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Mormon: Compiler of the Book of Mormon, Author, Soldier, Man of God

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Abstract: This article is a biographical sketch of Mormon, who served as prophet, editor, soldier, and author.

MORMON
Compiler of the
Book of Mormon,
Author, Soldier,
Holy Man of God



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M

ormon, compiler
and abridger of
the Book of

Mormon, was a prophet and a holy man who also served as commander of the armed forces of the Nephite nation. Combining in his character the qualities of great strength and deep spirituality, he was a teacher and guide to his people, testifying of Jesus and crying repentance to them while he led their armies to brilliant military victories.

Sickened with their unrighteous arrogance when his people, forgetting God, celebrated their soldierly triumphs by boasting of their own strength, Mormon refused for a time to lead them in battle. He condemned their oaths of vengeance and death against their enemies, but relented when their dreadful defeat and destruction became inevitable; he marched with their armies and died with them in the terrible struggles that resulted in the virtual extinction of the Nephite nation.

He was named after the land of Mormon, where

Alma, converted through the preaching of Abinadi, found refuge from King Noah's court and established the Church of Christ. Mormon, with all his other duties, served as historian and custodian of the records of his people and was assigned the monumental task of abridging those records into a concise account. As chief literary figure and laborer, his name was given to the completed record, though in fact it was written by many authors.

Mormon the Man

What went into the making of this prophet-general-historian? What mattered most to him? What did he teach? How well did his life reflect his convictions?

Mormon was a "pure descendant" of Lehi and of Nephi. It is remarkable to observe how early in life his disposition and commitment became evident:

At ten years of age he was known by responsible men to be a "*sober child, . . . quick to observe,*" and received a significant assignment for the future.

At 11 he traveled with his father to the land of Zarahemla.

At 15 he was "*visited of the Lord, and tasted and knew of the goodness of Jesus.*"

In his sixteenth year he commanded the armies of the Nephites.

In his teens he fearlessly sought to preach repentance to the people at a time when they had "*no gifts from the Lord, and the Holy Ghost did*

not come upon any."

As with other great men, as with the Lord himself when he was on the earth, Mormon's remarkable mission and contribution took form while he was very young; he made up his mind and committed his life in his early years. The great promise was fulfilled in a life of selfless service.

He Loved the Lord

The signature of his service is found in Mormon's simple statement:

"Behold, I am a disciple of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I have been called of him to declare his word among his people, that they might have everlasting life."

He believed and taught forcefully that *"in Christ there should come every good thing."*

He urged them to *"search diligently in the light of Christ that ye may know good from evil; and if ye will lay hold upon every good thing, . . . ye certainly will be a child of Christ,"* for, he said, Christ *"advocateth the cause of the children of men."*

He Loved His People

Notwithstanding their wickedness, Mormon loved his people:

"I had led them many times to battle, and had loved them, according to the love of God which was in me, with all my heart; and my soul had been poured out in prayer unto my God all the day long for them. . . ."

"And my prayer to God is concerning my brethren, that they may once again come to the knowledge of God, yea, the redemption of Christ. . . ."

"I love little children with a perfect love; and they are all alike and partakers of salvation."

Mormon prayed for his people, noting that their repentance was not sincere but was the *"sorrowing of the damned,"* and that *"the day of grace was passed with them, both temporally and spiritually."*

The earnest ambitions of his heart were *"that I could persuade all ye ends of the earth to repent and prepare to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ."*

A Wise and Faithful Teacher

Mormon lived his convictions. The great spiritual depth of his teachings was combined with wise counsel for the daily problems of life and personal conduct consistent with his professions. Humbly he pleaded with his people to live with honor, to protect *"that which [is] most dear and precious above all things, which is chastity and virtue."*

He urged them

- to *"pray unto the Father with all the energy of the heart."*
- to *"know that God is not a partial God."*
- to have charity, for *"charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever."*
- to pray and act and give *"with real intent of heart."*
- to be sensitive to the Spirit of Christ, which is *"given to every man, that he may know good from evil."*
- to believe in prophets and angels and miracles, for God works in *"divers ways"* to *"manifest things unto the children of men."*
- to believe in the restoration of the Jews and the Lamanites, in the gathering in of the house of Jacob and the house of Joseph.

Admonition and Promise

Much of Mormon's life was lived amidst carnage and destruction and tragic unrighteousness, yet he fought both evil and enemy to the death. Strong and faithful himself, he sought to the end to bring his people to repentance. His valedictory may well have been in his plea that *"they who have faith in him will cleave unto every good thing,"* and in the admonition delivered through his son Moroni:

"Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God." ○

References: Mormon 1:2, 1:6, 1:14, 1:15, 2:1, 2:2, 2:13-15. Words of Mormon 8. 3 Nephi 5:13, 5:20-26. Moroni 7:9, 7:16, 7:19, 7:22, 7:24, 7:28, 7:47-48, 8:17-18, 9:9.