

Introduction

By studying the final testimony of Mormon and the initial writings of Moroni, you will better understand the role and purpose of the Book of Mormon. Moroni declared: “I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing” (Mormon 8:35). Moroni’s prophetic vantage point allowed him to complete the Nephite record with total awareness of both the escalating wickedness and the great spiritual blessings of the dispensation of the fulness of times. In a day when some people might be inclined to abandon faith in the face of great difficulties, Moroni’s words teach us to see miracles and revelations as evidence that “God is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (see Mormon 9:9). Although the spiritual and social conditions in the world may be in a state of constant change and decline, God’s covenant people can have full confidence that He is eternally the same.

Commentary

Mormon 7. Counsel to the Remnant of Israel in the Latter Days

- In his final words, Mormon addressed the descendants of the Lamanites and affirmed that they are a “remnant of the house of Israel” (Mormon 7:1). Even though the Lamanites were his mortal enemies, his love for them demonstrated his spiritual maturity and the importance of the full blessings of the gospel. Consider Mormon’s final testimony and counsel as if he were speaking directly to you. He taught what you *need to know* (see Mormon 7:1–7) and what you *need to do* (see Mormon 7:8–9) in order to follow “the example of our Savior” so that “it shall be well with you in the day of judgment” (Mormon 7:10).

Mormon 7:2. “Ye Are of the House of Israel”

- Mormon’s message to the remnant of the Lamanites also applies to all members of the house of Israel (see commentary for Helaman 3:30 on p. 264).

Mormon 7:2, 5. Mormon’s Final Plea to Believe in Christ

- Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles reflected on Mormon’s poignant plea to those of the latter days to believe in Christ:

“In a soliloquy of death, Mormon reached across time and space to all, especially to that ‘remnant of the house of Israel’ who would one day read his majestic record. Those of another time and place must learn what those lying before him had forgotten—that all must ‘believe in Jesus Christ, that he is the Son of God,’ that following his crucifixion in Jerusalem he had, ‘by the power of the Father . . . risen again, whereby he hath gained the victory over the grave; and also in him is the sting of death swallowed up’ [Mormon 7:2, 5]. . . .

“To ‘believe in Christ,’ especially when measured against such tragic but avoidable consequences, was Mormon’s last plea and his only hope. It is the ultimate purpose of the entire book that would come to the latter-day world bearing his name” (*Christ and the New Covenant* [1997], 321–22).

Mormon 7:8–9. The Book of Mormon and the Bible Support Each Other

- The Bible testifies of the Book of Mormon, and the Book of Mormon testifies of the Bible. Mormon declared, “This [the Book of Mormon] is written for the intent that ye may believe that [the Bible]; and if ye believe that [the Bible] ye will believe this [the Book of Mormon] also” (Mormon 7:9).

President Brigham Young (1801–77) declared it impossible for someone who claimed to truly believe in the Bible to not believe in the Book of Mormon if they have seriously studied the Book of Mormon and learned its doctrines:



“No man can say that this book (laying his hand on the Bible) is true, is the word of the Lord, is the way, is the guide-board in the path, and a charter by which we may learn the will of God; and at the same time say, that the

Book of Mormon is untrue; if he has had the privilege of reading it, or of hearing it read, and learning its doctrines. There is not that person on the face of the earth who has had the privilege of learning the Gospel of Jesus Christ from these two books, who can say that one is true, and the other is false” (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [1954], 459).

- One purpose of the Book of Mormon is to prove to the world that the Holy Bible is true (see D&C 20:11). By reading the Book of Mormon, a person’s testimony of the Bible increases. President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) spoke of his love for the Bible and the Book of Mormon and how both testify that Jesus is the Christ:



“I love the Bible, both the Old and the New Testaments. It is a source of great truth. . . .

“. . . That sacred and holy book has been of inestimable worth to the children of men. In fact, it was a passage from the Bible that inspired the Prophet Joseph Smith to go to a grove of trees near his home and kneel in prayer. What followed was the glorious vision that commenced the restoration of the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the earth. That vision also began the process of bringing forth new scripture [the Book of Mormon] to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Bible in bearing witness to a wicked world that Jesus is the Christ and that God lives and loves His children and is still intimately involved in their salvation and exaltation” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 100–101; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 78).

Mormon 8:1–6. Moroni

- Moroni witnessed the death of his father, Mormon, and the destruction of the entire Nephite nation. Nevertheless, his life was preserved, and he faithfully fulfilled his mission in mortality. The Lord appointed Moroni to finish writing “the sad tale of the destruction” of the Nephites (Mormon 8:3).

Before his death Moroni wrote the last part of his father’s book (Mormon 8–9), abridged the Jaredite record (the book of Ether), recorded the vision of the brother of Jared in the sealed portion of the plates (see Ether 4:4–5), and also wrote his own book (the book of Moroni). Yet Moroni’s mission continues in our dispensation. In modern revelation we learn that Moroni holds “the keys of the record of the stick of Ephraim” (D&C 27:5). The resurrected Moroni ministered to the Prophet Joseph Smith and tutored him several times on his role in restoring the fulness of the gospel, including the coming forth of the Book of Mormon (see Joseph Smith—History 1:30–60; *History of the Church*, 1:9–19). Depicting Moroni’s role in the Restoration, the Church has placed statues of Moroni atop most of its temples.



Walter Flare, Courtesy of Museum of Church History and Art

- Mormon 8:1–6 reveals the circumstances under which Moroni lived and helps readers understand the urgency of his message. Elder L. Tom Perry of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles counseled us to put ourselves in the position of those who wrote the scriptures long ago. Quoting Brigham Young, Elder Perry said:

“Do you read the Scriptures, my brethren and sisters, as though you were writing them a thousand, two thousand, or five thousand years ago? Do you read them as though you stood in the place of the men who wrote them? If you do not feel thus, it is your privilege to do so, that you may be as familiar with the spirit and meaning of the written word of God as you are with your daily walk and conversation’ (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1941], p. 128). . . .

“. . . Let us take Brigham Young’s advice and imagine we are standing in the place where Moroni, the last of the great Nephite prophets, stood. The assignment his father gave to him to complete the record, which

was entrusted to his care, was very difficult. He must have been in a state of shock as he described the total destruction of his people.

“He must have felt compelled to describe how his people had been hunted by the Lamanites until they were all destroyed. In his feeling of loneliness, he reports that his father was among those who were killed. We sense that the only thing Moroni is living for is to complete the record, as he writes, ‘Therefore I will write and hide up the records in the earth; and whither I go it mattereth not’ (Mormon 8:4).

“All he has is the faith that the Lord will preserve him long enough to complete the record and that someday it will be found by one chosen of the Lord. He realizes that the record will be a voice of warning to future generations of what occurs when nations like his own turn away from the teachings of the Lord. It is from the depths of his heart that Moroni cries out to those who will eventually receive the record. He wants to spare those who read his account the heartache and misery which comes from disobedience.

“He writes first to the members of the Church and then to those who have not embraced the gospel of Jesus Christ. Moroni’s last words to the members of the Church are written as a voice of warning. He writes as one who sees the history of his people repeating itself in the future” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1992, 18–19; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1992, 15–16).

Mormon 8:14–18. “Blessed Be He That Shall Bring This Thing to Light”

- Mormon 8:16 refers to the Prophet Joseph Smith, who was chosen to bring the Book of Mormon to the world (see D&C 3:5–10). Many of the ancient prophets



were aware of Joseph Smith and prayed for his success to translate and publish the gold plates, thus fulfilling the purposes of God (see Mormon 8:22, 24–25; D&C 10:46). President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles,

spoke of the role that Joseph Smith played in bringing forth the Book of Mormon:

“The truth is, simply, that he was a prophet of God—nothing more and not one whit less!

“The scriptures did not come so much from Joseph Smith as they did through him. He was a conduit through which the revelations were given. . . .

“The Prophet Joseph Smith was an unschooled farm boy. To read some of his early letters in the original shows him to be somewhat unpolished in spelling and grammar and in expression.

“That the revelations came through him in any form of literary refinement is nothing short of a miracle” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1974, 137; or *Ensign*, May 1974, 94).

Mormon 8:19–20. “Judgment Is Mine”

- Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles commented on the phrase “judgment is mine, saith the Lord”: “I speak of the final judgment. This is that future occasion in which all of us will stand before the judgment seat of Christ to be judged according to our works (see 1 Ne. 15:33; 3 Ne. 27:15; Morm. 3:20; D&C 19:3). . . . I believe that the scriptural command to ‘judge not’ refers most clearly to this final judgment, as in the Book of Mormon declaration that ‘man shall not . . . judge; for judgment is mine, saith the Lord’ (Morm. 8:20)” (“‘Judge Not’ and Judging,” *Ensign*, Aug. 1999, 7).

MORMON 8:22

How can Moroni’s words in this verse strengthen us as we labor in the Lord’s cause?

Mormon 8:31. Pollutions in the Last Days

- Mormon 8:31 refers to “great pollutions” in our day. While serving as a member of the Presidency of the Seventy, Elder Joe J. Christensen suggested that the great pollutants spoken of were not environmental, but primarily spiritual:

“We all hear and read a great deal these days about our polluted physical environment—acid rain, smog, toxic

wastes. But . . . there is another kind of pollution that is much more dangerous—the moral and spiritual.

“In a recent conference, Elder Boyd K. Packer said, ‘As we test the *moral* environment, we find the *pollution* index is spiraling upward’ (in Conference Report, Apr. 1992, p. 91; or *Ensign*, May 1992, 66). The Apostle Paul foresaw ‘that in the last days perilous times shall come’ (2 Timothy 3:1). And speaking of the last days, the prophet Moroni declared, ‘Yea, it shall come in a day when there shall be great pollutions upon the face of the earth’ (Mormon 8:31).

“Sadly, the effects of this great pollution are perhaps most evident in the mass media, films, television, and popular music. Of this, Senator Robert D. Byrd said, ‘If we in this nation continue to sow the images of murder, violence, drug abuse, . . . perversion, [and] pornography . . . before the eyes of millions of children, year after year and day after day, we should not be surprised if the foundations of our society rot away as if from leprosy’ (in Michael Medved, *Hollywood vs. America* [New York: Harper Perennial, 1992], p. 194).

“. . . In most areas of the mass media there seems to be a declaration of war against almost everything the majority treasures most: the family, religion, and patriotism. Marriage is degraded, while premarital and extramarital relations are encouraged and glamorized. Profanity and the foulest of vulgar gutter language bombard the ears of all who listen. . . . Human life itself is trivialized by the constant barrage of violence and killings” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1993, 12; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1993, 11).

Mormon 8:34–35. Written for Us Today

- President Ezra Taft Benson declared that our study of the Book of Mormon should be influenced by our knowledge that Moroni saw our day and wrote with us in mind:

“We must make the Book of Mormon a center focus of study [because] it was written for our day. The Nephites never had the book; neither did the Lamanites of ancient times. It was meant for us. Mormon wrote near the end of the Nephite civilization. Under the inspiration of God, who sees all things from the beginning, he abridged

centuries of records, choosing the stories, speeches, and events that would be most helpful to us.

“Each of the major writers of the Book of Mormon testified that he wrote for future generations. . . .

“Mormon himself said, ‘Yea, I speak unto you, ye remnant of the house of Israel’ (Mormon 7:1). And Moroni, the last of the inspired writers, actually saw our day and time. . . .

“If they saw our day and chose those things which would be of greatest worth to us, is not that how we should study the Book of Mormon? We should

constantly ask ourselves, ‘Why did the Lord inspire Mormon (or Moroni or Alma) to include that in his record? What lesson can I learn from that to help me live in this day and age?’

“And there is example after example of how that question will be answered” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 5; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 6).



Mormon 9:1–6. Miserable in God’s Presence

- President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) explained why the unrepentant will be miserable in the presence of Jesus Christ:

“There can be no salvation without repentance. A man cannot enter into the kingdom of God in his sins. It would be a very inconsistent thing for a man to come into the presence of the Father and to dwell in God’s presence in his sins. . . .

“I think there are a great many people upon the earth, many of them perhaps in the Church—at least some in the Church—who have an idea they can go through this life doing as they please, violating the commandments of the Lord and yet eventually they are going to come into his presence. They think they are going to repent, perhaps in the spirit world.

“They ought to read these words of Moroni: ‘Do ye suppose that ye shall dwell with him [Christ] under a

consciousness of your guilt? Do ye suppose that ye could be happy to dwell with that holy Being, when your souls are racked with a consciousness of guilt that ye have ever abused his laws? [Mormon 9:3] (*Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [1954–56], 2:195–96).

Mormon 9:3–6. “Consciousness of Your Guilt”

- President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) explained why one who has sinned feels the burden of guilt and the need for repentance:

“As repentance gets under way, there must be a deep consciousness of guilt, and in that consciousness of guilt may come suffering to the mind, the spirit, and sometimes even to the body. In order to live with themselves, people who transgress must follow one or the other of two alternatives. The one is to sear their conscience or dull their sensitivity with mental tranquilizers so that their transgression may be continued. Those who choose this alternative eventually become calloused and lose their desire to repent. The other alternative is to permit remorse to lead one to total sorrow, then to repentance, and finally on to eventual forgiveness.

“Remember this, that forgiveness can never come without repentance. And repentance can never come until one has bared his soul and admitted his actions without excuses or rationalizations. He must admit to himself that he has sinned, without the slightest minimization of the offense or rationalizing of its seriousness, or without soft-pedaling its gravity. He must admit that his sin is as big as it really is and not call a pound an ounce. Those persons who choose to meet the issue and transform their lives may find repentance the harder road at first, but they will find it the infinitely more desirable path as they taste of its fruits” (“The Gospel of Repentance,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1982, 4).

Mormon 9:7–8. Revelations and the Scriptures

- Elder Dallin H. Oaks explained the connection between scriptures and personal revelation:

“What makes [Latter-day Saints] different from most other Christians in the way we read and use the Bible and other scriptures is our belief in continuing

revelation. For us, the scriptures are not the ultimate source of knowledge, but what precedes the ultimate source. The ultimate knowledge comes by revelation. With Moroni we affirm that he who denieth revelation ‘knoweth not the gospel of Christ’ (Morm. 9:8).

“The word of the Lord in the scriptures is like a lamp to guide our feet (see Ps. 119:105), and revelation is like a mighty force that increases the lamp’s illumination manifold. We encourage everyone to make careful study of the scriptures and of the prophetic teachings concerning them and to prayerfully seek personal revelation to know their meaning for themselves” (“Scripture Reading and Revelation,” *Ensign*, Jan. 1995, 7).

Mormon 9:9–10. “God Is the Same Yesterday, Today, and Forever”

- Moroni declared that God is an unchangeable being who will remain “the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Mormon 9:9). Modern revelation confirms that the coming forth of the Book of Mormon proves God continues to “inspire men and call them to his holy work” in our day as He has in the past, “showing that he is the same God yesterday, today, and forever” (D&C 20:11–12).

The *Lectures on Faith* state that in order to have perfect faith in God one must have a correct idea of God’s “character, perfections, and attributes” ([1985], 38). One of God’s characteristics is that He will not change: “[God] changes not, neither is there variableness with him; but that he is the same from everlasting to everlasting, being the same yesterday, today, and for ever; and that his course is one eternal round, without variation” (*Lectures on Faith*, 41). Consider the blessing of knowing that God continues His holy work in our day and will always remain the same yesterday, today, and forever.

- Moroni warned us that there are those who “have imagined . . . a god who doth vary” (Mormon 9:10). Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that we could not believe or trust in a God who changes or is still learning new truths:

“The omniscience of God in the minds of some well-meaning Latter-day Saints has been qualified by the concept of ‘eternal progression.’ Some have

wrongly assumed God’s progress is related to His acquisition of additional knowledge. . . .

“. . . God derives His great and continuing joy and glory by increasing and advancing His creations, and not from new intellectual experiences.

“There is a vast difference, therefore, between an omniscient God and the false notion that God is on some sort of post-doctoral fellowship, still searching for additional key truths and vital data. Were the latter so, God might, at any moment, discover some new truth not previously known to Him that would restructure, diminish, or undercut certain truths previously known by Him. Prophecy would be mere prediction. Planning assumptions pertaining to our redemption would need to be revised. Fortunately for us, however, His plan of salvation is constantly *underway*—not constantly *under revision*” (*All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience* [1979], 14–15).

MORMON 9:20

According to Moroni, why does God cease to perform miracles among men?

Mormon 9:10–26. Miracles

- Note the evidence Moroni gave that bears witness to the miracles of God—the creation of heaven and earth (see Mormon 9:17), the creation of man (see v. 17), and the scriptural testimonies of the miracles of Jesus and the Apostles (see v. 18). The “God of miracles” described by Moroni can still be found. Elder Dallin H. Oaks bore witness that many miracles happen in our day and are present in the true Church of Jesus Christ:

“Many miracles happen every day in the work of our Church and the lives of our members. Many of you have witnessed miracles, perhaps more than you realize.

“A miracle has been defined as ‘a beneficial event brought about through divine power that mortals do not understand and of themselves cannot duplicate’ [in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. (1992), 2:908]. The idea that events are brought about through divine power is rejected by

most irreligious people and even by some who are religious. . . .

“. . . Miracles worked by the power of the priesthood are always present in the true Church of Jesus Christ. The Book of Mormon teaches that ‘God has provided a means that man, through faith, might work mighty miracles’ (Mosiah 8:18). The ‘means’ provided is priesthood power (see James 5:14–15; D&C 42:43–48), and that power works miracles through faith (see Ether 12:12; Moro. 7:37)” (“Miracles,” *Ensign*, June 2001, 6, 8).

- Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) spoke of why miracles sometime cease:

“Why do signs and miracles cease in certain ages? Why are they not found at all times and among all peoples? Were those of old entitled to greater blessings than those of us who now dwell on the same earth that once was theirs? Moroni answers: ‘The reason why’ a God of gifts and miracles ‘ceaseth to do miracles among the children of men,’ and to pour out his gifts upon them, ‘is because that they dwindle in unbelief, and depart from the right way, and know not the God in whom they should trust.’ They worship false gods whom they define in their creeds, and they no longer walk in the same paths pursued by the saints of former days.

“It is men who have changed, not God; he is the same everlastingly. All men who have the same faith and live the same law will reap the same blessings” (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith* [1985], 367).

Mormon 9:32–34. Moroni Wrote in Reformed Egyptian

- Moroni stated that he had the ability to write in at least two languages: Hebrew and Egyptian (see Mormon 9:32–34). He noted that if the “plates had



been sufficiently large” he would have written in Hebrew; however, those who kept the record used “reformed Egyptian” due to the lack of space (vv. 32–33). Previously in the Book of Mormon, both

Nephi and King Benjamin acknowledged their use of Egyptian. Nephi stated that he wrote in “the language

of the Egyptians” when he engraved the small plates (1 Nephi 1:2). When speaking to his sons about the importance of the brass plates, King Benjamin noted that Lehi could read the record because he had “been taught in the language of the Egyptians” (Mosiah 1:4). Therefore, we understand that Lehi taught the gospel and Egyptian “to his children, that thereby they could teach them to their children” (Mosiah 1:4). Evidently, this pattern continued through the generations of record keepers that followed until Moroni learned the language from his father. However, Moroni’s statement that he wrote in “reformed Egyptian” (Mormon 9:32) indicates that some adaptations in the use of the language had occurred over the thousand years from the time of Lehi. This could explain why Moroni concluded with the comment that “none other people knoweth our language” but that God had prepared means for the eventual interpretation and translation of the record (Mormon 9:34).

Points to Ponder

- What do you learn from the way Mormon cared about others, including his enemies? (see Mormon 7).
- Moroni spent many years alone, yet his faith and testimony brought him peace. How can your testimony help you when you feel alone in the world?
- What are some of the “spiritual pollutions” that you see on the earth today? How can you resist being tainted by them?
- What are some miracles you have witnessed in your life?

Suggested Assignments

- Study the following scriptures, looking for prophecies of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon:

Isaiah 29:4

2 Nephi 3:19–20

2 Nephi 26:16

2 Nephi 33:13

Enos 1:15–16

Mormon 8:23

Mormon 9:30

Moroni 10:27

Moses 7:62

Joseph Smith—History 1:52–53

You might make a scripture chain of these verses by turning to Isaiah 29:4 and writing “go to 2 Nephi 3:19–20” in the margin of the page next to Isaiah 29:4. Then turn to 2 Nephi 3:19–20 and write “go to 2 Nephi 26:16” in the margin next to 2 Nephi 3:19–20. Repeat this process with all of the verses. When you reach Joseph Smith—History 1:52–53, write “go to Isaiah 29:4” in the margin, linking the chain back to the beginning.

- Prepare a five- to eight-minute talk on the blessings of accepting the Book of Mormon. You might use the following questions and resources as a guide to help you create your talk:

The Blessings of Accepting the Book of Mormon

Mormon 8:12. What blessing will come to those who do not condemn or criticize the Book of Mormon?

Mormon 8:17. Why is it important to not find fault with the Book of Mormon?

Doctrine and Covenants 20:8–15. What are some truths we will know if we accept the Book of Mormon?

From your personal experience: What are some of the spiritual blessings you have received from accepting the Book of Mormon?

President Ezra Taft Benson: “I bless you with increased *understanding* of the Book of Mormon. I promise you that from this moment forward, if we will daily sup from its pages and abide by its precepts, God will pour out upon each child of Zion and the Church a blessing hitherto unknown” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1986, 100; or *Ensign*, May 1986, 78).