



Type: Magazine Article

The Book of Mormon: Evidence that Jesus Is the Christ

Author(s): Francis W. Kirkham

Source: *The Instructor*, Vol. 98, No. 2 (February 1963), pp. 70-71

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

Abstract: Examines the title page of the Book of Mormon in view of other Hebrew writings. Discusses what the Book of Mormon tells of Christ.

The Book of Mormon

EVIDENCE THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST

An account written by the hand of Mormon . . . to come forth by the gift and power of God . . . to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, . . . manifesting himself unto all nations . . .

—BOOK OF MORMON TITLE PAGE.

More and more, God's children in all nations are now eager to know if Jesus, born of Mary in Bethlehem, is the Son of God; if, after His crucifixion on the cross, He *did* return to His disciples and live with them for 40 days, a resurrected, immortal person; if the power of the Holy Ghost *did* convince 3,000 persons on the day of Pentecost that they may have eternal life by obeying the Gospel plan.

We have the evidence in the record of His disciples of the Church established at that time.

Has God, our Eternal Father, now restored the Gospel plan for the peace and happiness of His children in all nations?

Preparatory to the coming forth of The Book of Mormon, the chosen Prophet Joseph Smith wrote: "My object in going to inquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right (for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong), and which I should join." In answer to his humble prayer, he writes: ". . . I saw a pillar of light exactly over my head, above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually until it fell upon me. . . . I saw two personages, whose brightness and glory defy all description, standing above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name and said, pointing to the other—*This is My Beloved Son. Hear Him!*"

Joseph Smith was told to join no existing church, for they were all wrong. This important message from Jesus Christ was published in the *Times and Seasons*, Nauvoo, Illinois, April 1, 1842, page 748; by Joseph Smith. He wrote earlier:

"This paper commences my editorial career. I alone stand responsible for it, and shall do for all papers having my signature henceforward." (*Times and Seasons*, March 1, 1842, page 216.)

"In the last number, I gave a brief history [the Wentworth Letter, *Times and Seasons*, March 1, 1842, page 706] of the rise and progress of the Church. I now enter more particularly into that history and extract from my journal." (*Times and Seasons*, March 15, 1842, page 726.) He assures us that he alone wrote his history and that he had an original private journal from which he copied.

Concerning his next celestial vision 3½ years

later, Joseph Smith writes: "I betook myself to prayer and supplication to Almighty God for forgiveness of all my sins and follies; and also for a manifestation to me, that I might know of my state and standing before him; for I had full confidence in obtaining a divine manifestation, as I previously had one." (Page 749.)

Then follows the description of the coming to Joseph Smith three times on the night of Sept. 21, 1827, of Moroni, a resurrected immortal messenger from God. He told of the ancient record of The Book of Mormon being buried in the nearby Hill Cumorah, and that it contained the fulness of the Gospel as delivered by the resurrected Christ to the people on the American Continent shortly after His death and resurrection in Palestine.

He declared a great and marvelous work was about to come forth among the children of men, that the spirit of God would be poured out upon all flesh, that the hearts of the children would be turned to the fathers, ". . . that God had a work for me [Joseph Smith] to do; and that my name should be had for good and evil among all nations, kindreds, and tongues; or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people." (*Times and Seasons*, April 15, 1842, page 753.)

After four yearly visits of Moroni at this date to the Prophet Joseph Smith to counsel, instruct, and test his reliability, the plates were given to him for translating. On page 71 of the *History of the Church* by Joseph Smith, he writes: "Meantime, our translation drawing to a close, we went to Palmyra, Wayne County, New York, secured the copyright, and agreed with Mr. Egbert B. Grandin to print 5,000 copies of The Book of Mormon for the sum of \$3,000.

"I wish to mention here that the title page of The Book of Mormon is a literal translation taken from the very last leaf, on the left hand side of the collection or book of plates, which contained the record which has been translated, the language of the whole running the same as all Hebrew writing in general (from right to left); and that said title page is *not* by any means a modern composition either of mine or of any other man who has lived or does live in this generation."

(For Course 15, lessons of April and May; for Course 11, lesson of April 28, "Joseph Smith"; and of general interest.)



Like others, it took time for Mary to realize that Jesus had been resurrected and that His work was not yet finished.

Briefly the title page declares to all mankind: This book was written by the spirit of revelation. It will be preserved by divine power. It will come forth by divine power. It will be translated by divine power to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting Himself to all nations.

Early converts tested by the Bible the claim that The Book of Mormon contained the fulness of the Gospel. They were sincere, devoted believers in God and in His Son Jesus Christ and in the Bible as the revealed word of God. As Parley P. Pratt, an early convert, wrote in his autobiography, "As I read it, I could not take my eyes from it. Sleep meant nothing to me. Food meant nothing to me; and I knew as surely as I lived that The Book of Mormon was divine." He went at once to see the person who was the instrument in its production. All the facts of the divine origin of The Book of Mormon were available to him. Thus confirmed by these facts and by the power of the Holy Ghost, he used his life to carry the message to his fellow men.

The prophecies of Moroni have been fulfilled. Joseph Smith's name is known for good and evil throughout the world. The spirit of God has been poured out upon all flesh; we live in a marvelous world of science and technology. The spirit of Elijah is here; the hearts of the children have turned to

their fathers. Note the great and growing interest in genealogy. A marvelous work and a wonder is before the world.

After about 40 years the Church numbered about 100,000 members (1870). It now appears in this year, 1962, there will be that number of *new convert* members.

The title page of The Book of Mormon, not written by any man in this generation, declares that this record was written by the spirit of revelation—preserved, brought forth, and translated by divine power to convince the Jew and the Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God.

The book contains this glorious promise:

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. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things. (Moroni 10:4, 5.)

At the 1962 World's Fair, the State of Washington built a large coliseum in which it displayed by television the great advance in technology and science to be expected by the turn of the century. It predicted a marvelous longer human life, fewer working days, greater opportunity for education, recreation, and travel, better homes, more ease, less strain, greater physical and material things for our welfare. But as the narration ended, the announcer declared: "But the unsatisfiable hunger of the mind and the soul remains."

This eternal hunger for a knowledge of who we are, why we are here, and our eternal immortal life, is answered by the fulness of the Gospel revealed by our Heavenly Father in The Book of Mormon.

What does The Book of Mormon tell us of Christ? Surely all God's children will sincerely seek to know. For our own blessing and to help prepare us as missionaries for our Church, we should dedicate our time and ask our Heavenly Father for His help and guidance as we read and study page by page the marvelous revealed truths in this sacred record. It is a powerful testimony that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting Himself to all nations.

—Francis W. Kirkham*

*Brother Kirkham, author of *A New Witness for Christ in America*, was called "the foremost scholar in this field" by Elder John A. Widtsoe. This book, first published in 1942, has undergone several editions. In 1950, at the request of President George Albert Smith, Brother Kirkham wrote Volume II, which answers the attacks which have been made against the divine origin of The Book of Mormon. The copyrights to both volumes have been presented to and accepted by the Brigham Young University. Brother Kirkham has devoted much of his life to educational research and other intellectual pursuits. He received his A. B. degree from the University of Michigan, the LL.B. degree from the University of Utah, and Ph.D. degree from the University of California. He has served as superintendent of the Granite School District, Utah; Utah State Director of Vocational Education; director of the National Child Welfare Association in New York City; Utah director for the National Youth Administration; and other positions in the field of education.
Library File Reference: Book of Mormon.