

MORONI 10

John W. Welch Notes



Questions to Ponder at the Outset

For many reasons, this chapter is one of the all-time favorites for Latter-day Saints. Almost every verse extends the desperate, if not exhausted, efforts of Moroni to draw his lifelong work and commission to a proper conclusion. After a total of 36 years of being, as far as we know, totally alone—with the exception of the personal visitations of Jesus Christ (Ether 12:39), the three Nephites (Mormon 8:11), and, most of all, the companionship of the Holy Spirit—Moroni succeeds in finally leaving the Book of Mormon where he would like us to find it.

As you read Moroni 10, you may wish to ponder personally, and share conversations with others, about any of the following details and questions. If we don't know where we're going, how will we know when we get there?

- **Moroni 10:1.** Four hundred and twenty-one years have passed since the birth of Jesus when Moroni wrote this last chapter. To put that date into perspective, in Europe, between AD 385 and 420, wars were fought between the western and eastern halves of the Roman empire, Christianity became the state religion, and invasions were mounted from the northeast into France, Germany, the Balkans and other Roman territories. Also, there have been 421 years between AD 1599 (when Queen Elizabeth and Shakespeare were alive) and the present year of 2020. The year 1620 (when the Mayflower landed at Plymouth Rock) was also four centuries ago. That is a long time ago, in which much has happened. How does that awareness of the wide scope of history give you perspectives that help you put Moroni's final words into a broad timeframe?
- **Moroni 10:1, 24.** Moroni first said that he was writing here to the Lamanites, then he turned to addressing "all the ends of the earth." And next, in his Title Page,

- Moroni says that he hopes that his message will reach three groups—the Lamanites and Jews in the House of Israel, and also the Gentiles—to whom he was writing. How is Moroni’s desired purpose being fulfilled today? What is your role personally in seeing that the Book of Mormon is fulfilling its purposes to these audiences?
- **Moroni 10:3.** What does Moroni suggest that people ponder before they ask if the record is true? How does remembering the previous mercies of God help prepare any person to know the truth of the Book of Mormon and to receive any gifts of the Spirit from God?
 - **Moroni 10:4.** In what way is the three-witness law evident in verse 4? Who are the three witnesses that bear testimony to us of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon? Why would Moroni have called particularly upon those three as his witnesses? What traditional functions does this fulfill in certifying the accuracy of his record?
 - **Moroni 10:7.** We are asked here not to deny the power of God. On what principles will God apply his powers for the benefit of His children?
 - **Moroni 10:8.** Moroni repeatedly asks us not to deny the gifts of God. Moroni then lists some of the spiritual gifts that are available. Which gifts are included in Moroni’s list, and why? For what purposes are these many gifts given? What did Amaleki say about spiritual gifts in Omni 1:25? What spiritual gifts did Alma mention in Alma 9:21–22? How do these lists, and other such lists, compare with each other and relate to their particular times and circumstances?
 - **Moroni 10:9–17.** What does Moroni say about spiritual gifts being available in our day? What drives away the gifts of the spirit? Consider and compare the list in D&C 46:8–27. In D&C 46:8, for what important purpose did the Lord suggest we could use these gifts? How do the purposes, availability, and the list of gifts in D&C 46 line up with those in Moroni 10? Do you have any of these gifts? How do you use them? If you need a gift for a righteous purpose, when and how can you, or have you, sought for that gift?
 - **Moroni 10:27.** Moroni declared that his words would come forth “out of the dust.” When that occurred, what ancient prophecy was being fulfilled, and in what ways was it fulfilled?
 - **Moroni 10:27, 34.** Here again (twice now), Moroni tells us that he will meet us at the “bar,” even the “pleasing bar” of God. Why might he have called it a “pleasing bar”? What circumstances led Moroni to add this final conclusion and witness to his record when he had already done so at the end of his Jaredite record? See Ether 5:6. Who else will be there at the judgment bar of God to testify? See also 2 Nephi 33:11.
 - **Moroni 10:30.** Isaiah gave guidance similar to this verse in Isaiah 52:11. What are “unclean things”? How are we to avoid them? Look at Genesis 39:12. When

Potiphar's wife was tempting him, it says that Joseph "fled and got him out." How can and should we maintain purity in our lives?

- **Moroni 10:31.** What ancient prophet is Moroni quoting here? How well did Moroni know the scriptures from which these phrases have come and also in general?
- **Moroni 10:31–33.** How may we become "perfected in Christ"? What does it mean to be perfected in Christ? What does it not mean?

Moroni Concludes His Writings

Moroni had written what he had believed was going to be his final words in Mormon chapters 8 and 9. In that earlier conclusion, he focused on fulfilling his father's requests—writing things that were important and necessary to be included in the Nephite record. Although his words were heartfelt, Moroni was recording these things as part of his duty as his father's scribe and editor.

Now, in Moroni chapter 10, Moroni opened up his heart and expressed what he really wanted to say. These were the things about which he felt passionate. There could be no better ending to the Book of Mormon than chapter 10 of Moroni.

Hugh Nibley often spoke candidly about the relevance of the Book of Mormon to our day, and particularly the words of Moroni. Nibley memorably stated, "I intend to take Moroni as my guide to the present world situation." He pointed out that the Book of Mormon gives answers to issues of today—important questions of "prosperity and security—the great inseparably related issues of wealth and war." He further noted, "In the Book of Mormon, the very questions which now oppress the liberal and fundamentalist alike, to the imminent overthrow of their fondest beliefs, are fully and clearly treated. No other book gives such a perfect and exhaustive explanation of the eschatological problem. ... Here you will find anticipated and answered every logical objection that the intelligence and vanity of men even in this sophisticated age has been able to devise against the preaching of the word. And here one may find a description of our own age so vivid and so accurate that none can fail to recognize it."

Further Reading

Hugh W. Nibley, "Gifts," in *Approaching Zion* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1989), 89.

Gary P. Gillum, ed. and comp., *Of All Things: A Nibley Quote Book* (Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 1981), 86–87.

John W. Welch, "[Hugh Nibley and the Book of Mormon](#)," *Ensign*, April 1985, online at churchofjesuschrist.org.

Moroni 10:1 — Moroni’s Words to the Lamanites

At the beginning of chapter 10, Moroni addressed the Lamanites, his former enemies. He wanted to warn and urge them to be righteous. Moroni used the word “exhort” eight times as he warned and taught. While there can be many powerful dimensions in the meanings of the word “exhort,” Moroni was careful to not be overly zealous, which could turn the Lamanites and readers away from his teachings. He also did not use here the more pointed questioning and challenging verbal registers that he had used earlier in Mormon 8–9.

How might we speak like Moroni and avoid offending people and prevent our teachings from being rejected? How can we avoid going too far with “exhortations”? From Moroni, notice that in verses 18 and 19, he twice added the words “my beloved brethren” into his exhortation. These words were used a dozen times by Mormon in his three letters which Moroni treasured. As missionaries exhort people to come unto Christ, love and understanding make that invitation more pleasant. If a person understands that the missionaries teaching them actually care and have concern for them, their words carry a stronger message without sharpness.

Moroni 10:2 — “I Seal up These Records”

Usually, when people talk about sealing something, they are thinking of licking and sealing an envelope. Perhaps Moroni’s closing up the stone box would have been considered a kind of sealing, but the phrase “to seal” has a lot more to do with authority than closure. When people are sealed in the temple, it does not mean they are glued together forever; rather, they are authenticated as part of the eternal family.

In the ancient world, court or state officials often had a unique seal, which may have been a little cylinder seal or a signet ring that left an impression when rolled onto clay or wax. When a seal of approval was placed on something, it became official. Jewish law required three witnesses to sign and put their seal on a lump of clay that was then attached to the document. This was necessary in order for a document to be legally binding. Only a judge could break the seal and if the seal was otherwise broken, the integrity of the document was compromised. A broken seal indicated someone may have tampered with the contents. Without sealing a document, someone could rub a character out of a metal plate and scratch in a new one, changing the original intent of the document.

Two Roman brass plates from AD 109, which we acquired in 2005, were witnessed in this ancient manner and now reside in the BYU Special Collections Library. They are an official decree of the Roman Emperor Trajan granting citizenship to a retiring Roman soldier who had fought for 25 years in the Roman Army. This doubled, sealed, witnessed document served as the soldier’s retirement passport, giving him Roman citizenship and privileges

as a retiree. Fragments of such plates are found all over the old Roman Empire. However, there are less than twenty such sets of two plates—and one of them is archived at BYU. These ancient sealed Roman plates are interesting because they are composed of two bronze plates connected by a ring so that they open like a book. The full text is written on the outside (equivalent to the front cover) and then the same text is replicated on the inside. On the back are listed the official names of seven witnesses, as required by Roman law. These witnesses are officials of the Roman Empire. All such documents have not only the names of seven Roman officials, but also the personal seals of these seven witnesses.

When the Book of Revelation chapter 5 talks about John seeing a book that was written on the inside and on the outside, sealed with seven seals, and given to the judge who can then break the seal, he may well have been using this standard kind of authentication of documents. A similar mode of authenticating a real estate deed is found in Jeremiah 32. This authentication method is evident in Hebrew, in Greek, and in Latin. It was used in Mesopotamia for over 2000 years before the time of Christ. There are numerous ancient legal documents authenticated this way.



Figure 1 Pre-exilic Hebrew royal seal, in the Louvre Museum, Paris. Photo by John W. Welch

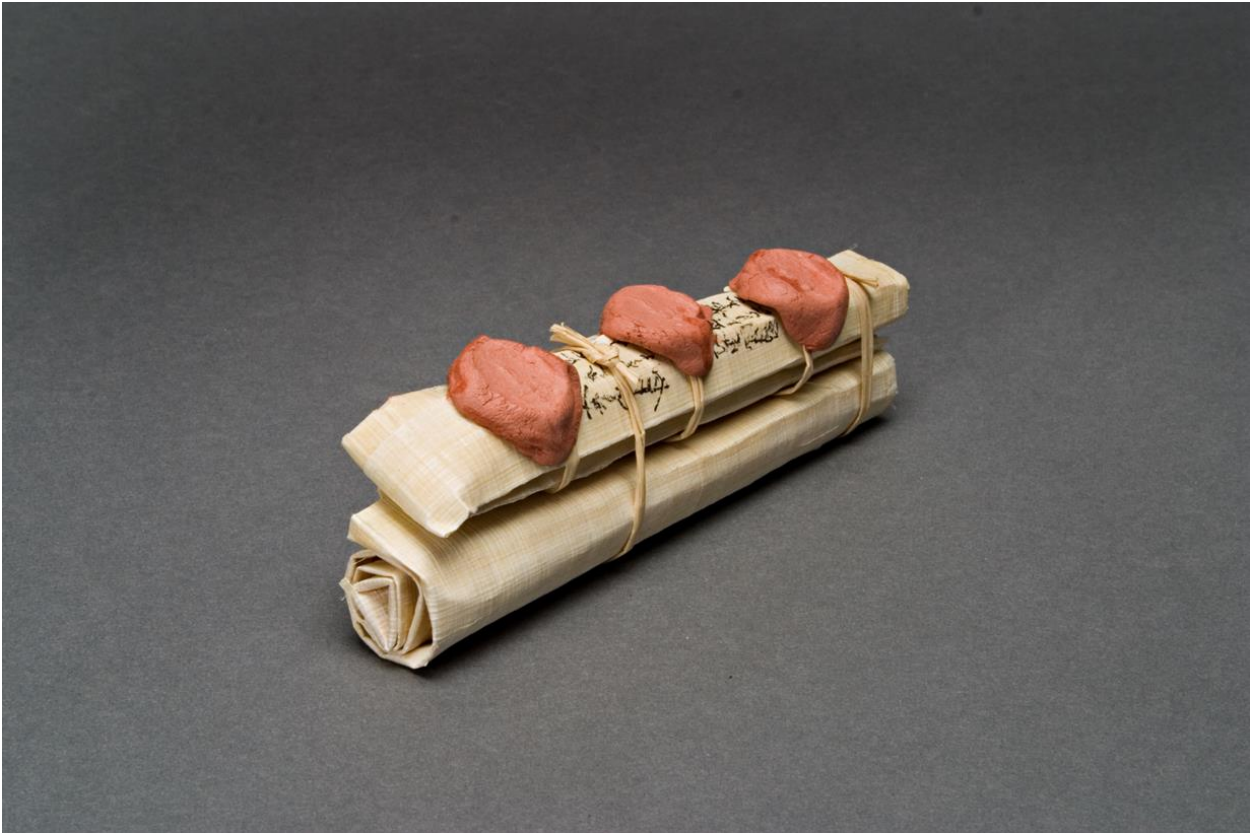


Figure 2 Model of typical Hebrew papyrus legal document from Elephantine, Egypt, showing the names and seals of the required three witnesses. From the BYU Studies and FARMS exhibition of Two Doubled, Sealed, Roman Metal Plates, currently in the library of the LDS

Putting on the official binder with the seal of the witnesses would have been an important part of closing up an official document in Moroni's mind. This was standard operating procedure for any legal documentation in the ancient world.

In addition, Moroni knew Isaiah's prophecy about "a book that is sealed" (Isaiah 29:11) that would come forth "out from the dust" (Isaiah 29:4), as it was quoted by Nephi in 2 Nephi 27:7–9. No doubt Moroni had Isaiah 29 in mind when he finally sealed up the final record.

Further Reading

Evidence Central, "[Book of Mormon Evidence: Doubled, Sealed, and Witnessed Documents](#)," September 19, 2020, online at evidencecentral.org.

Book of Mormon Central, "[Why Was the Heavenly Book Sealed with Seven Seals?](#) (2 Nephi 27:17)," *KnoWhy* 541 (December 12, 2019).

Book of Mormon Central, "[Why Would a Book Be Sealed?](#) (2 Nephi 27:10)," *KnoWhy* 53 (March 14, 2016).

John W. Welch and Kelsey D. Lambert, “Two Ancient Roman Plates,” *BYU Studies* 45, no. 2 (2006): 55–76.

John A. Tvedtnes, “Sealed Books,” in *The Book of Mormon and Other Hidden Books: “Out of Darkness Unto Light”* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2000), 59–73.

John W. Welch, “Doubled, Sealed, Witnessed Documents: From the Ancient World to the Book of Mormon,” in *Mormons, Scripture, and the Ancient World: Studies in Honor of John L. Sorenson*, ed. Davis Bitton (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1998), 391–444.

Moroni 10:2 — Moroni’s Eight Exhortations

Moroni organized his final message by giving a series of exhortations. He used a form of the word “exhort” nine times in this chapter—first, as he introduced this section and then eight more times as he gave eight specific exhortations. This word sets the main tone that runs throughout this final chapter. Moroni had exhorted his readers in similar ways earlier in Mormon 8 and 9. However, in his final words in Moroni 10, something gentler and more compassionate is now found, even though his message is still very intense and urgent. Here, Moroni took time to offer more explanation and instruction together with each of his exhortations.

In Greek, the origin of the word “exhort” is related to swearing an oath and “to encourage extremely or strongly.” In English, it means “to encourage, entreat, persuade, preach, urge, and warn.” Moroni knew that this was his last chance to communicate with his readers. He said, in effect, “Do not procrastinate and set this message aside,” and he said repeatedly, “I would exhort you ... I would exhort you.”

Moroni’s Four Pairs of Exhortations in Moroni 10

Pair Item	Scripture	Context
Pair One		
1	10:3	Remember God’s mercy
2	10:4	Ask God in the name of Christ
Pair Two		
3	10:7	Deny not the power of God
4	10:8	Deny not the gifts of God

Pair Three		
5	10:18	Remember that every good gift cometh from Christ
6	10:19	Remember that He is the same yesterday, today, and forever
Pair Four		
7	10:27	Remember all these things
8	10:30	Come unto Christ

These exhortations and the method in which Moroni presented them are valuable to anyone leading Come Follow Me discussions, giving Home Evening lessons, doing missionary work, seeking personal improvement, and teaching the gospel in general. Each exhortation given by Moroni, or for that matter the earlier prophets, may be usefully studied by following their themes as they run through the Book of Mormon. These settings increase understanding, give enlightenment, guidance, and ideas for application. Moroni's final exhortations were not included as mere afterthoughts. Moroni worked with this text intentionally, intricately, and intimately. He knew every theme in the materials that he and his father had abridged, and he understood which themes would be most important for those who would eventually read the record. Each of these important exhortations deserve to be discussed separately and contemplated as necessary parts of one great whole.

Further Reading

James E. Faulconer, "Sealings and Mercies: Moroni's Final Exhortations in Moroni 10," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 22, no. 1 (2013), 5–19.

Moroni 10:3 — Remember the Lord's Mercy (First Exhortation)

In verse 3, Moroni's first exhortation was, "I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, *that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men.*" The theme of remembering how merciful the Lord has been is threaded throughout the entire Book of Mormon. For example, Alma, Benjamin, and Jacob all addressed this topic. Because it is such a strong theme throughout the Book of Mormon, the words "mercy," "mercies," or "merciful" appear in the book very frequently: "Mercy" appears 85 times; "mercies," especially tender mercies, 18 times; and merciful appears 47 times. That is a lot of use for any content-rich word in the Book of Mormon.

Putting on a special lens to watch for a particular topic, such as “God’s mercy,” is an effective way to study the Book of Mormon. Searching for instances in the Book of Mormon where the word “mercy” is mentioned explicitly or linked through a story about a merciful aspect of God, will reveal a great deal about the mercy of God and will demonstrate how, why, and when God’s mercy works. Studying the scriptures by subject or topic is a very effective method of delving deeply into gospel doctrine. Are there any better places to learn about God’s mercy than by studying the Book of Mormon?

In fact, the first chapter of the entire Book of Mormon launches the theme of the Lord’s mercy as a key concept that runs throughout this record, making it all the more appropriate that Moroni ends with that theme as well. In 1 Nephi 1:1, while not specifically using the word “merciful,” Nephi introduced this concept by stating that he had seen many afflictions, “nevertheless, having been highly favored of the Lord in all my days; yea, having had a great knowledge of the goodness and mysteries of God ...” Referring implicitly to God’s mercy, Nephi assures us as his readers that the Lord visits, helps, reassures, blesses, and reveals his will to people.

A few verses later, in 1 Nephi 1:14, Lehi made the following observation, after receiving his vision of the destruction of Jerusalem:

Great and marvelous are thy works, O Lord God Almighty! Thy throne is high in the heavens, and thy power, and goodness, and **mercy** are over all the inhabitants of the earth; and, because thou art merciful, thou wilt not suffer those who come unto thee that they shall perish.”

What did Lehi consider merciful about the destruction of Jerusalem? Lehi understood that there would be an opportunity for repentance for any person who chose to come back to the Lord—the Lord will save any who come to Him. Part of the mercy is that God always points out the mistakes for which people can repent. How would they know what they needed to correct if there were no schoolmaster; if they had no one loving enough to say, “If you keep going down this path, it is not going to work out”? Warning is an act of mercy.

Six verses later, in 1 Nephi 1:20, responding to the Jews’ treatment of his father, Nephi adopted this theme as one of the main purposes for his writing: “But behold, I, Nephi, will show unto you that the tender mercies of the Lord are over all those whom he hath chosen, because of their faith, to make them mighty even unto the power of deliverance.”

Indeed, the mercy of the Lord extends throughout all time and to all people. In Jacob 4:10, Jacob recorded, “For behold, ye yourselves know that he counseleth in wisdom, and in justice, and in great **mercy**, over all his works.”

When discussing the great plan of God that includes the Atonement, Alma referred to the entire plan as the “Plan of Mercy.” In his words to his son Corianton, in Alma 42:15, Alma explained:

And now, the plan of **mercy** could not be brought about except an atonement should be made; therefore God himself atoneth for the sins of the world, to bring about the plan of **mercy**, to appease the demands of justice, that God might be a perfect, just God, and a **merciful** God also.

God’s “Eternal Plan,” when viewed from different perspectives is variously called the “Plan of Happiness,” the “Plan of Salvation,” or in the Book of Mormon, the “Plan of Redemption.” God’s mercy is a prime focus, no matter which name is used for God’s plan. Therefore, the mercy of God is demonstrated and presented throughout the whole Book of Mormon.

And why is it important for people to remember how merciful God has been from the time of Adam until now? If a person gratefully remembers the mercy and the love of God, instead of demanding God’s attention or being afraid of God’s condemnation, the attitude of appreciation softens the heart, making one more receptive to God’s Spirit, God’s word, and God’s personal revelation. Knowing that God has been merciful in the past gives people confidence that He will be generous and openhanded again. We can learn something important, and often overlooked, from Moroni’s approach. If you want to encourage righteousness, begin by remembering the mercy of God.

Further Reading

Book of Mormon Central, “[How Can We Be Delivered through the Lord’s Tender Mercies?](#) (1 Nephi 1:20),” *KnoWhy* 447 (July 5, 2018).

Evidence Central, “[Book of Mormon Evidence: Politeness Formula in Ancient Epistles](#),” September 19, 2020, online at evidencecentral.org.

Moroni 10:4–5 — Moroni’s Promise: Ask God in the Name of Christ (Second Exhortation)

Moroni instructed and exhorted his readers next to “*ask God the Eternal Father in the name of Christ*, if these things are not true.” Using the name of Jesus Christ was sacred and important in Moroni’s mind, as it should be in ours. In 3 Nephi, as the Lord instructed and demonstrated how to administer the sacrament, Jesus himself gave priesthood authority to ask and to do things in his name. The authority to righteously use the name of Jesus Christ, especially in ordinances, was and is a sacred priesthood responsibility. That may be why Moroni waited to the very end (see Moroni 4 and 5) to record the exact

wording for the sacrament prayers—not wanting these prayers over the emblems of Christ’s sacrifice to fall into unworthy hands.

The witness of the Holy Ghost, of course, is crucial to knowing the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon—or for that matter, to knowing any truth by revelation. Moroni 10 is where Moroni promises us that if we will ask God, the Holy Ghost will testify to us of the truthfulness of this ancient scriptural record. We want people who are investigating, or who are having questions, to get to the point where they will pray in faith and actually ask God for an answer to their probing questions. It might help the person seeking answers if she or he understands why and what Moroni was doing at the very end of his book. Here Moroni was putting his personal conclusion, his colophon—his “seal”—on the record. In this case, the form of the seal was to invite you to ask God if it is true. Moroni’s promise was that the Holy Ghost would “seal” or validate the authenticity of the record.

Normally, upon completion of such plates, when a scribe sealed and closed up an important record, he would not authenticate the record by simply stating “I Nephi” or “I Mormon” wrote these things. He would call upon other people to authenticate the record—to be witnesses, to sign their names, and to put their official seal—either a stamped seal or a cylinder seal—on the record to testify, “I validate what is being said.” Put yourself in Moroni’s position. He was all alone. Who was he going to get to serve as a witness?

Providing witnesses for foundational documents was a legal requirement in ancient times as it is today, and Moroni fulfilled that requirement, though not in the traditional manner. His exhortation and promise in Moroni 10:4 provided much more than a testimony-building moment. Ancient Hebrew law required that there be two or three witnesses in order for an article to be legally enforced. In Matthew 18:16, Jesus, referring to the laws such as those in Deuteronomy, chapters 17 and 19, said, “[I]n the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.” This practice was extended to legal documents. No bill of divorcement, deed, or will was enforceable without calling the witnesses who had sealed it.

It is interesting that 2 Nephi 27:12 records that there will be three witnesses to the plates that had been delivered to the prophet for translation: “Wherefore, at that day when the book shall be delivered unto the man of whom I have spoken, the book shall be hid from the eyes of the world, that the eyes of none shall behold it save it be that **three witnesses** shall behold it, by the power of God, besides him to whom the book shall be delivered; and they shall testify to the truth of the book and the things therein.”

The first edition of the translated Book of Mormon followed the ancient pattern of having the statement of three witnesses authenticate the record. The testimonies of eight

additional witnesses were later added. In subsequent editions of the Book of Mormon, the statements of the witnesses were placed on the page following the introduction to the book, so readers could read the witness testimonies first.

One may well ask how Moroni provided for the witnessing of his completed work. How did he follow traditional practices in the sealing and witnessing of the plates? Whom did he call as witnesses? We know that Moroni, being entirely alone, had no people around to call as his witnesses. Yet, he planned to perform a kind of sealing as explained in Moroni 10:2: “And I seal up these records, after I have spoken a few words by way of exhortation unto you.”

Moroni, performing his final acts as a scribe, named three witnesses who would testify of the truthfulness of what he had written—not in the way that ordinary witnesses might testify, because he had no ordinary witnesses. The three that he called upon are the members of the Godhead. Moroni 10:4 states, “And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask *God, the Eternal Father*, in the name of *Christ*, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the *power of the Holy Ghost*.”

These are the three most reliable witnesses that will repeatedly provide the final legal function of authenticating truth for any era. They are far more reliable than any earthly witnesses. They will testify of the correctness of scriptural records, not only during people’s earth-lives today, but also at the judgment bar. In verse 27, Moroni states that we will know that his record is true and that he did not lie, “for ye shall see me at the bar of God; and the Lord God will say unto you: Did I not declare my words unto you, which were written by this man, like as one crying from the dead, yea, even as one speaking out of the dust?”

Thus, Moroni was able to complete the ancient procedures of authentication and verification and thereby proved himself a worthy editor and scribe. The seal on Moroni’s record is greater than that found on any important record, and it is incumbent upon the reader to observe Moroni’s closing and seventh exhortation in verses 24 through 27—to believe and trust the record that he has provided.

Confirmation of truth by the Spirit is the ultimate desire and is of utmost importance when receiving revelation. However, we are told that we need to seek wisdom by study and also by faith. When we are seeking answers or when we are working with people seeking answers, we must use both tools—the Spirit and learning. B. H. Roberts, writing a hundred or so years ago, stated the following in his introduction to a couple of books entitled, *A New Witness for God in America*: “The Holy Ghost will always be the ultimate

source; the most important source of our knowledge. But the clearer the truth can be stated, the greater the opportunity will the Holy Ghost have of bearing witness of the truth of what is being said.” We have to be articulate, specific, and clear about what we are asking of God so that the Holy Ghost can penetrate through and touch a soul who may not initially seem ready.

Further Reading

Book of Mormon Central, “[How Will God Manifest the Truth of the Book of Mormon?](#) (Moroni 10:4),” *KnoWhy* 254 (December 16, 2016).

Book of Mormon Central, “[How Important Was it to Moroni that We Pray about the Book of Mormon?](#) (Moroni 10:4-5),” *KnoWhy* 359 (August 30, 2017).

Robert L. Marrott, “[Witnesses, Law of,](#)” in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols., ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1992), 4:1569–1570.

Moroni 10:6–18 — Moroni Teaches about the Gifts of the Spirit

God blesses us with specific gifts of the Spirit necessary to bring about our own conversion, the conversion of others, and to build the Kingdom of God here on earth. These are the purposes of gifts of the Spirit—not for our own self-aggrandizement; not to satisfy our own curiosity or to prove something because we lack faith.

Moroni discussed the source of spiritual gifts—the Spirit of Christ—as well as their various manifestations. He explained “there are different ways that these gifts are administered; but it is the same God who worketh all in all; and they are given by the manifestations of the Spirit of God unto men, to profit them” (Moroni 10:8).

By applying this principle, Moroni helps us understand that we should not confine the expected confirmation of truth to a specific type of spiritual manifestation, but rather should be open to the various ways or gifts through which God communicates inspiration and revelation. Elder David A. Bednar taught, “Revelations are conveyed in a variety of ways, including, for example, dreams, visions, conversations with heavenly messengers, and inspiration. Some revelations are received immediately and intensely; some are recognized gradually and subtly.”

Personal revelation has been a theme of President Russell M. Nelson since the early part of his ministry. He has emphasized the importance of receiving our own personal revelation and has explained that receiving personal revelation is especially crucial for those of us living in these, the latter days. He has stated:

Through personal revelation you can receive your own witness that the Book of Mormon is the word of God, that Joseph Smith is a prophet, and that this is the

Lord's Church. Regardless of what others may say or do, no one can ever take away a witness borne to your heart and mind about what is true. ... In coming days, it will not be possible to survive spiritually without the guiding, directing, comforting, and constant influence of the Holy Ghost.

Moroni certainly understood our day and knew what counsel would be most important.

Further Reading

David A. Bednar, *"The Spirit of Revelation," Ensign*, May 2011 or online at churchofjesuschrist.org.

Russell M. Nelson, *"Revelation for the Church, Revelation for Our Lives," Ensign*, May 2018 or online at churchofjesuschrist.org

Moroni 10:6–7 — Deny Not the Power of God (Third Exhortation)

Moroni preceded his discussion about the gifts of God with an exhortation to "deny not the power of God," and later explained that when people are unbelieving, "the power and gifts of God shall be done away" (Moroni 10:24). We must have faith in Jesus Christ before God's power can reveal truth.

Whatever the timing or method of personal revelation, Moroni declared that God only "worketh by power according to the faith of the children of men" (Moroni 10:7). In all cases, it is faith in Jesus Christ that activates the spiritual witness of truth.

Moroni's Seven "Deny" Statements in Moroni 10

Block Item	Scripture	Context
Block One		
1	10:6	Nothing that is good denieth the Christ
2	10:7	Deny not the power of God
3	10:8	Deny not the gifts of God
Block Two		
4	10:32	Deny yourselves of all ungodliness
5	10:32	Deny yourselves of all ungodliness

6	10:32	If by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God
7	10:33	If ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ

Further Reading

Book of Mormon Central, [“What Does It Really Mean to Be a Good Person? \(Moroni 10:6\),” KnoWhy 499](#) (January 24, 2019).

Moroni 10:8–16 — Deny Not the Gifts of God—Block One (Fourth Exhortation)

In the context of attesting, testifying, exhorting, and warning in Moroni 10, Moroni uses the word *deny* exactly seven times.

He first uses the word *deny* three times in three verses in addressing his future Lamanite readers, and anyone else who might be listening in.

1. He declares that “nothing that is good *denieth* the Christ” but rather that which is good acknowledgeth that he is (10:6). And then he then exhorts these people:
2. to “*deny not* the power of God” (10:7) and
3. to “*deny not* the gifts of God, ... [which] are given by the *manifestations* of the Spirit of God unto men, to profit them” (10:8).

First and second, people must not deny Christ or the power of God. Third, people must not deny the panoply of the many gifts of God. It is important to recognize that these gifts are manifested in many ways. God, after all, is a God of fullness and abundance.

There are thus many gifts of the Spirit, some of which Moroni listed in verses 8–17. It is interesting, but not coincidental, that the Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants all contain sections explaining gifts of the Spirit. The prophet Moroni, the apostle Paul, and the prophet Joseph Smith list these gifts, respectively, in Moroni 10, 1 Corinthians 12, and D&C 46. Obviously, this multiplicity indicates the importance of this topic in order for us to gain and maintain a testimony of Jesus Christ and his gospel. Where else in the world can one go to receive a patriarchal blessing to help recognize and embrace the spiritual blessings God has particularly afforded to us individually?

As readers reach the end of the Book of Mormon, some may have already received a witness of the truthfulness of the record but perhaps may not have recognized it for what it was. Others might be seeking a specific type of spiritual manifestation and yet overlooked how the Spirit works through a number of different manifestations. Those who carefully read

the context of Moroni's promise will more fully understand the wide variety of spiritual manifestations that are given for our benefit. The abundance of these gifts helps us to "*deny not the power of God*" and to "*deny not the gifts of God*" (Moroni 10:7–8).

It is probable that Moroni's teaching about spiritual gifts was triggered by what he himself had learned as he worked on the Nephite record. As he abridged the text of the Book of Mormon, Moroni was undoubtedly touched by the many narratives of faithful people who were blessed with and by gifts of the Spirit. For example, he likely recognized that Nephi, the people of Ammon, and many others had the gift of exceeding great faith. He was familiar with narratives of people who "beheld angels and ministering spirits" — including Nephi and his brothers, Alma the Younger and his companions, the people and their children upon Christ's appearance in Bountiful, and many others. Moroni was intimately familiar with the plates which were full of accounts of people who saw, experienced, and worked "mighty miracles."

Moroni, himself, was blessed with many gifts of the Spirit throughout his lifetime. These things were part of his personal testimony and experience. The Lord blessed Moroni with the gift of "tongues and interpretation of languages" as he worked on the plates in general. He relied on these gifts as he abridged the Jaredite records. Undoubtedly, Moroni recognized and knew that King Mosiah also had these same gifts.

Spiritual gifts are necessary and present in all dispensations of the gospel. Moroni received personal revelation about the Nephite record coming forth in a future day by the gift and power of God. He understood that special spiritual gifts would be necessary for interpreting and translating the record. In addition, Moroni knew that his work would go to the Lamanites, Gentiles, and Jews—people of many languages. Spiritual gifts are indispensable in providing and increasing faith in Jesus Christ and for communicating the word of the Lord and bringing it into the hearts of people everywhere.

Moroni's four other uses of "deny" occur near the end of chapter 10, in verses 32 and 33 (see below).

Further Reading

Book of Mormon Central, "[How did the Book of Mormon Help the Early Saints Understand Spiritual Gifts?](#) (Moroni 10:8)," *KnoWhy* 299 (April 12, 2017).

Book of Mormon Central, "[How Will God Manifest the Truth of the Book of Mormon?](#) (Moroni 10:4)," *KnoWhy* 254 (December 16, 2016).

Moroni 10:17 — Gifts of the Spirit Come unto Every Man *Severally*

Verse 17 states that “all these gifts come by the Spirit of Christ; and they come unto every man severally, according as he will.” It is not a gift from God if we somehow create these things by ourselves. It is a spiritual gift when it is given by Christ and by God’s will.

What does the word “severally” mean? The phrase “joint and several liability” is familiar legal terminology. People who are “jointly liable” can be sued as a group and, if any one person in the group is found to be in the wrong, each person would pay an equal amount due the victim or plaintiff. However, if the liability is several, then each one of them can be sued individually without involving the entire group or whole partnership. “Severally” is an old way of saying “individually.” “Collectively” or “individually” means the same as “jointly” or “severally.”

For instance, in the Parable of the Talents, before traveling into a far country, a man called his servants together and gave one of his servants one talent, two to another, and five to another — “to every man according to his several ability” (Matthew 25:15).

Moroni was saying that the spiritual gifts are given severally —individually— because God knows who we are. He knows what we can do, what we should do, and what he would like us to have the opportunity to do. It is useless to envy the gifts of others.

Further Reading

Book of Mormon Central, “[How Will God Manifest the Truth of the Book of Mormon?](#) (Moroni 10:4),” *KnoWhy* 254 (December 16, 2016).

Moroni 10:18 — Remember That Every Good Gift Cometh from Christ (Fifth Exhortation)

Following Moroni’s list of gifts of the Spirit and his explanation of the origin and nature of gifts, Moroni exhorted the reader to remember that “*every good gift cometh from Christ*” (verse 18). This statement presumes the existence of bad gifts. Indeed, in verse 30, Moroni reminded his readers to “touch not the evil gift.” These evil gifts come from those who do not have other people’s best interests at heart. Think of the Trojan horse given by the Greeks in the Trojan War. “Evil gifts” may initially look enticing or helpful, but they lead down the wrong path or encourage pride.

The Book of Mormon contains many references to the principle of learning by the Spirit, which is done by relying on gifts of the Spirit and not relying on the philosophies of men. For example, in 2 Nephi 9:28–29 Nephi warned of “the evil one” and of “the vainness, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men.” He explained:

When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken not unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish. But to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God.

Although Moroni was speaking predominantly to the Lamanites in verse 18, it is a valid warning for everyone today. The Book of Mormon is a blessing and is truly a gift to anyone who receives it, reads it, and then applies Moroni's promise from Moroni 10:4–5. Receiving and acting upon spiritual gifts may lead to another principle: "by their fruits ye shall know them" (3 Nephi 14:20). By the fruits that are borne of "good gifts," we can recognize and harvest the benefits or abilities that they generate.

Moroni 10:19 — Remember God Is the Same Yesterday, Today, and Forever (Sixth Exhortation)

Moroni's sixth exhortation is to remember that *God always remains the same, meaning he is constant in keeping his covenants*. God's promises are sure—he will keep his side of the bargain.

Covenants are a very important focus of the Book of Mormon. Covenants are mentioned in the title page of this book of scripture. One of the main reasons the entire record was written was so people will know God's covenants and will know that God is the same today as he was when he made each covenant. Moroni's themes fold back on each other.

President Spencer W. Kimball was fond of teaching that the most important word in the dictionary could be "remember." Kimball believed that "because we have made covenants with God, our greatest need is to 'remember' them."

Further Reading

Evidence Central, "[Book of Mormon Evidence: To Remember and to Forget](#)," September 19, 2020, online at evidencecentral.org.

Henry B. Eyring, "[Always Remember Him](#)," *Liahona*, February 2018, online at churchofjesuschrist.org.

Moroni 10:20–23 — Faith, Hope and Charity

Moroni's writings in these verses contain a sequence that illustrates the rising effect of faith, hope, and charity that leads, in steps, to positive eternal consequences. This upwardly rising list is followed by an equivalent downward spiral that transpires if one does not have faith—a spiral that leads to despair because of iniquity. Moroni does not go into detail as he mentions the necessity of having faith, hope, and charity, probably because he has already included his father's lengthy discourse on this grand trilogy in Moroni 7.

But Moroni does add an important summation of the necessary co-existence of these three (in verse 20), and then states (in the opposite order) the necessary requirement of having charity, hope, and faith (verses 21, 22, and 23). He stresses that these three are both necessary and sufficient. One can be “saved in the kingdom of God” if and only if one has all three.

And he also quotes, as his father had done, a saying of Jesus that we don’t otherwise have. Mormon had quoted this saying as follows, “And Christ hath said: If ye will have faith in me ye shall *have power* to do whatsoever *thing* is expedient *in me*” (Moroni 7:33). Moroni then intensified that saying to read: “And Christ *truly* said *unto our fathers*: If ye have faith ye *can* do *all things* which are expedient *unto me*” (10:23).

Moroni 10:24–27 — Remember All These Things (Seventh Exhortation)

Initially, Moroni’s message in chapter 10 was directed to the Lamanites (verses 1–23). However, in verse 24, Moroni turned his attention to “all the ends of the earth.” Expounding further on the gifts of God, he warned that if the gifts of God were to be “done away,” it would be because of unbelief, and unrighteousness. This is followed by his seventh exhortation in verse 27. Speaking still to the entire world, he explained why we must remember:

... for the time speedily cometh that ye shall know that I lie not, for ye shall see me at the bar of God; and the Lord God will say unto you: Did I not declare my words unto you, which were written by this man, like as one crying from the dead, yea, even as one speaking out of the dust?

Among his exhortations in chapter 10, Moroni encouraged his readers to “remember” four times. The theme of “remembering” permeates the Book of Mormon. The first three of Moroni’s appeals to remember were directed at the reader to remember a particular good, loving, or divine trait of the Father and Christ—including the advice to remember that they will not change (verses 3, 18, and 19). The fourth was an injunction to remember what Moroni had said—to act, obey, and accept Christ.

Both “remember” and “forget” are words through which one may gainfully study the whole Book of Mormon. These two words are used repeatedly throughout the record. King Benjamin said, “And now, O man, remember, and perish not” (Mosiah 4:30). There is more to remembering than just being able to memorize something, like a multiplication table. “Remembering” in the sense of memorizing something may be helpful with certain points of the gospel, but there is more to remembering than just recalling memorized material. Moroni does not direct us to “memorize” or “recall.” He exhorts us to “remember.”

The Hebrew word behind “remember” is the word for “obey.” When you really remember something, you obey it. How many mothers have said, “Remember what I said?” Mothers were not asking, “Can you repeat back to me what I said.” They were asking, “Why did you not do it?” The same meaning accompanies the Hebrew understanding of the word “hear.” “Hear, O Israel!” does not just mean to listen and let it go in one ear and out the other. There is an element of obeying when you really “hear” and “remember.”

Sister Julie Beck, who served as Relief Society General President, gave a talk at General Conference that explained the process of “remembering.” The word “member” means “a part of something.” To “re-member” means “to put the parts back together.” A memory of one particular experience with the Spirit may be vague. However, by consciously putting together one memory after another—adding each spiritual experience one piece at a time—you recognize the validity and strength of God’s dealings in your life. This process builds and strengthens testimony. That is remembering in a very active way. This is what Moroni wanted us to do when he exhorted us to remember. He was not asking us to memorize or make a list. He was asking us to recall and then to put back together and feel again what we experienced every time a good gift came to us. He was giving us a recipe for building, strengthening, and maintaining our testimony of Jesus Christ.

Further Reading

Evidence Central, “[Book of Mormon Evidence: To Remember and to Forget](#),” September 19, 2020, online at evidencecentral.org.

Book of Mormon Central, “[Why is the Book of Mormon’s Historical Authenticity So Important?](#) (Moroni 10:27),” *KnowWhy* 480 (October 30, 2018).

Julie B. Beck, “[Remembering, Repenting and Changing](#),” *Ensign*, May 2007 or online at churchofjesuschrist.org.

Moroni 10:30–31 — Touch Not the Unclean Thing, as Jesus and Isaiah Commanded

Moroni was not the first to warn, “touch not the unclean thing.” This was a quotation from Isaiah 52:11 where he stated, “Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord.” This phrase was used in Alma 5:57: “Be ye separate, and touch not their unclean things.” Jesus quoted Isaiah almost verbatim at Bountiful in 3 Nephi 20:41. Moroni, then, was not the first to touch on the theme, “do not touch the unclean thing.” There is plenty of material throughout the Book of Mormon for a study of that theme. In his summary, Moroni was teaching principles that had been demonstrated and taught throughout the record.

In verse 31, Moroni followed that quotation by stating, “awake and arise from the dust, O Jerusalem,” quoting from Isaiah 52:1–2. Moroni continued with “and put on thy beautiful

garments, O daughter of Zion; and strengthen thy stakes and enlarge thy borders forever." He blended three passages from Isaiah 52 and Isaiah 54, all of which Jesus had quoted in 3 Nephi chapters 20 and 22. Moroni was echoing the words of Jesus as he invited us to come unto Jesus. He was pulling his teachings from the strong themes of the Savior and the earlier prophets.

In addition to incorporating these important concepts in this powerful conclusion in verse 31, Moroni also included phrases from Isaiah and 3 Nephi in the Title Page, which was the last thing written by Moroni. The Title Page is included as the first page in modern versions of the Book of Mormon, even though it was probably the last of Moroni's writings. It mentions the Lord's confounding the language of the people of Jared and gives reassurance that the House of Israel "are not cast off forever." The "covenants of the Lord" are also mentioned on the title page. In Moroni's summary in verse 31, he reassures the reader that people will "no more be confounded" and that "the covenants of the Eternal Father which he hath made unto thee, O House of Israel, may be fulfilled." In other words, the House of Israel will not be cast off forever.

Moroni 10:30–32 — Come unto Christ and Be Perfected by His Grace (Eighth Exhortation)

In these verses, Moroni presents a sequence of steps to attain the goal of coming unto Christ and being perfected in him. This is a checklist for Celestial behavior.

In order to become perfected, Moroni explains that one must deny oneself of all ungodliness, which is a path to not denying the power of God. By doing these things, we will love God with all our might, mind and strength. Jesus identified this as the greatest commandment. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." This was part of the Law of Moses delineated in Deuteronomy 6:5 and was reiterated by Jesus to the Pharisee in Matthew 22:37.

By taking these measures, the grace of Christ will be sufficient for perfection or completeness. The Lord's grace is given unconditionally, but it will only be effective and sufficient after these preliminary steps have been taken. His grace is always there. But Moroni powerfully says in these verses, that unless these outlined steps are taken—denying all ungodliness, recognizing the power of God, and loving God—the grace of Christ will not be sufficient. Members of the Church believe that grace is always there—but, like the light in a room, it does not do us much good as long as our eyes are closed.

What does it mean to be perfected in Christ? The word "perfected" means "finished." The word for "perfected" in Hebrew means "to be at peace, finally settled, everything is calm." The Hebrew greeting, "Shalom," comes from that same root. In Greek, the words

“to be perfected” mean “to come across a finish line.” The concept does not mean that everything is over or that a person is totally finished. It means a person has finished a race or finished a course—one has come to an endpoint.

After going through the ordinances of the gospel and following Moroni’s steps, one is perfected in a sense—one is finished, but not yet a perfect being. The course is completed. Paul used this when he said that he had finished the course set before him (2 Timothy 4:7).

Elder Bednar has addressed this matter:

We will not attain a state of perfection in this life but we can and should press forward with faith in Christ along the straight and narrow path and make steady progress toward our eternal destiny. The Lord’s pattern for spiritual development is line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little. Small, steady, incremental, spiritual improvements are the steps the Lord would have us take. Preparing to walk guiltless before God is one of the primary purposes of mortality and the pursuit of the lifetime. It does not result from sporadic spurts of intense, spiritual activity.

Further Reading

Book of Mormon Central, “What Does It Mean to Love God with ‘All Thy Mind’? (Moroni 10:32),” *KnoWhy* 517 (May 23, 2019).

David A. Bednar, “Clean Hands and a Pure Heart” *Ensign*, November 2007, online at churchofjesuschrist.org.

Brent J. Schmidt, *Relational Grace* (Provo, UT: BYU Studies, 2015), 158–160.

Moroni 10:32–33 — Deny Not: Block 2

Four final exhortations to “deny not” are all included in verses 32 and 33. After having expanded his range of audience to include people in “all the ends of the earth” (10:24), Moroni goes on to exhort everyone to “come unto Christ and lay hold upon every good gift.” He then places the next two “denys” at the center of a small inverted parallelism or chiasm in 10:32:

4. “Come unto [1] Christ,

and [2] be perfected in him,

and [3] *deny* yourselves of all ungodliness;

5. and if ye shall [3] *deny* yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, minds, and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace

ye may [2] be perfect
in [1] Christ.”

And then in 10:32–33, he doubly intensifies his final point, with a direct parallelism:

6. “And if [4] by the grace of God

ye are [5] perfect

in [6] Christ, ye can in nowise

[7] *deny* the power of God” (10:32).

7. “And again, if [4] ye by the grace of God

are [5] perfect

in [6] Christ,

and [7] *deny not* his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ” (10:33).

Having completed his seven-fold emphasis on the word “deny,” Moroni signals to all readers that everyone should make special efforts to avoid ever wrongly denying the manifestations of God’s spirit unto us.

Obviously, the exhortation to “deny not” occupies a profoundly central place here in Moroni 10, as it has throughout the Book of Mormon. It was a key concern for Mormon as well as for Moroni. The word deny (denied, denieth, or denying) is used 83 times in the Book of Mormon, more than twice as often as it is found in the Bible.

In trying to unpack fully why Moroni chose to end his writings with this particular set of instructions and warnings regarding “denying,” it helps to make use of a full set of analytic tools. For example, here are some reflections in this regard that I find most intriguing and beneficial.

Why Seven Times?

Here is yet another significant set of seven in scripture. This number may convey several meanings. It is an apocalyptic number of completion (7 vials, 7 trumpets, 7 seals, etc.), and thus is appropriate here at the completion of the Book of Mormon. Note also the importance of sealing in Moroni 10:2, so perhaps Moroni intended these 7 words to function in way as his fully authoritative personal seal. Seven was also a number of priestly sanctification, especially with the 7-fold sprinklings of the blood in Leviticus (and note the mention of the blood of Christ in 10:33). It also signified power and victory, as Joshua conquered Jericho marching around the city seven times, blowing trumpets, rams’

horns. The usage in Moroni 10 seems purposeful, to herald in, as Moroni says, Christ's coming in triumph through the air to meet us at the judgment bar of God (10:34).

It would also seem purposeful that these negative 7 *denies* are counterbalanced with precisely fourteen (7 x 2) appearances in Moroni 10 of the most positive word, Christ. In effect, Moroni is saying that the grace of God, perfecting us in Christ, both in heaven and earth, will outdo *by double* any inclination we might have to deny the power or the gifts or the goodness of God.

Legalistically, How the Idea of "Denial" Accentuates the Legal Nature of Moroni 10

Realizing that the word "deny" is used often in legal contexts, especially in the courtroom challenges or judicial interrogations reported in the cases of Sherem, Korihor, and others in the Book of Mormon, this may also help us notice the full force and effect of the judicial nature of Moroni 10. Here Moroni deals pointedly with God's justice, with our ultimate courtroom appearance before the judgment bar of God. In Moroni's exhortations that we "deny not the power" and "deny not the gifts" of God, strong threads of legalisms can also be found. This legal register intensifies the seriousness of denying things that should not be denied, as the following consideration of Moroni 10 through this lens repeatedly shows.

1. There is the legal context of sealing. In ancient legal practice known in Lehi's day, as we can tell from Jeremiah 32, in finalizing a legal document, the document would be written with one part open and the other part sealed so that the document could be opened someday by an authorized judge to determine the validity of the terms of the document. Thus, Jeremiah buried a deed of acquisition in a jar to be available in years to come to prove the truth of his prophecies and make them undeniable.
2. From other sources, including actual Hebrew or Aramaic documents, three witnesses were required, and they would impress their private seals on clay or wax attached to the document as their affirmation that the document was legally authorized and binding. As Moroni has no other humans that he can call as his witnesses, he calls upon the most undeniable witnesses possible, namely God the Eternal Father, Christ, and the Holy Ghost, to manifest the truth of his record, with certitude, to all who would know in this life or who will know in the world to come.
3. Accurately discerning the truth has practical, philosophical, and theological importance in ordinary life, but it is also the primary reason for calling witnesses in a judicial proceeding. Notice that Moroni avers not only that we may know by this means "the truth" but also may know that which is "just" (10:6), another indication that Moroni is thinking of eternal justice and judgment in his concluding affidavit.

4. Seeing the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost in their principal role as witnesses stems directly from the opening words of the resurrected Christ in 3 Nephi 11. Of all the things that he could have said about the Godhead, Jesus there explained their reciprocal roles of mutual witnessing and corroboration. Each member of the Godhead is sustained and validated by the testimony of the two others, so that in the mouth of two witnesses each of them, and all things, can be established. Jesus said, "And I bear record of the Father, and the Father beareth record of me, and the Holy Ghost beareth record of the Father and me" (11:32). It was Jesus's foundational logic of legitimacy that he bore record of his doctrine from the Father, and if anyone believes in Christ, he also believes in the Father, and unto him "will the Father bear record of [Jesus], for [the Father] will visit him with fire and with the Holy Ghost" (11:35). Moroni invokes precisely this theological understanding of the divine order of justice as he buried his sealed record and promised that all may know epistemologically the truth of that record as well as the ethical goodness of it by the power and gifts of God, who bears witness of the Holy Ghost by giving manifestations of the Spirit.

5. Moroni next mentions ten gifts of the Spirit, arranging them in five pairs. Perhaps he has the structure of the Ten Commandments in mind here, with their two tables of five each. Under the law, the Ten Commandments will be used in the heavenly court, and what we, the defendants or the accused, can offer in our behalf is the evidence of all the gifts that we have accepted, and not denied. For unto those who have received in few things will be given more, but from those who have rejected or refused will be taken. Thus, it seems that Moroni lists these gifts here not only because he knows these gifts personally, but also that they are the kinds of gifts that everyone can seek after and obtain. These gifts come to each person separately, meaning individually and personally, "according as he will" (17), meaning according to the desires of our hearts, and thus they are the evidence that reveals our inner character and spirit. As gifts of the Spirit are evidenced in our lives, we are proven to be Christ's followers.

6. Moroni then exhorts the Lamanites to remember that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. In a legal context this can mean that he can be absolutely counted on to judge righteously and to always keep his promises (10:19).

7. Moroni next summarizes briefly his father's words on faith, hope, and charity, now in the context of legally qualifying someone to be admitted into the presence and kingdom of God.

8. Finally, in speaking to his first audience, Moroni introduces into evidence the veracity of Christ's own testimony: "And Christ *truly* said unto *our* fathers: If ye have faith you can

do all things which are expedient unto me" (10:23), thus concluding his adjuration to the Lamanites.

9. Turning his attention to his second audience, to all the ends of the earth, Moroni then comments on his depositing of the record, entering it into the heavenly court's record, and by giving his deposition of its integrity, as he testifies as its final scribe and custodian. Here again, in speaking to the universal audience, we find many broader legal or jurisprudential elements.

10. Moroni then inveighs two conditional curses upon all people, using the traditional "Wo," or curse formula:

First, "Wo unto you if the power and gifts of God shall be done away among you because of your unbelief," but Moroni adds here a saving clause, namely allowing for the condition that even if only one person has spiritual gifts, that's still good, because it means that faith, hope and charity have not completely passed away (10:24–25).

Second, "Wo unto them who shall do these things away [or in other words, deny the gifts of the Spirit and power of God], and die in their sins." But again there is a saving proviso, namely that the curse will not have effect if one repents, touches not the evil gift, and comes unto Christ.

11. Then, in addition to testifying for a second time that he speaks this according to the words of Christ (10:23, 26), Moroni offers two absolute declarations that he is telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth: First, "I lie not" (10:26), and second, "You will see I lie not" (10:27).

12. Twice he situates the listeners before the judgment seat of God: "for ye shall see me at the bar of God" (10:27), and a I will "meet you before the bar of the great Jehovah, the Eternal Judge" (10:34). Whether the judgment bar is pleasing or pleading (the spelling of this word in the Original Manuscript is questionable) is quite beside the point. Obviously, it will be pleasing for Moroni who expects to find himself fully vindicated, while for those who meet him there it may or may not be so pleasing but rather, for some of them, they will be found pleading.

13. At that bar, twice Moroni announces that he plans to call God as his witness. God will be asked to answer Moroni's question and answer: "Did I not declare?" and God will show that "what I have written is true" (10:29)

14. Twice Moroni talks about apprehending and producing evidence: Say "yes" to *laying hold* on every good gift, but say "no" to even touching the evil gift or the unclean thing (10:30). Laying hold on or possessing these good gifts will be an advantage in court, as

these bring forth their evidences of good, just, and true works. But if people have refused these gifts and instead have defiled themselves with evil or unholy things, those things will surely be evidence testifying against themselves.

15. Interestingly, Moroni still sees merely touching something unholy as sufficient to transfer impurity, apparently a holdover from the ritual purity system as it was understood in ancient Israel. Perhaps, conversely, he now also associated the transfer of purity and power with touching, as he knows of the times when the people touched the resurrected Lord, when he touched each child one by one (3 Nephi 17:21), and “touched with his hand” each of his disciples and “gave them power to give the Holy Ghost” (3 Nephi 18:37), and in the same manner did the Nephite elders ordain priests and teachers by laying their hands upon them (Moroni 3:2).

16. What will then hopefully be the favorable legal verdict and order from this heavenly court is announced by Moroni in advance in a beautiful couplet: “awake, and arise from the dust, O Jerusalem; yea, and put on thy beautiful garments, O daughter of Zion” (10:31).

17. The covenant of God is mentioned twice, first attesting that the legal covenants of the Eternal Father will be fulfilled (10:31), and second, that we may by the grace of God become perfect in Christ through the shedding of the blood of Christ, in fulfillment of the covenant of the Father (10:33).

Perhaps these many doublets are all here to invoke the unstated but fundamental talonic principle that surely operates in this divine court, namely that if we have denied or refused the Christ and his gifts on earth, he must deny or renounce us before God in heaven.

18. Thus, the conditions of a favorable judgment are then given: “Deny yourselves of all ungodliness” and “love God with all your might, mind, and strength” (10:32), which is the first and the greatest of all the commandments.

19. Finally, the fulfillment of the promise of sanctification, holiness, and being without spot is certified, both “in the covenant of the Father,” and “through the shedding of the blood of Christ,” and “unto the remission of [our] sins” (10:33).

Linguistically, There Are Many Meanings for the Word “Deny”

To succeed, it is most important, as Moroni repeatedly says, for us to “deny not,” in any way, shape or form. Linguistically, it helps to identify all that it might actually mean to “deny” something or someone. The English word “deny” comes from the Latin *de-nego*, or *denare*, literally meaning “to not say yes.” The word “deny,” whether in English, or in the Hebrew (which is *kay-khash*) or the Greek (*arneomai*) which stand behind the word “deny” in the KJV, has many strong meanings, at least a dozen, all of which can be

instructive in reading Moroni 10. All of these commonly associated meanings appear to have meant something important to Moroni. Considering them all can help us can grasp all that Moroni is trying to tell us.

1. The word may mean to declare something not true or to declare something false *propositionally*. Thus, Moroni's instruction that we deny not the spirit would mean we should not say that the affirmations of the Spirit are false. Moroni, of course, had preferred to be killed rather than deny or declare as false his testimony of Christ. This veracity, he said, would be borne out by the validation of his words by the Lord God himself, who will say at the Judgment, "did I not declare my words unto you, which were written by this man?" (10:27). In that way, all will know propositionally that Moroni has lied not (10:26).

2. The word may also mean to deny the existence of something *ontologically*, such as by asserting that the power of God and the manifestations of the Spirit are imaginary or fictitious, thus nullifying their existence. For Moroni, the existence of Christ was beyond dispute, although he knew that many people in his own day, as well as in future days, would still deny this. But Moroni had seen Christ, and he was absolutely confident that all people will meet him at the judgment bar of God, and so a denial in an ontological sense was also to be prohibited. This sense is found explicitly in Moroni 10:6: good denieth not the Christ, but acknowledgeth *that he is*.

3. The Latin etymology of the word deny conveys a connotation of pushing away from. In other words, one denies to oneself the good gifts of God when one *rejects or refuses* to welcome or allow them or the Spirit into one's life. The Greek *arneomai*, can mean to refuse an inheritance, or recline to be useful, blindly turning away from that which is fortunate. In this sense, Moroni punctuates his admonition to deny not the gifts of God with the emphatic reassurance that "they are given by the manifestations of the Spirit of God unto man, to *profit* them" (10:8). In this sense, Moroni had spent his life hoping that those who oppose him would no longer choose to push the gospel and the spirit away, but rather would voluntarily "come unto Christ, and lay hold upon every good gift" (10:30), and not refuse or push them away.

4. One also may deny someone or something to others by refusing to *openly acknowledge* those things. In this sense, an open denial or repudiation of the gifts becomes a public action and not just a personal abnegation. Moroni had seen such denials in the public actions of many of his recalcitrant brethren who, for example, denied members blessings of the spirit by propounding and implementing incorrect practices, such as infant baptism.

5. One can also deny *by withholding something or not affording it to others*. Understood this way, one would deny the gifts and power of God by seeing the needs of others for

priesthood blessings or for encouraging validation of spiritual experiences and yet by discouraging or holding back the facilitation of the receipt of those gifts by those in need. In this vein, Moroni advises all to be generous and charitable, for “except he have charity ye can in nowise be saved in the kingdom of God” (10:21). This problem becomes even more extreme when one refuses to grant a specific request made by one in need, turning the spiritual beggar away, thus choosing to deny such a request.

6. There is also a *relational* sense in which one may deny one’s loyalty to someone else, by not admitting familiarity with or knowledge of that person. Thus, one would deny the gifts of God by failing to acknowledge openly that the gifts came *from God*, to recognize his hand in all things, and to thank him for those gifts. The Greek *arneomai*, which means “deny,” is often used in a legal context, and means to personally deny, disown, decline, resist, or reject, to renounce a duty or office. It often implies turning away from “a previous relationship of obedience and fidelity.” (*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 1:470).

7. In a legal sense, one might negate or deny a contractual or covenant relationship *simply by saying no*. Jesus said, in a covenant-making context, let your speech be yes, yes or no, no, and the Latin word *denego* literally means saying no and not yes in a covenant making context. Thus, Moroni’s mention of “the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins” at the end of chapter 10 (in v. 33, see also v. 31) might then be the ultimate outcome of denying the gifts, particularly those relational blessings that are extended by the Father to his children as beneficiaries through his eternal covenant.

8. Similarly, either party to a promise may deny himself or herself by *acting in contradiction to that promise*. 2 Timothy assures that God himself cannot act in contradiction to his character or promises, which would be to deny himself. Moroni, somewhat similarly, works with this same concept as he exhorts readers to remember that God “is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and that all these gifts [of which Moroni has spoken], which are spiritual, never will be done away, even as long as the world shall stand, only according to the unbelief of the children of men” (10:19). Moroni’s point here is not to make an unhelpful theological statement that God is unchanging, impassive, and immobile, but rather to reassure positively that God will not and cannot walk away from the gifts of the Holy Ghost which Jesus promised or bestowed, either himself or through his twelve empowered and ordained disciples.

9. Finally, there are senses in which one may *turn away from a bad thing*, such as in denying yourself of all ungodliness (as Moroni says twice in 10:32 that we should do). One might abstain from or forego some temporal good, sacrificially denying oneself that optional benefit for some higher good. But one should not deny oneself something that one has

been commanded to do, such as to seek the gifts of the spirit or to believe, as that would be to deny the faith.

Judging by his choice of words throughout this chapter, Moroni may well have had all nine of these meanings in mind. They all explain to us ways in which we should assiduously guard against ever denying the gifts or power of God. Just as King Benjamin could not state all the ways in which one can commit sin (Mosiah 4:29), we cannot say all the ways in which we can deny the powers and gifts of God. This topic was obviously of urgent importance in Moroni's mind. We would do well to check ourselves to be sure that we do not deny anything improperly. Otherwise, if we do not watch ourselves, our thoughts, our words, and our deeds, and observe the commandments of God, and continue in faith, even unto the end of our lives, we must perish (see Mosiah 4:30).

Moroni 10:33 — Sanctification Comes through Christ

The scriptures teach that no unclean thing may enter into the presence of God, but Moroni commented on an additional benefit of becoming perfected in Christ:

[I]f ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then ye are sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye may become holy, without spot.

What an invitation! What a wonderful, enabling instruction on how to receive the grace of Christ—be perfected in him, made holy, and without spot; all of which will qualify us to abide in his holy presence.

One can truly enjoy the spirit of Moroni's distillation of everything that he was trying to convey. It is inspiring to observe how the principles that we encounter at the end of the Book of Mormon have been taught throughout the record, how the way had been prepared, and how the groundwork had been laid all along so that Moroni could tie it together for a meaningful conclusion. There is hardly a single verse in the whole Book of Mormon that is not somehow directed at channeling the reader to these concluding points. It is a brilliantly superb summation of the entire Book of Mormon and, in and of itself, it is a truly remarkable, communicative conclusion and composition.

Moroni 10:34 — Moroni Finally Invokes the Name Jehovah

Moroni's thoughts completely turned to Jesus Christ and to the Father as he was putting the final stamp of divine imprimatur and validity upon the record.

The name "Jehovah" only appears one time in the whole Book of Mormon, except for places where it is in a quotation from Isaiah or some other ancient prophet. Why is that

the case? Why would Moroni wait to the very end and say, “Until ... I am brought forth triumphant through the air, to meet you before the pleasing bar of the great Jehovah, the Eternal Judge of both quick and dead”?

One possibility for using the name “Jehovah” very sparingly is that the name of Jehovah was extremely sacred to the ancient Israelites. In attempts to carefully observe the commandment not to take God’s name in vain, they did not speak openly using the name of God, considering his name to be very sacred. This is one reason why there was confusion among the Jews and others about who Jesus was, who Jehovah was, who Elohim was, and who God the Father was.

Every year, on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest had the name of Jehovah (YHWH - “Yaweh”) written on his forehead. On this day, as the High Priest performed the atoning sacrifices, he was acting in the place of the Savior, who would perform the real eternal atonement. Under the Law of Moses, so sacred was the name “Jehovah,” it could only be pronounced out loud on the Day of Atonement. Otherwise, when the Israelites spoke of Jehovah, they would use a euphemism of some kind in place of using the name “Jehovah” – using the title “Lord,” among others.

In King Benjamin’s Speech, the phrase “Lord God” is mentioned ten times. “Ten” was considered the number of perfection. King Benjamin said the name or title of God a perfect number of times. A High Priest could mention God’s name on the Day of Atonement, but he had to mention it out loud in the prayers a perfect number of times. The name “Jehovah” appears in the Dead Sea Scrolls in a few places. Where the name “Jehovah” does appear, the ancient Hebrew scribes would not spell out the four letters of the name in Hebrew (JHWH). Instead, they put four dots to remind people that they should not say the sacred name out loud.

When Moroni got to the very end of the Nephite record, he put the very sacred name “Jehovah” as the final punctuation mark on his text, sealing it with the name of God. The sacred name written in the Nephite record made the record itself sacred. Moroni felt that he could safely and respectfully write the name of Jehovah because he then buried the record in the ground so no unauthorized person or natural event would damage it. There would be no risk of someone reading the holy name of Jehovah and misusing it until God brought the record forth. This indicated the reverence that Moroni had for Jesus Christ and for his name, Jehovah.

Further Reading

Book of Mormon Central, “[Why Did Alma Repeat the Lord’s Name Ten Times While in Prayer?](#) (Alma 31:26),” *KnoWhy* 139 (July 8, 2016).

Book of Mormon Central, "Why Does an Angel Reveal the Name of Christ to Jacob? (2 Nephi 10:3)," *KnoWhy* 36 (February 18, 2016).

Moroni 10:34 — The Pleasing Bar

Moroni ended his words by bidding farewell until he is "brought forth triumphant through the air, to meet you before the pleasing bar of the great Jehovah, the Eternal Judge of both quick and dead." There has been discussion about Moroni's use of the word "pleasing." How can the judgment bar be pleasing?

For the righteous, accountability and judgment before God is going to be a pleasant experience. The word "pleasing" is very powerful in this context and setting. This same phrase is also found in Jacob's farewell recorded in Jacob 6:13. Moroni knew the cultural norms for saying goodbye—indeed, Jacob's and Moroni's farewells are very similar.

Believing the word "pleading" gives the phrase stronger textural weight, Royal Skousen, in his critical edition, suggests that the phrasing might also possibly read, "pleading bar of Christ." And indeed, as shown above, in a courtroom setting, people do plead for mercy and for justice.

But since the word "pleasing" is used in both Moroni 10:34 and Jacob 6:13, it is a little hard to imagine the same "hearing error" occurring twice during the translation process between Joseph Smith and his scribe. Thus, the word "pleasing" need not be emended.

Moreover, Jacob used the word "pleasing" six times in his short, sensitive book (see John W. Welch Notes, p. 280), and it appears a total of twelve times in the Book of Mormon. The word "pleading" appears only once in all the Book of Mormon, in a non-judicial setting in Alma 55:23, when captured soldiers are pleading for mercy. So, it is more likely that Moroni was using the fairly widespread word "pleasing" or "pleased," if not the more particular expression "pleasing bar" used by Jacob. The word "pleasing" was a familiar piece of traditional Nephite language.

It is also important to note that God is going to be both just *and* merciful, which seeming paradox transcends the powers usually open to judges on earth. That may also have influenced Moroni in calling it the "pleasing bar." Alma 42 makes it very clear that God is both just and merciful, and that the one cannot exist without the other. Understanding God as a merciful judge provides us with great reassurance.

Moroni's life was dedicated to bringing all people and all readers of this treasured book of scripture to that threshold—come unto Christ, remember, ask, believe, and come unto the Savior to receive all promised blessings. What a wonderful privilege it is to be able to talk about this beautiful text. The Holy Ghost bears witness that this book is true.

Further Reading

John S. Welch, "Keep the Old Wine in Old Wineskins: The Pleasing (Not Pleading) Bar of God," *FARMS Review* 18 no. 1 (2006): 139–147. It is true that one finds "a variety of examples of 'pleading bar' on the internet, all dating back to the 1600s," referring to a cage or limited area in English courtrooms where accused criminals were barricaded (hence the English word "bar" or "barrier"), where they were allowed to state in court their "plea" of guilty or innocent. See Royal Skousen, "The Language of the Original Text of the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies Quarterly* 57, no. 3 (2018), 87–88. But, as I would add in friendly reply, that British and American colonial courtroom feature was not a part of any Nephite or Hebraic places of criminal judgment known to Moroni, and much less, one would think, a feature in God's heavenly place of our final judgment.

In the End, Seeing Moroni 10 as a Summation of Moroni's Book of Moroni

To understand why Moroni structured his final comments the way he did, it helps to look back, one final time, at the overall composition of the book of Moroni as a whole. Seeing what he has included in chapters 1 to 9, emphatically punctuates his parting words in chapter 10.

For at least 36 years Moroni had lived in excruciating terror, not only of loneliness but also of fear of being put to death for refusing to deny Christ. He opens his final book by emphasizing that he has not made himself known to the Lamanites, "lest they should destroy me." Because of their enmity "they put to death every Nephite that will not deny the Christ" (Moroni 1:1–2). And despite all that he must go through as a consequence and everything else he might gain by doing so, Moroni absolutely attests, "and I, Moroni, will not deny the Christ" (1:3). This being his constant driving force, he makes this ground of his very being the dominant *Leitmotif* of his concluding book.

Knowing and planning that his final statement would culminate in his exhortations about how people might know things through the power of the Holy Ghost, so that they would know that which is good and does not deny the Christ (10:6), and desiring to warn people not to deny the gifts administered by the Spirit of God so that they could become perfected, finished and completed themselves and "in nowise deny the power of God" (10:32), Moroni began his book purposefully in a very deliberate way. In chapter 2, he lays the foundation for Moroni 10:4 by disclosing the words of Christ, which were spoken in 3 Nephi 18 as he gave them the power to give the Holy Ghost.

Then, in chapter 3, he told the manner in which elders were ordained "to preach repentance and remission of sins through Jesus Christ, by the endurance of *faith* on his name to the end" (3:3), and he made a point of emphasizing the fact that they were called and ordained "according to the *gifts* and callings of God unto men" and that they were ordained "by the

power of the Holy Ghost which was in them" (3:4). Then, in order that all members of the church might "always have [Christ's] Spirit to be with them," which are the words with which both of the sacrament prayers end (4:3; 5:2), Moroni set forth the priesthood directions for the administration of the bread of the wine, in remembrance of the body which he had shown them and of the *blood* which was shed for them (see 10:33).

Then, after explaining the requirements for baptism, Moroni explained how the church follow the directives of Christ at the end of 3 Nephi 18, by which the church maintained a faithful membership, which required three witnesses (Moroni 6:7), in order to call a person to repentance, so that their meetings could then proceed "after the manner of the workings of the Spirit, and by the power of the Holy Ghost," which led them either to preach or exhort, or to pray or to supplicate, or to sing in joy and praise of God (6:9).

Readers may wonder why Moroni has placed these treasured ecclesiastical and liturgical instructions at the beginning of his final farewell. But their emphasis on facilitating and protecting the gifts of the Holy Ghost clearly seem purposefully aimed at laying the groundwork for Moroni's final exhortations about asking for and experiencing the gift of the Holy Ghost, perfection in Christ, and the fulfillments of the covenants of God, the Eternal Father (10:31, 33).

And then one may also wonder why Moroni then pulls out of his satchel three letters that he has treasured all these years, that were written to him by his father about 70, 60, and 40 years earlier. In the first letter, Moroni 7:17, Mormon speaks of how "the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil; ... for every thing which inviteth to do good, and to persuade to believe in Christ, is sent forth by the power and gift of Christ; wherefore ye may know with a perfect knowledge that it is of God. But whatsoever thing persuaded men to do evil, and believe not in Christ, and deny him, and serve not God, then ye may know with a perfect knowledge it is of the devil" (7:16–17). The obvious relationships between these words and Moroni's statements in chapter 10 about knowing the truth of all things by the power of the Holy Ghost and denying not the power and gifts of God, as well as his restatement of the triad of faith, hope, and charity, prepare the reader to connect these precedents and to recognize and embrace Moroni's powerful exhortations and concluding invitations.

And likewise, Moroni chapter 8, about the lamentable rise of the practice of infant baptism, also includes a four-fold warning regarding this practice as a denial of the gift and power of the atonement of Christ. Mormon's words here find several echoes in Moroni 10: "God is not a partial God, neither a changeable being; but he is unchangeable from all eternity to all eternity. Little children cannot repent; wherefore, it is awful wickedness to *deny* the pure *mercies of God* unto them; ... But it is mockery before God,

denying the mercies of Christ, and the power of his Holy Spirit, ... and they are *denying* the Holy Ghost" (8:18–19, 23, 28). Moroni carries this torch forward, stringently warning people to "deny not."

One may also wonder why Moroni included the gruesome chapter 9, about the total depravity of both Nephites and Lamanites obsessed in the convulsions of terminal warfare. Perhaps he did this for two reasons: first, simply to help us understand the reality of the fears that he had lived with for 36 years, all because he would not deny Christ; and second because, in spite of all those ugly atrocities, Moroni had clung to his father's final blessing to him, that "May Christ lift thee up, and may his sufferings and death, and the showing his body unto our fathers, and his mercy and long-suffering, and the hope of his glory and of eternal life, rest in your mind for ever. And may the grace of God the Father, whose throne is high in the heavens, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who sit on the right hand of his power, until all things shall become subject under him, be, and abide with you forever. Amen" (9:25–26). Moroni's final blessing in Moroni 10:30–34 extends unto all the ends of the earth the gist of these very personal words of comfort and encouragement that he had received from his own father.

Of Endings and Beginnings: Where to Start?

Steve Walker has said it well: "I find the final section of the Book of Mormon to be particularly engaging. Like any good climax, it tends to be the most intense part of the book. It is arguably the most significant section. This culmination of a thousand-year chronicle puts the whole volume into overview mode—the summary at the end of the book that encapsulates what has mattered most. T. S. Eliot observed that 'what we call the beginning is often the end / and to make an end is to make a beginning. / The end is where we start from.' Endings reorient us." (Steven C. Walker, "Last Words," in *The Reader's Book of Mormon*, ed. Robert Reese and Eugene England, 7 [Salt Lake City, UT: Signature Books, 2008], pp. x-xi, quoting "Little Gidding," in *Four Quartets* [London: Faber and Faber, 1942]). And so it is with Moroni 10. It reorients us. The end is where we really start.

And indeed, as we learn where the Book of Mormon was bound and determined, from the beginning, to end, we can now look backward to see how Mormon and Moroni have carefully brought us to this all-important conclusion. More than summarizing all that has been said before, these endings tell us Mormon's and Moroni's concerns that shaped their book. Those concerns of the Lord, made plain in Moroni's masterful final ending, indeed have masterminded the entire Book of Mormon project from its outset.