



Type: Magazine Article

A Chosen Servant: Mormon

Author(s): Marie F. Felt

Source: *The Instructor*, Vol. 99, No. 4 (April 1969), pp. 149-151

Published by: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Abstract: For a juvenile audience, an account of Mormon's role in compiling the records of the Book of Mormon.

Mormon bids farewell to a once great nation. ►

A CHOSEN SERVANT MORMON

A picture story by Marie F. Felt

It was on Sept. 22, 1823, that Joseph Smith, nearly 18 years old, found himself on the way to the Hill Cumorah. This hill was not far from his home, and without doubt he had hiked over it many times in previous years. However, not until the Angel Moroni visited him had he realized the importance of that hill, and that buried in it was something very special. The Angel had told him this.

Long, long before this, nearly 1500 years before, there had been gathered on that hill all that remained of the great Nephite nation. The Nephites had been fighting for years with their enemies, the Lamanites; then they had gathered for the last and final battle. That battle was to determine who should live upon this land and rule it; it was to be a battle to the very last man.

Without doubt, when Moroni visited Joseph, he told Joseph about the great battle and about his father, Mormon, who had been their leader. He told him about the precious records that Joseph was about to see, of the great care that had been given them throughout the many years, and why they had been buried in this particular hill.

These records were especially important because they told the history of Lehi and his family. This family had left Jerusalem 600 years before Christ and journeyed under God's direction to the land now called America. God had told Lehi and his family and all who came after them, the things he wanted them to know and to do. He told them of the blessings that would be theirs if they obeyed. And the record tells what happened when the people did not obey—of their selfishness, their great unhappiness, their lust for power over their fellowmen.

(For Course 4, lesson of June 21, "The Angel Moroni Appears to Joseph Smith"; for Course 6, lesson of August 30, "The Book of Mormon, Another Sacred Record"; and for Course 8, lesson of May 31, "The First and Second Commandments.")



One day, by means of signs that they had been told would come, they learned that Jesus had been born in Bethlehem of Judea, far across the ocean, in the land from which Lehi and his family had come.

About 33 years then passed, in which Jesus grew up in the Holy Land. There He taught the people the right things to do. Some people listened, but many did not. Some people were so greedy and selfish for power and influence that they even plotted and had Jesus crucified.

Then Nephi, who was keeping the records at this time, told of the coming of Jesus to the American continent; of how the people repented of their sins and wrong-doings and were baptized; of how Jesus blessed the little children there; of His choosing twelve disciples to lead, guide, and teach the people the true Gospel principles. Nephi also tells of the great joy experienced by the people and of their repentance; of the wonderful spirit of peace, love, and kindness that was among them.

This wonderful spirit lasted for two hundred years, just as long as the people obeyed the commandments of God. As they lived together, thinking of and helping one another, they became a prosperous and a wealthy people.

Now to be prosperous and wealthy is all right if people also remember to serve God, but these people did not. With their wealth, they became greedy, selfish, and wicked; and the spirit and blessings of

God withdrew from them. They no longer loved and obeyed Him.

It is at this point in the record that we hear of Mormon. He was only ten years old at the time—only ten! But Ammaron, the keeper of the records, knew that he must choose someone to write the history of the Nephites and the Lamanites after he was gone; so he chose Mormon, even though Mormon was only a child. He chose him because Mormon loved God and obeyed His commandments, even though most of the people around him were wicked.

As he spoke with Mormon, Ammaron said,

. . . I perceive [I can see] that thou art a sober [serious] child and art quick to observe; Therefore, when ye are about twenty and four years old I would that ye should remember the things that ye have observed concerning this people; and when ye are of that age, go to the land [of] Antum, unto a hill which shall be called Shim; and there have I deposited unto the Lord all the sacred engravings concerning this people.

And behold, ye shall take the plates of Nephi unto yourself, and the remainder shall ye leave in the place where they are; and ye shall engrave on the plates of Nephi all the things that ye have observed concerning this people. (Mormon 1:2-4.)

Although only ten years of age, Mormon remembered the things which Ammaron commanded him to do. So that he would know about those who lived in other places, he went with his father, when he was 11 years of age, to “. . . the land southward, even to the land of Zarahemla.” (Mormon 1:6.) He tells us, “The whole face of the land had become covered with buildings, and the people were as numerous almost, as it were the sand of the sea.” (Mormon 1:7.)

About this time, Mormon records that the people began to war with one another. They no longer loved the Lord. They were so wicked,

. . . that the Lord did take away his beloved disciples, and the work of miracles and of healings did cease because of the iniquity of the people.

And there were no gifts from the Lord, and the Holy Ghost did not come upon any, because of their wickedness and unbelief. (Mormon 1:13, 14.)

By this time Mormon was 15 years old. He was still very sober and serious, believing fully in God, our Heavenly Father, and in Jesus Christ. One day something very special happened to him. He was “visited of the Lord” and “knew of the goodness of Jesus.” He wanted now, even more than before, to preach to the people and tell them to repent and to worship, honor, and obey God; but he was told not to do it. The people were too wicked, and God knew they would not listen.

In the year following, when he was 16 years old, because he was both “large in stature” and the people had faith in him, Mormon was chosen to be leader of the Nephite armies in their war with the Lamanites. Still the people would not repent of their wickedness, and Mormon was sad.

One day, seeing that the Lamanites were about to make war again, Mormon “. . . did go to the hill Shim, and did take up all the records which Ammaron had hid up unto the Lord.” (Mormon 4:23.) These he took with him as he moved northward with the armies of his people.

After many years of fleeing from the Lamanites, the Nephites, with Mormon as their leader, came to the Hill Cumorah. There, before the great battle, Mormon tells us that he “. . . hid up in the hill Cumorah all the records which had been entrusted to me by the hand of the Lord, save it were these few plates which I gave unto my son Moroni.” (Mormon 6:6.)

After the great battle, Mormon, too, was killed by the Lamanites; and Moroni alone was left to write upon the precious records. Then he tells us, “Therefore I will write and hide up the records in the earth, . . .” (Mormon 8:4.)

Following this, he tells us that someone will find the records and bring them forth.

. . . For he [the Lord] truly saith that no one shall have them to get gain; but the record thereof is of great worth; and whoso shall bring it to light, him will the Lord bless. For none can have power to bring it to light save it be given him of God; for God wills that it shall be done with an eye single to his glory, or the welfare of the ancient and long dispersed covenant people of the Lord. (Mormon 8:14, 15.)

And no one need say they shall not come, for they surely shall, for the Lord hath spoken it; for out of the earth shall they come, by the hand of the Lord, and none can stay it; and it shall come in a day when it shall be said that miracles are done away; and it shall come even as if one should speak from the dead. (Mormon 8:26.)

And now, in September, 1823, as Joseph neared the place where the records were buried, he recognized it. He had seen it in vision the night before. The stone he saw looked just like any stone partly buried in the earth, but Joseph tells us,

This stone was thick and rounding in the middle on the upper side, and thinner towards the edges, so that the middle part of it was visible above the ground, but the edge all around was covered with earth.

Having removed the earth, I obtained a lever, which I got fixed under the edge of the stone, and with a little exertion raised it up. I looked in, and

there indeed did I behold the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the breastplate, as stated by the messenger. The box in which they lay was formed by laying stones together in some kind of cement. In the bottom of the box were laid two stones cross-ways of the box and on these stones lay the plates and the other things with them.

I made an attempt to take them out, but was forbidden by the messenger, and was again informed that the time for bringing them forth had not yet arrived, neither would it, until four years from that time; but he told me that I should come to that place precisely in one year from that time, and that he would there meet with me, and that I should continue to do so until the time should come for obtaining the plates.

Accordingly, as I had been commanded, I went at the end of each year, and at each time I found the same messenger [Moroni] there, and received instruction and intelligence from him at each of our interviews. . . . (Joseph Smith 2:52-54.)

At length the time arrived for obtaining the plates, the Urim and Thummim, and the breastplate.

On the twenty-second day of September, one thousand, eight hundred and twenty-seven, having gone as usual at the end of another year to place where they were deposited, the same heavenly messenger delivered them up to me with this charge: that I should be responsible for them; that if I should let them go carelessly or through any neglect of mine, I should be cut off, but that if I would use all my endeavors to preserve them, until he, the messenger, should call for them, they should be protected. (Joseph Smith 2:59.)

And so these precious records that Mormon took possession of at the age of 16, and on which he had written since he was 24, were given to Joseph Smith at the age of 21. They were delivered to him by Moroni, the faithful and devoted son of Mormon, who had written the final record upon them and deposited them in this Hill Cumorah, where they had remained for nearly 1500 years.

Library File Reference: Book of Mormon.

The Fruits of Faith

by Willis S. Peterson

As members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we must necessarily accept and live the doctrines of the Church. These constitute the plan of salvation for the development of all spirits. We must have faith in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Such a faith accepts the existence of God and His relationship to human beings. This faith also accepts the teachings of Jesus concerning man's relationship with his fellowmen, and His teachings concerning Christ's relationship to God, as the Son of the Eternal Father.

Upon the foundations of this faith, all principles taught by Jesus and given to man for his salvation and eternal joy may become understandable and livable.

This mature faith does five very important things:

1. Faith perfects one's reason and sense of true values in conduct.
2. Faith perfects one's freedom. Faith reveals truth, and truth makes us free.
3. Faith assures equality to all men as children of God. Have you ever noticed, when you have worked for or with a person of deep, mature faith in Christ, that you have been treated with gentleness,

(For Course 28, lesson of April 12, "Faith"; and for Course 16, lessons of August 2-23, "The LDS Concept of the Gospel as a Way of Life.")

equality, charity, and kindness? A person who truly loves God is not mean to his fellowmen.

4. Faith teaches that all men bear within themselves the image of God, and their salvation has been paid for by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. As this torch burns by its own brilliance, then man is valued more by his fellowman for what he is than for what he can do.

5. Finally, faith gives a man peace of soul, because his conduct toward his fellowmen will warrant it. He will think less of himself and more about what he can do for others. His rebellious moods will give way to resignation; his tendency to frustration and discouragement, which is due to pride, will become an additional reason for throwing himself into the Father's service. He, in turn, will become understanding, considerate, and kind to his Father's other children.

Proof of this and proof of so many other things pertaining to Gospel living can be readily found in the example set by our Prophet and President, David O. McKay. He is not only kind to his fellowmen, but he is also kind to all other living creatures. His actions and the joy he has thus derived are witnesses of the authenticity and truth of Christ's teachings.

Library File Reference: Faith.