as the Joseph Smith Translation. Display and read the following statement by the Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44):



“I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers. Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors” (*Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* [2007], 207).

- Why was an inspired revision of the Bible needed?

Remind students that Nephi had a vision of the coming forth of the Bible. Invite a student to read 1 Nephi 13:23–25 aloud. Ask the class to look for Nephi’s description of the Bible when it was originally written.

- What did the angel teach Nephi about the Bible when it was first created? (It “contained the covenants of the Lord,” it was “of great worth,” and it “contained the fulness of the gospel of the Lord.”)

Invite students to read 1 Nephi 13:26–28, looking for what Nephi learned would happen to the Bible and for what reasons.

- What did the great and abominable church do to the Bible? (Emphasize that the great and abominable church is not any specific church or organization but rather a general term referring to all those who fight against Christ [see 1 Nephi 13:4–9; 14:10].)
- According to verse 27, why were these plain and precious parts removed?

Invite a student to read 1 Nephi 13:29 aloud while the class looks for the results of the plain and precious parts being removed from the Bible.

- What happened as a result of the plain and precious teachings of the Lord being removed from the Bible?
- What evidence do you see in today’s world that “an exceedingly great many do stumble” as the result of a lack of plain and precious truths?

Invite a few students to take turns reading aloud from 1 Nephi 13:35–36, 38–41 while the class looks for the Lord’s solution to this problem.

- What would the Lord do to overcome the problems caused by the removal of the plain and precious truths from the Bible?
- In addition to the Book of Mormon, what “other books” has the Lord brought forth as part of the Restoration? (Encourage students to make a note in their scriptures that “other books” could include the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible.)
- According to verse 40, how do the Book of Mormon and the “other books” resolve the problems caused by the removal of the plain and precious parts of the Bible? (Students should understand the following truth: **The Book of Mormon and latter-day scriptures help to establish the truth of the Bible and restore plain and precious truths that have been taken away from it.**)

To illustrate how the Book of Mormon confirms our understanding of the doctrine and principles found in the Bible, share the following statement by Elder Tad R. Callister, who served in the Presidency of the Seventy:



“The Bible is one witness of Jesus Christ; the Book of Mormon is another. Why is this second witness so crucial? The following illustration may help: How many straight lines can you draw through a single point on a piece of paper? The answer is infinite. For a moment, suppose that single point represents the Bible and that hundreds of those straight lines drawn through that point represent different interpretations of the Bible and that each of those interpretations represents a different church.

“What happens, however, if on that piece of paper there is a second point representing the Book of Mormon? How many straight lines could you draw between these two reference points: the Bible and the Book of Mormon? Only one. Only one interpretation of Christ’s doctrines survives the testimony of these two witnesses.

“Again and again the Book of Mormon acts as a confirming, clarifying, unifying witness of the doctrines taught in the Bible” (“The Book of Mormon—a Book from God,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2011, 75).

- Why is it important to have both the Book of Mormon and the Bible as witnesses of the doctrines of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Invite students to bear testimony and share examples of how the Book of Mormon has helped them to better understand the Bible or to grow closer to the Savior.

Student Readings

- Ezekiel 37:15–19; 1 Nephi 13:20–41; 2 Nephi 3:11–14; 29:1–14.
- Russell M. Nelson, “Scriptural Witnesses,” *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 43–46.