



# BOOK OF MORMON CENTRAL

<http://bookofmormoncentral.org/>

---

## *Learning to Love the Book of Mormon - The Book of Mormon*

Author(s): Michael J. Preece

Source: *Learning to Love the Book of Mormon*

Last Updated: August 2013 to February 2014

---

**Abstract:** This work consists of a rather comprehensive commentary on the verses of the Book of Mormon. I believe it may be read and enjoyed by the casual student of the Book of Mormon who might, for example, find use for it as a reference source. The book's intended purpose, however, is to assist the serious student who would like to begin a thorough, intensive, and searching tour through the book.

# Learning to Love the Book of Mormon

Updated August 2013 to February 2014

---

## Contents

Introduction

### **The First Book of Nephi**

1 Nephi Chapter 1  
1 Nephi Chapter 2  
1 Nephi Chapter 3  
1 Nephi Chapter 4  
1 Nephi Chapter 5  
1 Nephi Chapter 6  
1 Nephi Chapter 7  
1 Nephi Chapter 8  
1 Nephi Chapter 9  
1 Nephi Chapter 10  
1 Nephi Chapter 11  
1 Nephi Chapter 12  
1 Nephi Chapter 13  
1 Nephi Chapter 14  
1 Nephi Chapter 15  
1 Nephi Chapter 16  
1 Nephi Chapter 17  
1 Nephi Chapter 18  
1 Nephi Chapter 19  
1 Nephi Chapter 20  
1 Nephi Chapter 21  
1 Nephi Chapter 22

### **The Second Book of Nephi**

2 Nephi Chapter 1  
2 Nephi Chapter 2  
2 Nephi Chapter 3  
2 Nephi Chapter 4  
2 Nephi Chapter 5  
2 Nephi Chapter 6  
2 Nephi Chapter 7  
2 Nephi Chapter 8  
2 Nephi Chapter 9  
2 Nephi Chapter 10  
2 Nephi Chapter 11  
2 Nephi Chapter 12  
2 Nephi Chapter 13  
2 Nephi Chapter 14  
2 Nephi Chapter 15  
2 Nephi Chapter 16  
2 Nephi Chapter 17  
2 Nephi Chapter 18  
2 Nephi Chapter 19  
2 Nephi Chapter 20  
2 Nephi Chapter 21

2 Nephi Chapter 22  
2 Nephi Chapter 23  
2 Nephi Chapter 24  
2 Nephi Chapter 25  
2 Nephi Chapter 26  
2 Nephi Chapter 27  
2 Nephi Chapter 28  
2 Nephi Chapter 29  
2 Nephi Chapter 30  
2 Nephi Chapter 31  
2 Nephi Chapter 32  
2 Nephi Chapter 33

### **The Book of Jacob**

Jacob Chapter 1  
Jacob Chapter 2  
Jacob Chapter 3  
Jacob Chapter 4  
Jacob Chapter 5  
Jacob Chapter 6  
Jacob Chapter 7

### **The Book of Enos**

Enos Chapter 1

### **The Book of Jarom**

Jarom Chapter 1

### **The Book of Omni**

Omni Chapter 1

### **Words of Mormon**

Words of Mormon Chapter 1

### **The Book of Mosiah**

Mosiah Chapter 1  
Mosiah Chapter 2  
Mosiah Chapter 3  
Mosiah Chapter 4  
Mosiah Chapter 5  
Mosiah Chapter 6  
Mosiah Chapter 7  
Mosiah Chapter 8  
Mosiah Chapter 9  
Mosiah Chapter 10  
Mosiah Chapter 11  
Mosiah Chapter 12  
Mosiah Chapter 13

Mosiah Chapter 14  
Mosiah Chapter 15  
Mosiah Chapter 16  
Mosiah Chapter 17  
Mosiah Chapter 18  
Mosiah Chapter 19  
Mosiah Chapter 20  
Mosiah Chapter 21  
Mosiah Chapter 22  
Mosiah Chapter 23  
Mosiah Chapter 24  
Mosiah Chapter 25  
Mosiah Chapter 26  
Mosiah Chapter 27  
Mosiah Chapter 28  
Mosiah Chapter 29

### **The Book of Alma**

Alma Chapter 1  
Alma Chapter 2  
Alma Chapter 3  
Alma Chapter 4  
Alma Chapter 5  
Alma Chapter 6  
Alma Chapter 7  
Alma Chapter 8  
Alma Chapter 9  
Alma Chapter 10  
Alma Chapter 11  
Alma Chapter 12  
Alma Chapter 13  
Alma Chapter 14  
Alma Chapter 15  
Alma Chapter 16  
Alma Chapter 17  
Alma Chapter 18  
Alma Chapter 19  
Alma Chapter 20  
Alma Chapter 21  
Alma Chapter 22  
Alma Chapter 23  
Alma Chapter 24  
Alma Chapter 25  
Alma Chapter 26  
Alma Chapter 27  
Alma Chapter 28  
Alma Chapter 29  
Alma Chapter 30

Alma Chapter 31  
Alma Chapter 32  
Alma Chapter 33  
Alma Chapter 34  
Alma Chapter 35  
Alma Chapter 36  
Alma Chapter 37  
Alma Chapter 38  
Alma Chapter 39  
Alma Chapter 40  
Alma Chapter 41  
Alma Chapter 42  
Alma Chapter 43  
Alma Chapter 44  
Alma Chapter 45  
Alma Chapter 46  
Alma Chapter 47  
Alma Chapter 48  
Alma Chapter 49  
Alma Chapter 50  
Alma Chapter 51  
Alma Chapter 52  
Alma Chapter 53  
Alma Chapter 54  
Alma Chapter 55  
Alma Chapter 56  
Alma Chapter 57  
Alma Chapter 58  
Alma Chapter 59  
Alma Chapter 60  
Alma Chapter 61  
Alma Chapter 62  
Alma Chapter 63

### **The Book of Helaman**

Helaman Chapter 1  
Helaman Chapter 2  
Helaman Chapter 3  
Helaman Chapter 4  
Helaman Chapter 5  
Helaman Chapter 6  
Helaman Chapter 7  
Helaman Chapter 8  
Helaman Chapter 9  
Helaman Chapter 10  
Helaman Chapter 11  
Helaman Chapter 12  
Helaman Chapter 13  
Helaman Chapter 14  
Helaman Chapter 15  
Helaman Chapter 16

### **The Book of Third Nephi**

Third Nephi Chapter 1  
Third Nephi Chapter 2  
Third Nephi Chapter 3

Third Nephi Chapter 4  
Third Nephi Chapter 5  
Third Nephi Chapter 6  
Third Nephi Chapter 7  
Third Nephi Chapter 8  
Third Nephi Chapter 9  
Third Nephi Chapter 10  
Third Nephi Chapter 11  
Third Nephi Chapter 12  
Third Nephi Chapter 13  
Third Nephi Chapter 14  
Third Nephi Chapter 15  
Third Nephi Chapter 16  
Third Nephi Chapter 17  
Third Nephi Chapter 18  
Third Nephi Chapter 19  
Third Nephi Chapter 20  
Third Nephi Chapter 21  
Third Nephi Chapter 22  
Third Nephi Chapter 23  
Third Nephi Chapter 24  
Third Nephi Chapter 25  
Third Nephi Chapter 26  
Third Nephi Chapter 27  
Third Nephi Chapter 28  
Third Nephi Chapter 29  
Third Nephi Chapter 30

### **The Book of Fourth Nephi**

Fourth Nephi Chapter 1

### **The Book of Mormon**

Mormon Chapter 1  
Mormon Chapter 2  
Mormon Chapter 3  
Mormon Chapter 4  
Mormon Chapter 5  
Mormon Chapter 6  
Mormon Chapter 7  
Mormon Chapter 8  
Mormon Chapter 9

### **The Book of Ether**

Ether Chapter 1  
Ether Chapter 2  
Ether Chapter 3  
Ether Chapter 4  
Ether Chapter 5  
Ether Chapter 6  
Ether Chapter 7  
Ether Chapter 8  
Ether Chapter 9  
Ether Chapter 10  
Ether Chapter 11  
Ether Chapter 12  
Ether Chapter 13

Ether Chapter 14  
Ether Chapter 15

### **The Book of Moroni**

Moroni Chapter 1  
Moroni Chapter 2  
Moroni Chapter 3  
Moroni Chapter 4  
Moroni Chapter 5  
Moroni Chapter 6  
Moroni Chapter 7  
Moroni Chapter 8  
Moroni Chapter 9  
Moroni Chapter 10

### **Supplemental Articles**

- Introduction to the Supplemental Articles
- Biblical Prophecies of the Book of Mormon
- Book of Mormon Chapter Framework
- Book of Mormon Geography
- Book of Mormon Myths
- Brief History of Opposition to the Book of Mormon
- A Brief History of the Translation of the Book of Mormon
- Chronology of the Bible and the Book of Mormon
- Editions of the Book of Mormon
- Evidences of the Book of Mormon
- Great Apostasy
- Hebrew Language and the Book of Mormon
- Historical Setting for the Book of Isaiah
- Introduction to the Book of Isaiah
- Jerusalem at the Time of Lehi
- Jewish Pilgrimage Festivals and their Relationship to King Benjamin's Speech
- Language of the Book of Mormon
- Lehi's Life and Profession in Jerusalem
- Names in the Book of Mormon
- Narrative Historical Summary of the Book of Mormon
- Notes on the Hypothetical Map of Book of Mormon Lands

- Parable for Critics of the Book of Mormon
- Peoples of the Book of Mormon
- *Strait* and *Straight* in the Book of Mormon
- Those Confusing Book of Mormon Plates
- War and the Book of Mormon
- Pronouncing Guide
- Book of Mormon Scripture Mastery Passages
- Thirty-Five Minute History of the Book of Mormon
- Enallage in the Hebrew Bible and the Book of Mormon

### **Illustrations**

- Book of Mormon Plates
- Frankincense Trail
- Geography of Hill Amnihu
- Hypothetical Map of Book of Mormon Lands
- Liahona
- Spindles of Liahona
- Moroni's Military Strategy against Zerahemnah
- Place of Entrance
- Territories of the Tribes
- "The Box"
- Trench and Palisade
- Book of Mormon History Diagram 1 Nephi 1 through Mosiah 22
- Book of Mormon History Diagram Alma 1 through 22
- Book of Mormon Lands, a Proposed Setting

## Introduction

---

In the Church, our study and understanding of the Book of Mormon has undergone a most interesting evolution since the book's translation in 1829. As late as the early twentieth century our understanding of the book was not far advanced. Almost no serious studies of the book and its contents had been published, and the book was not heavily used in worship service discourse or in gospel instruction. There was even some skepticism about the literal divine origins of the Book within the LDS community, particularly among the more educated. By the mid 1900s, beginning with an acknowledged assumption of the book's divine origins, Sidney B. Sperry, Hugh W. Nibley, John L. Sorenson, and a few others had launched serious scholarly inquiries into the book. In the mid-1970s the rate of publications on Book of Mormon topics began to increase.

The rate of publications on the Book of Mormon particularly soared after President Ezra Taft Benson, soon after his ordination as president and prophet, called the Church to repentance in November of 1985 and at the April General Conference of the Church in 1986. The Church worked the Book of Mormon into the regular cycle of the new correlated curriculum for adults, and church leaders began using the Book of Mormon more frequently and systematically in speeches and instructional situations. Since then, the book's authenticity as an ancient scriptural record has become more firmly and generally established. Those who remain vocal doubters of the book's literal divine origins are no longer identified with the committed LDS community.

In the October General Conference in 1986, President Benson said:

We must make the Book of Mormon a center focus of our study [because] it was written for our day. The Nephites never had the book; neither did the Lamanites of ancient times. It was meant for us. . . . Under the inspiration of God, who sees all things from the beginning, [Mormon] abridged centuries of records, choosing the stories, speeches, and events that would be most helpful to us. . . .

If they [the Book of Mormon writers] saw our day then chose those things which would be of greatest worth to us, is not that how we should study the Book of Mormon? We should constantly ask ourselves, "Why did the Lord inspire Mormon (or Moroni or Alma) to include that in his record? What lesson can I learn from that to help me live in this day and age?" (*Conference Report*, October 1986, 3-7).

President Benson would later write:

It is not just that the Book of Mormon teaches us truth, though it indeed does that. It is not just that the Book of Mormon bears testimony of Christ, though it indeed does that, too. But there is something more. There is a power in the book which will begin to flow into your lives the moment you begin a serious study of the book. You will find greater power to resist temptation. You will find the power to avoid deception. You

will find the power to stay on the strait and narrow path. The scriptures are called the “words of life” (D&C 84:85), and nowhere is that more true than it is of the Book of Mormon. When you begin to hunger and thirst after those words, you will find life in greater and greater abundance (“The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion,” *Ensign*, November, 1986, 16:7).

Further:

I would like to speak about one of the most significant gifts given to the world in modern times. The gift I am thinking of is more important than any of the inventions that have come out of the industrial and technological revolutions. This is a gift of greater value to mankind than even the many wonderful advances we have seen in modern medicine. It is of greater worth to mankind than the development of flight or space travel. I speak of the gift of the Book of Mormon (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft] 1988, 51).

President Benson often reiterated the prophet Joseph Smith’s statement when Joseph referred to the Book of Mormon as “the keystone of our religion” (*TPJS*, 194). A keystone, sometimes called the headstone, is the central stone in an arch. It holds all the other stones in place, and if it is removed, the arch crumbles.

Your author has developed the habit, as I read the Book of Mormon, of reading slowly and actually looking for words or phrases or concepts whose meanings are unclear. I search for ideas that are not completely compatible with the framework of knowledge I already possess. I have been surprised to learn that I seldom have to read more than two or three verses before coming upon some puzzlement, large or small. On each occasion, I am left with an unsettled perplexity, a sort of uncomfortable disequilibrium. “Why are there so many verses in this basic scriptural work,” I have wondered, “that cause me to struggle so?” Disquieting as these feelings are, I have come to recognize them as a first step in learning some valuable new insight.

Once I come upon a phrase or verse I don’t understand, I begin my search for the answer by reading and re-reading the “offending” passage, by checking cross references, by reading supplemental explanatory materials, by sometimes asking help of my learned friends, and often praying about the verse. Mercifully, I have found that my efforts are most always fruitful. I am able to re-establish my equilibrium with the verse, and, at the same time, find myself possessing a greater insight on some particular point. With some satisfaction, I then continue on in my reading, only to find the process beginning again a verse or two later. I heartily recommend this same approach to my readers, and I have attempted in this commentary to spare you some of the pain of finding your answers. I hope I have anticipated many of your perplexities as you study the Book of Mormon, yet I suspect that each of us will encounter and be obliged to overcome our own unique set of questions. There is certainly a magic in enduring in this process, for certainly as we do so, we are “treasur[ing] up . . . the words of life” (D&C 84:85).

Your author prefers to think of this work as an “enrichment commentary.” I believe it may be read and enjoyed by the casual student of the Book of Mormon who might, for example, find use for it as a reference source. The book’s intended purpose, however, is to assist the serious student who would like to begin a thorough, intensive, and searching tour through the book. Though it may be useful to the student who wishes to skip from one verse here to another verse there, it is intended to be read sequentially. Some concepts discussed in earlier verses in the book or even earlier verses in a particular chapter may receive more casual attention when encountered later in the text.

This work consists of a rather comprehensive commentary on the verses of the Book of Mormon. Some may have reservations about the basic concept of this book. I am aware of Peter’s warning: “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of men: but Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:20-21). I have endeavored in this project not to add or detract from the scripture, but only clarify. Some will say that such a comprehensive commentary is not possible without placing a “private interpretation” on some verses. I have earnestly attempted to avoid assigning any purely individual or private interpretations to the scriptural verses. Your author is a student of the Book of Mormon and in no wise an expert. To create this volume I have prayerfully studied and utilized the thoughts and explanations of many authors and scholars whose explanations of the Book of Mormon verses might be generally considered to be “authoritative” and “scholarly.” I have collected materials from general authorities and from individuals with undeniable scholarly credentials who openly profess a spiritual witness of the book. When I have borrowed their ideas only, and have rephrased them for my purposes, no reference will be cited. When I have quoted another author’s wording, acknowledgment is provided. Indeed, I have begun and completed this project as a student who is simply trying to make it possible for myself and for others to understand the book’s sometimes difficult verses. I acknowledge the fact, however, that my private biases have not been completely eliminated.

I am also sensitive to the need to avoid proof-texting in a work such as this. That is, I have tried very hard to let the scriptures speak for themselves. An author guilty of proof-texting presupposes the doctrine and then seeks support from the scriptures. I have attempted to consider each verse in its historical and sequential context.

I have tried to include timely and necessary background information to make the book’s words, phrases, and verses really come alive. I have tried to avoid rhetoric and concentrate on the meat. It is not my purpose to preach about the principles contained in the book, rather my goal is to improve understanding. This work presupposes, in its reader, an “average” understanding of the Book of Mormon. I have tried to eliminate those commentary materials which would likely be redundant and unnecessary for my

so-called average reader. It is my intent to explain, clarify, and enrich your study and understanding of the book.

The work includes a variety of “supplemental articles” to which reference is made appropriately in the text. Among these supplemental articles is a purely historical telling of the Book of Mormon story entitled, *A Narrative Summary of the Book of Mormon*. From this “historical” summary, doctrinal materials have been omitted, but all characters, events, and places are included. It is hope that this historical account may be useful to the student who wishes to quickly “brush up” on the historical narrative.

A few “housekeeping” notes about this work are pertinent. The text of the Book of Mormon is included in bold with a blue color to clearly distinguish it from the commentary. All commentary is colored black. The paragraphs of commentary material are often preceded by a quoted phrase, also of blue color, without any punctuation except for quotation marks. These are phrases taken directly from the verse of text immediately above the commentary paragraph. The commentary then follows these quoted phrases. Sometimes the verse commentary for a group of verses will precede, rather than follow, the actual text rendering of the verses. This is done if it felt that a word of explanation before reading a passage would be helpful. Most block quotes appear in red print and are not double-indented. Finally, in this current updated version of this commentary (2014) page numbers have been eliminated, as they are considered unnecessary.

In reading the Book of Mormon, often we tend to regard some of the materials contained therein as non-essential. We wonder, “Why was the report of this battle or that incident included in the book?” As we study the book, we will assume that there is no “filler” material in the Book of Mormon. Every item in the book was placed there for a reason and purpose. In making his abridgment of the sacred records of the Book of Mormon people, Mormon wrote, “I cannot write the hundredth part of the things of my people” (Words of Mormon 1:5). Hence, we must assume that all items in the book have been included following thoughtful and inspired consideration.

There is a miracle in the scriptures. If a person reads the scriptures regularly, he or she will invariably have his or her life touched by them eventually. “Whosoever believeth on my words,” the Lord said in reference to the Book of Mormon, “them will I visit with the manifestation of my Spirit” (D&C 5:16). Isaiah prophesied that the Book of Mormon would bring a spiritually blind generation to an understanding of the doctrine of Christ (2 Nephi 27:35; Isaiah 29:24). It has been suggested by those experienced in gospel study that no individual who studies the scriptures daily will be remiss in keeping the commandments.

Our scriptures advise us of several other books of scripture yet to come forth. One day, “all things shall be revealed unto the children of men which ever have been . . . and which ever will be” (2 Nephi 27:11). Perhaps, though, we will never be privileged to receive additional scriptures until we learn to appreciate fully those we already have.



Consider the following testimony of The Book of Mormon by President Ezra Taft Benson:

We invite all men everywhere to read the Book of Mormon, another testament of Jesus Christ.

The Bible sits on the pulpit of hundreds of different religious sects. The Book of Mormon, the record of Joseph, verifies and clarifies the Bible. It removes stumbling blocks, it restores many plain and precious things. We testify that when used together, the Bible and the Book of Mormon confound false doctrines, lay down contentions, and establish peace (see 2 Nephi 3:12).

We do not have to prove that the Book of Mormon is true. The Book is its own proof. All we need to do is read it and declare it! The Book of Mormon is not on trial—the people of the world, including the members of the Church, are on trial as to what they will do with this second witness for Christ” (*Conference Report*, October 1984, 7; *Ensign* November 1984, 8).

I am deeply committed to the book as an authentic ancient scripture. The Spirit has born witness to my soul on numerous occasions as I have studied and pondered its verses. I know with all my heart that the book was written by ancient prophets who intended for their writings to come forth to the world and be translated in our day by Joseph Smith, Jr., through the “gift and power of God.”

Michael J. Preece

# The Book of Mormon

The original authors of the book of Mormon are: Mormon (chapters 1 through 7) and his son Moroni (chapters 8 and 9).

## Chapter Outline of Mormon

A brief outline of the book of Mormon, worth committing to memory, is as follows:

**Mormon 6** The Great and Final Battle Between the Lamanites and Nephite

**Mormon 8-9** Moroni's warning to the people of this final dispensation.

## Mormon Chapter 1

---

**1 And now I, Mormon, make a record of the things which I have both seen and heard, and call it the Book of Mormon.**

**verse 1** Mormon lived from about AD 310-385. In about 320 AD, when Mormon was 10 years old, the keeper of the Book of Mormon plates, Ammaron, was constrained by the Holy Ghost to hide all the sacred records, that they might be preserved. Accordingly he buried the records in a hill called Shim. After hiding the records, Ammaron was constrained to approach a ten-year-old boy named Mormon. Ammaron instructed Mormon that when he reached the age of twenty-four he should remove the plates of Nephi from their hiding place and engrave upon them his own account. Mormon's account was to be called "The Book of Mormon."

Meanwhile, at age fifteen Mormon was given command of the Nephite armies. The Nephites were wicked and unrepentant and seemed always to be fighting a losing battle.

As commanded, in about AD 335, when Mormon reached the age of twenty-four, he removed the plates of Nephi from the hill Shim and recorded upon them a full account of the wickedness and abominations of his day. This account was written by Mormon onto the large plates of Nephi. His later abridgement of his own record includes what is now Mormon chapters 1 through 5.

In about AD 380 Mormon began to abridge the large plates of Nephi, engraving his abridgement onto a new set of plates, the plates of Mormon. This abridgement included an abridgement of his own record which he had written onto the large plates of Nephi.

The war escalated, and it was apparent the wicked Nephites would be defeated. In about AD 385, the great final battle between Nephites and Lamanites near the hill Cumorah occurred. Mormon wrote an account of this battle directly onto the plates of Mormon (Mormon 6). Mormon also entered a final summary and warning to future generations (Mormon 7). Thus these chapters (6-7) are unabridged records. By this

time, Mormon was old, and he knew this would be the final battle of his people. He buried all the records entrusted to him in the Hill Cumorah except for the small plates of Nephi and the plates of Mormon which he delivered to the care of his son, Moroni. Moroni also maintained access to the plates buried in Cumorah. Moroni entered more of Mormon's teachings onto the plates of Mormon including a letter Mormon had written to his son Moroni. These teachings of Mormon became Mormon 7.

**2 And about the time that Ammaron hid up the records unto the Lord, he came unto me, (I being about ten years of age, and I began to be learned somewhat after the manner of the learning of my people) and Ammaron said unto me: I perceive that thou art a sober child, and art quick to observe;**

**verse 2 “thou art a sober child”** We probably ought not to think of the child Mormon as somber and gloomy. Rather Ammaron’s intent was likely that Mormon was thoughtful, serious-minded, and mature beyond his years.

**“quick to observe”** The word *observe* has two distinct meanings. First, it means to look, to see, or to notice. It also means to obey or to keep (see D&C 54:6). Both of these meanings doubtless applied to the young Mormon. He was bright and perceptive, and he was also obedient.

**3 Therefore, when ye are about twenty and four years old I would that ye should remember the things that ye have observed concerning this people; and when ye are of that age go to the land Antum, unto a hill which shall be called Shim; and there have I deposited unto the Lord all the sacred engravings concerning this people.**

**verse 3 “a hill which shall be called Shim”** The word *Shim* or *Xim* in the Mayan language means corn. It is interesting that there is a hill called Cintepec which is located east of Lake Catemaco in the Tuxtla mountain range in the State of Veracruz, Mexico. “Tepec” means hill or mountain in the Nahuatl (Aztec) language. “Cin” means corn. Hence, the hill Cintepec means Corn Hill. This hill is located near the hill Vigia. The latter hill is a reasonable candidate for the complex of hills—Shim and Cumorah. See the *Hypothetical Map of Book of Mormon Lands*.

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

**verse 4 “plates of Nephi”** These are the large plates of Nephi. As mentioned previously, Mormon originally wrote the account of his history onto the large plates of Nephi. He later abridged this record and wrote a shorter version onto the plates of Mormon (This abridgement now comprises Mormon chapter 1-5; see also Mormon 2:18).

**"the remainder shall ye leave in the place where they are"** The only other plates we know of in this collection are the small plates of Nephi and the brass plates of Laban.

**5 And I, Mormon, being a descendant of Nephi, (and my father's name was Mormon) I remembered the things which Ammaron commanded me.**

**verse 5** We learn that Mormon was really Mormon, Jr. John M. Butler has found some remarkable similarities between Mormon, Jr., and Joseph Smith, Jr. Brother Butler suggests that Mormon was a type for the Prophet Joseph ("The 'Author' and the 'Finisher' of the Book of Mormon," in *The Book of Mormon, Fourth Nephi Through Moroni, From Zion to Destruction*, edited by Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr., a FARMS publication, 61-68). Let us consider a few of the similarities.

Both were sober, thoughtful, and bright as children (Mormon 1:2; Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother*, 67). Both families moved to other locations when the boys were ten to eleven years old (Mormon 1:6; JS-H 1:3). Both saw the spiritual deficiencies of their people and importuned God on the matter. Both had "First Visions" at ages fourteen and fifteen (Mormon 1:14- 15; JS-H 1:7, 10-20). Both men were tutored by older prophets who had hid up records for their future use—Mormon by Ammaron and Joseph by Moroni. Both were also tutored by angels—Mormon by the three translated Nephite disciples (Mormon 8:10-11), and Joseph by numerous heavenly messengers (H. Donl Peterson, "Personages Who Appeared to the prophet Joseph Smith," in *Joseph Smith: The Prophet, The Man*, edited by Susan Easton Black and Charles D. Tate, Jr. 184-86). Both were charismatic leaders of their people. Both were men of large stature (Mormon 2:1; George Q. Cannon, *Life of Joseph Smith the Prophet*, 19) and strong enough to protect the plates from falling into the hands of evil people (see Mormon 6:6). Although both were large and physically fit as youths, neither Mormon nor Joseph received the plates appointed them until they were spiritually mature enough to perform the labors required of them. Several years of testing and training went by after Ammaron and Moroni revealed to their respective charges the missions they were to fulfill regarding the record of the Nephites. Mormon was told to record his observations of Nephite society on the plates when he was twenty-four years old (Mormon 1:3-4). Joseph translated the plates of Mormon and the small plates of Nephi when he was in his twenty-fourth year (JS-H 1:66-67) and published them to the world in March of 1830, shortly after his twenty-fourth birthday. The adversary constantly struggled against both these men. Both gathered their people into one body trying to escape persecution—Mormon to the Hill Cumorah and Joseph to Nauvoo. Both faced "extermination orders" —Joseph from the Missouri governor, and Mormon from the Lamanites. In the end both sealed their testimonies with their blood.

It is obvious that both Mormon and Joseph Smith, Jr., were among the noble and great ones before the foundation of the earth and were both chosen before they were

born to perform the work they did for the Lord (see Abraham 3:22-23; D&C 138:38, 53; *JD*, 7:290). Brother Butler concluded his article: “Today we may draw nearer to Christ—the author and the finisher of [our] faith” (Moroni 6:54)—because of the efforts of Mormon (the “author”) and Joseph Smith (the “finisher”)—of the Book of Mormon.

**6 And it came to pass that I, being eleven years old, was carried by my father into the land southward, even to the land of Zarahemla.**

**7 The whole face of the land had become covered with buildings, and the people were as numerous almost, as it were the sand of the sea.**

**8 And it came to pass in this year there began to be a war between the Nephites, who consisted of the Nephites and the Jacobites and the Josephites and the Zoramites; and this war was between the Nephites, and the Lamanites and the Lemuelites and the Ishmaelites.**

**verse 8** Here are mentioned the “-ites” which existed at the time. For a discussion of the significance of these group names, see the commentaries for Jacob 1:13 and 4 Nephi 1:38.

**9 Now the Lamanites and the Lemuelites and the Ishmaelites were called Lamanites, and the two parties were Nephites and Lamanites.**

**verse 9** The two general divisions of people, disregarding the subgroups, were Nephites and Lamanites.

**10 And it came to pass that the war began to be among them in the borders of Zarahemla, by the waters of Sidon.**

**verse 10** This particular battle between the Nephites and Lamanites seems to have had its beginnings in the mountains in southern Zarahemla near the head waters of the River Sidon.

**11 And it came to pass that the Nephites had gathered together a great number of men, even to exceed the number of thirty thousand. And it came to pass that they did have in this same year a number of battles, in which the Nephites did beat the Lamanites and did slay many of them.**

**12 And it came to pass that the Lamanites withdrew their design, and there was peace settled in the land; and peace did remain for the space of about four years, that there was no bloodshed.**

**13 But wickedness did prevail upon the face of the whole land, insomuch that the Lord did take away his beloved disciples, and the work of miracles and of healing did cease because of the iniquity of the people.**

**verse 13** The Lord’s removal from among the people of the three translated Nephite disciples should probably be regarded as a type of cursing of the people or the

withdrawal of a significant blessing from among them because of their wickedness. We will learn in the next verse that in addition to withdrawing his three disciples, he also generally withdrew the Spirit and any spiritual gifts, though there were doubtless a few, including Mormon, who still maintained “contact” with the Spirit.

**14 And there were no gifts from the Lord, and the Holy Ghost did not come upon any, because of their wickedness and unbelief.**

**15 And I, being fifteen years of age and being somewhat of a sober mind, therefore I was visited of the Lord, and tasted and knew of the goodness of Jesus.**

**verse 15** It is interesting to note that Mormon was “visited of the Lord” at about the same age (15 years) as was Joseph Smith, Jr. (14 years).

**16 And I did endeavor to preach unto this people, but my mouth was shut, and I was forbidden that I should preach unto them; for behold they had wilfully rebelled against their God; and the beloved disciples were taken away out of the land, because of their iniquity.**

**verse 16** It was probably the inspiration of the Lord which “shut” the mouth of Mormon. The Lord truly withdrew his influence from among this ungodly people. During his Old World ministry the Lord said, “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you” (Matthew 7:6).

**17 But I did remain among them, but I was forbidden to preach unto them, because of the hardness of their hearts; and because of the hardness of their hearts the land was cursed for their sake.**

**verse 17** The phrase “the land was cursed for their sake” simply means that because of the people and their wickedness the land was cursed for the time being. It does not necessarily mean that the Lord cursed the land so that it would not ultimately be a blessing and benefit to the people.

**18 And these Gadianton robbers, who were among the Lamanites, did infest the land, insomuch that the inhabitants thereof began to hide up their treasures in the earth; and they became slippery, because the Lord had cursed the land, that they could not hold them, nor retain them again.**

**verse 18** “they became slippery . . . that they could not hold them, nor retain them again” This phrase refers to the people’s treasures. Gadianton robbers were so skilled that no one could prevent their valued possessions from being stolen. Hugh Nibley commented on this period:

Again “the robbers of Gadianton did spread over all the face of the land” (4 Nephi 1:46), while business boomed as never before—“and gold and silver did they lay up in store in abundance, and did traffic in all manner of traffic” (4 Nephi 1:46). But the Gadiantons were tops at the grabbing game, and before long everybody started hiding up his possessions for security (Mormon 1:18). In vain—nothing could secure their valuables from gravitating into the competent hands of the society. In the end the Nephites had to settle for formal treaties with the Gadiantons as an independent power, sharing their lands with them on a permanent basis (Mormon 2:28-29) (*Since Cumorah*, 368).

**19 And it came to pass that there were sorceries, and witchcrafts, and magics; and the power of the evil one was wrought upon all the face of the land, even unto the fulfilling of all the words of Abinadi, and also Samuel the Lamanite.**

**verse 19** It is interesting that the record we have of Abinadi’s teachings in Mosiah 11-17 contains no mention of his prophesying of “sorceries, and witchcrafts, and magics.” This fact has been regarded as evidence that Mormon, as he abridged the account of the prophet Abinadi did not include all of the teachings of Abinadi even though we know that the senior Alma, as he wrote the original account of Abinadi’s teachings, did include all of those teachings in his record (Mosiah 17:4).

## Mormon Chapter 2

---

1 And it came to pass in that same year there began to be a war again between the Nephites and the Lamanites. And notwithstanding I being young, was large in stature; therefore the people of Nephi appointed me that I should be their leader, or the leader of their armies.

2 Therefore it came to pass that in my sixteenth year I did go forth at the head of an army of the Nephites, against the Lamanites; therefore three hundred and twenty and six years had passed away.

**verse 2** “three hundred and twenty and six years had passed away” Time is still being reckoned by the birth of the Savior.

It is truly remarkable that at the age of fifteen, Mormon possessed all the prowess—physical, intellectual, and spiritual—to so inspire the confidence of his people.

3 And it came to pass that in the three hundred and twenty and seventh year the Lamanites did come upon us with exceedingly great power, insomuch that they did frighten my armies; therefore they would not fight, and they began to retreat towards the north countries.

4 And it came to pass that we did come to the city of Angola, and we did take possession of the city, and make preparations to defend ourselves against the Lamanites. And it came to pass that we did fortify the city with our might; but notwithstanding all our fortifications the Lamanites did come upon us and did drive us out of the city.

5 And they did also drive us forth out of the land of David.

6 And we marched forth and came to the land of Joshua, which was in the borders west by the seashore.

**verses 3-6** We do not know the locations of Angola, the land of David, and the land of Joshua, though it seems likely they were in the land Desolation north of the narrow neck of land.

7 And it came to pass that we did gather in our people as fast as it were possible, that we might get them together in one body.

8 But behold, the land was filled with robbers and with Lamanites; and notwithstanding the great destruction which hung over my people, they did not repent of their evil doings; therefore there was blood and carnage spread throughout all the face of the land, both on the part of the Nephites and also on the part of the Lamanites; and it was one complete revolution throughout all the face of the land.



**verse 8** “it was one complete revolution throughout all the face of the land” The entire land was embroiled in war and carnage.

**9** And now, the Lamanites had a king, and his name was Aaron; and he came against us with an army of forty and four thousand. And behold, I withstood him with forty and two thousand. And it came to pass that I beat him with my army that he fled before me. And behold, all this was done, and three hundred and thirty years had passed away.

**verse 8** “and his name was Aaron” This victory over the forces of Aaron was apparently Mormon’s first victory as a young Nephite commander. Some years later the two sides will entered into a treaty ceding the land northward to the Nephites and the land southward to the Lamanites (Mormon 2:28-29). After ten years of peace, this same Aaron will send an epistle to Mormon, warning of Lamanite preparations for battle (Mormon 3:4). In a letter to his son Moroni, Mormon will speak of the “awful brutality” of Aaron’s army (Moroni 9:17).

**10** And it came to pass that the Nephites began to repent of their iniquity, and began to cry even as had been prophesied by Samuel the prophet; for behold no man could keep that which was his own, for the thieves, and the robbers, and the murderers, and the magic art, and the witchcraft which was in the land.

**11** Thus there began to be a mourning and a lamentation in all the land because of these things, and more especially among the people of Nephi.

**12** And it came to pass that when I, Mormon, saw their lamentation and their mourning and their sorrow before the Lord, my heart did begin to rejoice within me, knowing the mercies and the long-suffering of the Lord, therefore supposing that he would be merciful unto them that they would again become a righteous people.

**13** But behold this my joy was vain, for their sorrowing was not unto repentance, because of the goodness of God; but it was rather the sorrowing of the damned, because the Lord would not always suffer them to take happiness in sin.

**verse 13** “it was rather the sorrowing of the damned, because the Lord would not always suffer them to take happiness in sin” This intriguing phenomenon is exemplified today by the widespread anguish over the disease AIDS in the gay communities of the world. There is no thought to repent of the sexual misconduct that lies at the base of the disease, as that would interfere with their individual “freedoms.” The apostle Paul wrote of a “godly sorrow [which] worketh repentance.” He also described “the sorrow of the world [which] worketh death” (2 Corinthians 7:10). The sorrow of the damned comes from hopelessness and despair, which “cometh because of iniquity” (Moroni 10:22), and not from broken and contrite

hearts. Godly sorrow is a gift of the Spirit and is a first step in repentance. For a discussion of the concept of godly sorrow, see the commentary for Mosiah 26:29.

**14 And they did not come unto Jesus with broken hearts and contrite spirits, but they did curse God, and wish to die. Nevertheless they would struggle with the sword for their lives.**

**verse 14** Note here the awful and pitiful ambivalence of the wicked. There is no desire to continue to live, yet they are fearful of death because of the judgment which follows.

**15 And it came to pass that my sorrow did return unto me again, and I saw that the day of grace was passed with them, both temporally and spiritually; for I saw thousands of them hewn down in open rebellion against their God, and heaped up as dung upon the face of the land. And thus three hundred and forty and four years had passed away.**

**verse 15 “the day of grace was passed with them”** Mormon perceived that it was too late for the people of Nephi to repent. They were past feeling. The die was cast. They had sinned to the point where they had no desire or power to avail themselves of the grace of Christ. They would surely be destroyed spiritually. President Spencer W. Kimball wrote, “Sin is intensely habit-forming and sometimes moves men to the tragic point of no return” (*Miracle of Forgiveness*, 117).

**16 And it came to pass that in the three hundred and forty and fifth year the Nephites did begin to flee before the Lamanites; and they were pursued until they came even to the land of Jashon, before it was possible to stop them in their retreat.**

**17 And now, the city of Jashon was near the land where Ammaron had deposited the records unto the Lord, that they might not be destroyed. And behold I had gone according to the word of Ammaron, and taken the plates of Nephi, and did make a record according to the words of Ammaron.**

**verse 17** Mormon had actually gone for the first time to retrieve the plates some ten years earlier at age 24 (AD 335). He is now, therefore, about 34 years old.

**18 And upon the plates of Nephi I did make a full account of all the wickedness and abominations; but upon these plates I did forbear to make a full account of their wickedness and abominations, for behold, a continual scene of wickedness and abominations has been before mine eyes ever since I have been sufficient to behold the ways of man.**

**verse 18** Here it is clearly stated that on the large plates of Nephi, Mormon engraved a full and unabridged account of the history of his people. But on the plates of

Mormon (“these plates”) he recorded only an abridged telling—“I did forbear to make a full account.” In other words, he did not record a full account on the plates of Mormon.

“ever since I have been sufficient to behold the ways of man” The meaning of this charming phrase is evident.

**19 And wo is me because of their wickedness; for my heart has been filled with sorrow because of their wickedness, all my days; nevertheless, I know that I shall be lifted up at the last day.**

**verse 19 “I know that I shall be lifted up at the last day”** Mormon has been blessed with the gift of hope. Further, he is blessed to know he will be exalted. He has been blessed to have had his calling and election made sure, to receive the “more sure word of prophecy” (D&C 131:5). For a discussion of the concept of having one’s calling and election made sure, see the commentary for Helaman 10:4-7 and also *Ye Shall Know of the Doctrine*, volume 2, chapter 16, *Calling and Election Made Sure*.

**20 And it came to pass that in this year the people of Nephi again were hunted and driven. And it came to pass that we were driven forth until we had come northward to the land which was called Shem.**

**21 And it came to pass that we did fortify the city of Shem, and we did gather in our people as much as it were possible, that perhaps we might save them from destruction.**

**22 And it came to pass in the three hundred and forty and sixth year they began to come upon us again.**

**23 And it came to pass that I did speak unto my people, and did urge them with great energy, that they would stand boldly before the Lamanites and fight for their wives, and their children, and their houses, and their homes.**

**24 And my words did arouse them somewhat to vigor, insomuch that they did not flee from before the Lamanites, but did stand with boldness against them.**

**25 And it came to pass that we did contend with an army of thirty thousand against an army of fifty thousand. And it came to pass that we did stand before them with such firmness that they did flee from before us.**

**26 And it came to pass that when they had fled we did pursue them with our armies, and did meet them again, and did beat them; nevertheless the strength of the Lord was not with us; yea, we were left to ourselves, that the Spirit of the Lord did not abide in us; therefore we had become weak like unto our brethren.**

**verse 26 “we had become weak like unto our brethren”** The Nephites were without the Spirit of God because of their rampant iniquity. They had nothing left of the strength of the Lord given to the righteous by the Spirit of the Holy Ghost. The converted Lamanite king Lamoni previously had said to Ammon, one of the sons of Mosiah, “I know, in the strength of the Lord thou canst do all things” (Alma 20:4).

27 And my heart did sorrow because of this the great calamity of my people, because of their wickedness and their abominations. But behold, we did go forth against the Lamanites and the robbers of Gadianton, until we had again taken possession of the lands of our inheritance.

28 And the three hundred and forty and ninth year had passed away. And in the three hundred and fiftieth year we made a treaty with the Lamanites and the robbers of Gadianton, in which we did get the lands of our inheritance divided.

29 And the Lamanites did give unto us the land northward, yea, even to the narrow passage which led into the land southward. And we did give unto the Lamanites all the land southward.

**verse 29** In the treaty the Nephites received all land north of the narrow neck of land, and the Lamanites receive all land south. Keep in mind that the “narrow passage” is not synonymous with the narrow neck of land. Rather the narrow passage is the same as the “narrow pass” mentioned in Alma 50:34. For the convenience of the reader, the explanation of that geographical feature is repeated here.

Just exactly what is this “narrow pass” referred to here and elsewhere in the Book of Mormon (Alma 52:9, Mormon 2:29, and Mormon 3:5)? It is apparent from these verses of scripture, that the pass is not the same as the narrow neck of land itself. Rather it is some kind of specific feature of and within the neck itself. It is clear that parties passed near the city of Bountiful to gain access to this pass from the eastern seashore area. Here a Nephite army led by Teancum intercepted Morianton’s fleeing group just as both groups arrived at a very specific point: “the narrow pass which led by the sea into the land northward, yea, by the sea, on the west and on the east.” John L. Sorenson has provided a compelling solution to this puzzle. He suggests that the answer lies in a careful study of the specific geographic details of the isthmus of Tehuantepec (see the map, *Book of Mormon Lands, a Proposed Setting*, and the article *Book of Mormon Geography*). Dr. Sorenson observed: “An irregular sandstone and gravel formation appears as a ridge averaging a couple of miles wide and rising 150 to 200 feet above the surrounding country running west from the lower Coatzacoalcos River.” This formation provides the only reliable year-round route from the east coast area of the land Bountiful “northward” into the land Desolation or to what is now Veracruz. “A great deal of land on either side of this ridge is flooded periodically, as much as twelve feet in the rainy season. At times during that season this ridge pass would indeed lead ‘by the sea, on the west and on the east’ for the water in the flooded basins would be on both sides of the ridge and would have barred travel as effectively as the sea with which the flood waters were continuous. Even in the dry season, the lower terrain is choked with thorny brush, laced with lagoons, and rendered impractical as a customary route. This formation runs from near Minatitlan, the modern city on the

Coatzacoalcos, west about twenty miles to the city of Acayucan (*An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*, 43).

## Mormon Chapter 3

---

**1 And it came to pass that the Lamanites did not come to battle again until ten years more had passed away. And behold, I had employed my people, the Nephites, in preparing their lands and their arms against the time of battle.**

**2 And it came to pass that the Lord did say unto me: Cry unto this people— Repent ye, and come unto me, and be ye baptized, and build up again my church, and ye shall be spared.**

**verse 2** It is truly remarkable that the Lord, yet again, extends to the Nephites an offer of mercy. You and I might well judge the Nephites to be well past the point of no return.

**3 And I did cry unto this people, but it was in vain; and they did not realize that it was the Lord that had spared them, and granted unto them a chance for repentance. And behold they did harden their hearts against the Lord their God.**

**verses 1-3** Obviously the Nephites listened to Mormon only as their military and political leader, not as a prophet.

**verse 3 “they did harden their hearts against the Lord their God”** To harden one’s heart is to willfully close one’s heart against the Holy Spirit, in rebellion against God, in order to accomplish one’s own will. The resulting hard-heartedness can result in the Spirit’s ceasing to strive with a person and in spiritual death. Hard-heartedness can lead progressively from indulging oneself somewhat in wrongdoing to gross wickedness. Hard-heartedness is associated with complaining or murmuring, unbelief, blindness of mind, anger, impenitence, stiffneckedness, pride and sexual sin, desire for vengeance, abominations, cruelty, and murder. Hard-heartedness restricts spiritual understanding and can eventually lead to “know[ing] nothing” concerning the mysteries of God, and then being “taken captive by the devil” (Alma 12:9-11). It resists the softening action of the Holy Spirit and its attendant virtues, like meekness, compassion, and humility. It renders one vulnerable to lies, and blind to divine signs and wonders. It flourishes in conditions of ease and prosperity.

**4 And it came to pass that after this tenth year had passed away, making, in the whole, three hundred and sixty years from the coming of Christ, the king of the Lamanites sent an epistle unto me, which gave unto me to know that they were preparing to come again to battle against us.**

**5 And it came to pass that I did cause my people that they should gather themselves together at the land Desolation, to a city which was in the borders, by the narrow pass which led into the land southward.**

**verse 5** “to a city which was in the borders” The term *borders* here likely refers to mountains (see the commentary for 1 Nephi 2:5).

“by the narrow pass” See the commentary for Mormon 2:29.

**6** And there we did place our armies, that we might stop the armies of the Lamanites, that they might not get possession of any of our lands; therefore we did fortify against them with all our force.

**verse 6** Strategically, it was reasonable to try to defend the “narrow pass.”

**7** And it came to pass that in the three hundred and sixty and first year the Lamanites did come down to the city of Desolation to battle against us; and it came to pass that in that year we did beat them, insomuch that they did return to their own lands again.

**8** And in the three hundred and sixty and second year they did come down again to battle. And we did beat them again, and did slay a great number of them, and their dead were cast into the sea.

**9** And now, because of this great thing which my people, the Nephites, had done, they began to boast in their own strength, and began to swear before the heavens that they would avenge themselves of the blood of their brethren who had been slain by their enemies.

**verses 4-9** The Nephites had achieved a significant military victory. Even at this point it was probably not too late for them to repent. Rather than recognizing the delivering hand of the Lord, praising him in gratitude for their victory, and repenting of their sins, they instead boasted in their own strength and gloried in their own achievements.

**verse 9** “they . . . began to swear before the heavens” The Nephites, in their depravity, swore an evil oath to destroy the Lamanites. In doing so they were profaning and blaspheming God's sacred name. They had now placed the figurative nail in their own spiritual coffin.

**10** And they did swear by the heavens, and also by the throne of God, that they would go up to battle against their enemies, and would cut them off from the face of the land.

**11** And it came to pass that I, Mormon, did utterly refuse from this time forth to be a commander and a leader of this people, because of their wickedness and abomination.

**verse 11** Mormon had consented to lead the Nephite armies when they were battling for survival against the Lamanites. Now that the Nephites desired to become the aggressors, Mormon refused to lead them.

**12 Behold, I had led them, notwithstanding their wickedness I had led them many times to battle, and had loved them, according to the love of God which was in me, with all my heart; and my soul had been poured out in prayer unto my God all the day long for them; nevertheless, it was without faith, because of the hardness of their hearts.**

**verse 12 “it was without faith, because of the hardness of their hearts”**

Even though Mormon had poured out his soul in prayer for his people, he admits that he did so without any hope that the Lord would be able to redeem his people. See the discussion of hard-heartedness in the commentary for verse 3 above.

**13 And thrice have I delivered them out of the hands of their enemies, and they have repented not of their sins.**

**14 And when they had sworn by all that had been forbidden them by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, that they would go up unto their enemies to battle, and avenge themselves of the blood of their brethren, behold the voice of the Lord came unto me, saying:**

**15 Vengeance is mine, and I will repay; and because this people repented not after I had delivered them, behold, they shall be cut off from the face of the earth.**

**16 And it came to pass that I utterly refused to go up against mine enemies; and I did even as the Lord had commanded me; and I did stand as an idle witness to manifest unto the world the things which I saw and heard, according to the manifestations of the Spirit which had testified of things to come.**

**verse 16** Mormon knew that his people would not emerge victorious. The Lord commanded Mormon to serve as a witness against his own people. This standing as a witness was to serve as a warning, not only to his own people, but to all the world in this final dispensation of the sure justice of God.

**verses 17-22** Now that Mormon has lost all hope for his own people, he turns his attentions to prophesying of the “Gentiles” and the scattered remnants of Israel in this final dispensation.

**17 Therefore I write unto you, Gentiles, and also unto you, house of Israel, when the work shall commence, that ye shall be about to prepare to return to the land of your inheritance;**

**verse 17 “I write unto you, Gentiles, and also unto you, house of Israel”** By now the reader should have no trouble understanding the explanation of the terms Gentiles and house of Israel. The Gentiles are the citizens of the great Gentile nation, the United States of America. Many of these are blood Israelites, especially of the house of Joseph. The term “house of Israel” refers to the scattered Israelites throughout the world at the time of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.



**“when the work shall commence”** This is the work of gathering of Israel in the latter days following the restoration of the gospel.

**18 Yea, behold, I write unto all the ends of the earth; yea, unto you, twelve tribes of Israel, who shall be judged according to your works by the twelve whom Jesus chose to be his disciples in the land of Jerusalem.**

**19 And I write also unto the remnant of this people, who shall also be judged by the twelve whom Jesus chose in this land; and they shall be judged by the other twelve whom Jesus chose in the land of Jerusalem.**

**verses 18-19** There is a hierarchy of judges who, under Christ, shall judge the righteous. Here we learn that the twelve tribes of Israel will be judged by the twelve apostles chosen in the Old World. The remnant of the Book of Mormon people will be judged by the twelve apostles called in the Western Hemisphere, and the twelve Nephite apostles will be judged in turn by the Old World twelve. This judging applies only to the righteous—“even as many as have loved me and kept my commandments, and none else” (D&C 29:12; see also 13)—as Christ alone will issue the decrees of damnation to the wicked (*Millennial Messiah*, 520). The word *judgment* here may be misleading. The usual meaning of the word is to pass sentence or determine innocence or guilt. This interpretation, however, gives only half of the broader meaning as used in the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon speaks of the judgment of Christ as a time of reward and rejoicing, as well as a time of accountability.

The significance of this judging is unknown since we know that the partial judgment at the time of death will likely be performed by the Savior himself—“He employeth no servant there (2 Nephi 9:41).” Also, as has been discussed previously, the judgment is in the resurrection, since we are raised with celestial, terrestrial, telestial, or perdition bodies. Doubtless this formal judgment of the righteous will be more a time of great celebration than a time of critical judging.

**20 And these things doth the Spirit manifest unto me; therefore I write unto you all. And for this cause I write unto you, that ye may know that ye must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, yea, every soul who belongs to the whole human family of Adam; and ye must stand to be judged of your works, whether they be good or evil;**

**verse 20** Mormon is still addressing the latter-day Gentiles and the scattered house of Israel. His writings in the Book of Mormon are for these same groups.

**21 And also that ye may believe the gospel of Jesus Christ, which ye shall have among you; and also that the Jews, the covenant people of the Lord, shall have other witness besides him whom they saw and heard, that Jesus, whom they slew, was the very Christ and the very God.**

**verse 21 “that the Jews, the covenant people of the Lord, shall have other witness besides him whom they saw and heard”** Mormon is writing also to the Jews so that his writings, the Book of Mormon, will be another witness against them, in addition to the witness of the Lord himself who lived among them in mortality. Indeed, the Book of Mormon will be “Another Testament of Jesus Christ.”

**22 And I would that I could persuade all ye ends of the earth to repent and prepare to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.**

## Mormon Chapter 4

---

**1 And now it came to pass that in the three hundred and sixty and third year the Nephites did go up with their armies to battle against the Lamanites, out of the land Desolation.**

**verse 1** The Nephite armies, as the aggressor, traveled through the narrow pass and entered the Lamanites' lands to do battle against them "out of," or south of the land Desolation.

**2 And it came to pass that the armies of the Nephites were driven back again to the land of Desolation. And while they were yet weary, a fresh army of the Lamanites did come upon them; and they had a sore battle, insomuch that the Lamanites did take possession of the city Desolation, and did slay many of the Nephites, and did take many prisoners.**

**3 And the remainder did flee and join the inhabitants of the city Teancum. Now the city Teancum lay in the borders by the seashore; and it was also near the city Desolation.**

**verse 3 "Now the city Teancum lay in the borders by the seashore"** Again, This phrase suggests that the city of Teancum was located in the mountains ("in the borders") by the seashore, likely the eastern seashore.

**4 And it was because the armies of the Nephites went up unto the Lamanites that they began to be smitten; for were it not for that, the Lamanites could have had no power over them.**

**verse 4** The Nephites had been taught "never to give an offense" (Alma 48:14; 43:46). This teaching had moral and spiritual value as well as tactical value. From a strategic point of view, if the Nephites had maintained a purely defensive strategy they would have been more difficult to defeat. When an army is defending its own land, families, and social structure, the soldiers are more highly motivated. If two opposing armies are evenly matched, the "economy of force" factor favors the defensive strategy. It requires fewer soldiers to man a defensive fortification than attack that same fortification (*Warfare in the Book of Mormon*, edited by Stephen D. Ricks and William J. Hamblin, 276-77).

**5 But, behold, the judgments of God will overtake the wicked; and it is by the wicked that the wicked are punished; for it is the wicked that stir up the hearts of the children of men unto bloodshed.**

**verse 5 "it is by the wicked that the wicked are punished"** A wicked man is his own worst enemy. Not only does he bring upon himself the judgments of God, but

by his wicked deeds he often brings upon himself the wrath of his fellow man and other punitive natural consequences. C. S. Lewis observed:

The possibility of pain is inherent in the very existence of a world where souls can meet. When souls become wicked they will certainly use this possibility to hurt one another; and this, perhaps, accounts for four-fifths of the suffering of men. It is men, not God, who have produced racks, whips, prisons, slavery, guns, bayonets, and bombs; it is by human avarice or human stupidity, not by the churlishness of nature, that we have poverty and overwork (*The Problem of Pain*, 89).

**6 And it came to pass that the Lamanites did make preparations to come against the city Teancum.**

**7 And it came to pass in the three hundred and sixty and fourth year the Lamanites did come against the city Teancum, that they might take possession of the city Teancum also.**

**verse 7** One interesting Mesoamerican archaeological note is perhaps pertinent here. During this period in Mesoamerica there was great activity in trade beginning to develop. A major trade route was developing between what is now Mexico and the country of Guatemala. The Nephites were literally in the way of the only major trade route between these two trade centers, as the Nephites lived strategically near the isthmus of Tehuantepec. “Before an adequate trade relationship could be established with Mexico, the Lamanites in Guatemala [land of Nephi] needed to get rid of the tenacious Nephites” (Joseph L. Allen, *Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon*, 396).

**8 And it came to pass that they were repulsed and driven back by the Nephites. And when the Nephites saw that they had driven the Lamanites they did again boast of their own strength; and they went forth in their own might, and took possession again of the city Desolation.**

**9 And now all these things had been done, and there had been thousands slain on both sides, both the Nephites and the Lamanites.**

**10 And it came to pass that the three hundred and sixty and sixth year had passed away, and the Lamanites came again upon the Nephites to battle; and yet the Nephites repented not of the evil they had done, but persisted in their wickedness continually.**

**11 And it is impossible for the tongue to describe, or for man to write a perfect description of the horrible scene of the blood and carnage which was among the people, both of the Nephites and of the Lamanites; and every heart was hardened, so that they delighted in the shedding of blood continually.**

**verse 11** Taking pleasure in the shedding of another’s blood, is probably the ultimate depth of spiritual depravity. Certainly these Nephites and Lamanites were “past feeling” (1 Nephi 17:45) and hopelessly, spiritually lost.

**12 And there never had been so great wickedness among all the children of Lehi, nor even among all the house of Israel, according to the words of the Lord, as was among this people.**

**13 And it came to pass that the Lamanites did take possession of the city Desolation, and this because their number did exceed the number of the Nephites.**

**14 And they did also march forward against the city Teancum, and did drive the inhabitants forth out of her, and did take many prisoners both women and children, and did offer them up as sacrifices unto their idol gods.**

**verse 14** This is the first time human sacrifice is mentioned in the Book of Mormon. This heinous practice continued for the next 1,200 years. When the Spaniards arrived in the Mexico City Valley in AD 1519, they observed this diabolical practice being performed by the Aztecs. Bernal Diaz, a soldier in Cortez's army wrote: "When they sacrifice a wretched Indian they saw open the chest with stone knives and hasten to tear out the palpitating heart and blood, and offer it to their idols, in whose name the sacrifice is made. Then they cut off the thighs, arms, and head and eat the former at feasts and banquets, and the head they hang up on some beams, and the body of the man sacrificed is not eaten but given to these fierce animals" (Bernal Diaz, *The Discovery and Conquest of Mexico—1517-1521*. Translated by A.P. Maudslay, [Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York: The Noonday Press, 1972]; see also Mormon 4:15, 21 and Moroni 9:10). In addition, evidence for these heinous practices at about the same period of time have been revealed by archaeological excavations (see, for example, Sergio Gomez Chavez, "La funcion social del sacrificio humano en Teotihuacan: Un intento para formalizar su estudio e interpretation," in *La epoca clasica: Nuevos Hallazgos, nuevas ideas*, ed. Amalia Cardos de Mendez [Mexico: Museo Nacional de Antropologia, Instituto Nacional de Antropologia e Historia, 1990], 147-62; see also Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*, 346).

In spite of the Lamanites' horrific practice of human sacrifice, Mormon will later admit, in a letter to his son Moroni, that the Lamanites were no more wicked than his own people (Moroni 9:7-10).

**15 And it came to pass that in the three hundred and sixty and seventh year, the Nephites being angry because the Lamanites had sacrificed their women and their children, that they did go against the Lamanites with exceedingly great anger, insomuch that they did beat again the Lamanites, and drive them out of their lands.**

**verse 15** This would be the last victory the Nephites ever gained over the Lamanites.

16 And the Lamanites did not come again against the Nephites until the three hundred and seventy and fifth year.

17 And in this year they did come down against the Nephites with all their powers; and they were not numbered because of the greatness of their number.

**verse 17** “they did come down against the Nephites” You likely have been noticing that the Nephites “go up” to attack the Lamanites, and the Lamanites “go down” or “come down” to attack the Nephites. It is obvious that the Lamanites, generally lived at a higher altitude than the Nephites.

18 And from this time forth did the Nephites gain no power over the Lamanites, but began to be swept off by them even as a dew before the sun.

19 And it came to pass that the Lamanites did come down against the city Desolation; and there was an exceedingly sore battle fought in the land Desolation, in the which they did beat the Nephites.

20 And they fled again from before them, and they came to the city Boaz; and there they did stand against the Lamanites with exceeding boldness, insomuch that the Lamanites did not beat them until they had come again the second time.

21 And when they had come the second time, the Nephites were driven and slaughtered with an exceedingly great slaughter; their women and their children were again sacrificed unto idols.

22 And it came to pass that the Nephites did again flee from before them, taking all the inhabitants with them, both in towns and villages.

23 And now I, Mormon, seeing that the Lamanites were about to overthrow the land, therefore I did go to the hill Shim, and did take up all the records which Ammaron had hid up unto the Lord.

## Mormon Chapter 5

---

1 And it came to pass that I did go forth among the Nephites, and did repent of the oath which I had made that I would no more assist them; and they gave me command again of their armies, for they looked upon me as though I could deliver them from their afflictions.

**verse 1** The account of Mormon's deciding not to lead his people is contained in Mormon 3:11. It gives no indication that Mormon actually swore an oath not to lead his people. Mormon was obviously moved by compassion for his people. It was a selfless act, as he knew he could never again be victorious as a Nephite commander.

2 But behold, I was without hope, for I knew the judgments of the Lord which should come upon them; for they repented not of their iniquities, but did struggle for their lives without calling upon that Being who created them.

3 And it came to pass that the Lamanites did come against us as we had fled to the city of Jordan; but behold, they were driven back that they did not take the city at that time.

4 And it came to pass that they came against us again, and we did maintain the city. And there were also other cities which were maintained by Nephites, which strongholds did cut them off that they could not get into the country which lay before us, to destroy the inhabitants of our land.

**verse 4** The "strongholds" formed by a few Nephite-held cities temporarily delayed the Lamanite forces.

5 And it came to pass that whatsoever lands we had passed by, and the inhabitants thereof were not gathered in, were destroyed by the Lamanites, and their towns, and villages, and cities were burned with fire; and thus three hundred and seventy and nine years passed away.

**verse 5** As the Nephite army fled from before the Lamanites, they gathered up Nephites to travel with them. Those who did not go with the Nephite army were killed, and their cities were burned.

6 And it came to pass that in the three hundred and eightieth year the Lamanites did come again against us to battle, and we did stand against them boldly; but it was all in vain, for so great were their numbers that they did tread the people of the Nephites under their feet.

7 And it came to pass that we did again take to flight, and those whose flight was swifter than the Lamanites' did escape, and those whose flight did not exceed the Lamanites' were swept down and destroyed.

**8 And now behold, I, Mormon, do not desire to harrow up the souls of men in casting before them such an awful scene of blood and carnage as was laid before mine eyes; but I, knowing that these things must surely be made known, and that all things which are hid must be revealed upon the house-tops—**

**verse 8** To “harrow up” is to vex or cause mental distress. Mormon says he doesn’t want to upset his readers with a too graphic description of the carnage of the time, so he withholds some of the graphic details.

Mormon also suggests that those things which he left out of his account will eventually be made known—“revealed upon the house-tops.” This statement probably has a dual meaning. First, several scriptural passages testify that at the judgment, all deeds, words, thoughts, and intents of the heart, both righteous and wicked, will be revealed—shouted from the housetops as it were—for all to know (Matthew 10:26-27; D&C 1:3; 88:108-10). An alternate way in which the more graphic description of the wickedness of his people may yet come to light is that the Lord will one day reveal to the world more information than is contained on the plates of Mormon (the book of Mormon) see verses 12 and 13 of this chapter and 2 Nephi 27:10-11. This may come in the form of revealing what is on the sealed portion of the plates of Mormon, or perhaps it may come in the form of other records, perhaps even a translation of more of the writings on the large plates of Nephi than we have now. The reader is reminded that Mormon’s account of his own history on the plates of Mormon (Mormon 1-5) is an abridgment of a longer record of his own history he previously had entered onto the large plates of Nephi.

**9 And also that a knowledge of these things must come unto the remnant of these people, and also unto the Gentiles, who the Lord hath said should scatter this people, and this people should be counted as naught among them—therefore I write a small abridgment, daring not to give a full account of the things which I have seen, because of the commandment which I have received, and also that ye might not have too great sorrow because of the wickedness of this people.**

**verse 9** “**a knowledge of these things**” Mormon is still speaking of the knowledge of the wicked doings of the Nephites of his day, over and above that which is written in the Book of Mormon record, which will eventually come, in the latter days, to the remnant of the Book of Mormon people (“these people”). That same knowledge will also come to the Gentiles, the founders and citizens of the great Gentile nations, who will scatter the remnants of the Book of Mormon people.

“**this people should be counted as naught among them**” The latter-day Gentiles (“this people”) will regard the remnants of the Book of Mormon people as having little worth (“should be counted as naught among them”).

“**therefore I write a small abridgment**” Mormon refers to the plates of Mormon as a “small abridgment,” and he states that he was commanded not to write a more



complete record of the wickedness of his people. The implication of this verse is that if Mormon had written a more complete account, then the latter-day Gentiles, who will scatter the Lamanite remnants, would have even more reason to regard them as “naught” and have greater disdain for them. In effect Mormon’s being commanded to write only a brief record protects the latter-day Lamanite remnants from having the evil reputation that further knowledge would bring upon them.

Mormon’s writing here suggests that his actual abridgment of the writings on the large plates of Nephi, including his own writings on those plates, likely began at this time—about AD 380 (see verse 6).

**10 And now behold, this I speak unto their seed, and also to the Gentiles who have care for the house of Israel, that realize and know from whence their blessings come.**

**verse 10** Now Mormon speaks to the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. These consist of those Lamanite remnants which have joined the Church (“their seed”) and also of the “Israelite/Gentiles” who are responsible for gathering Israel. These have read the Book of Mormon and “realize and know from whence their blessings come.”

**11 For I know that such will sorrow for the calamity of the house of Israel; yea, they will sorrow for the destruction of this people; they will sorrow that this people had not repented that they might have been clasped in the arms of Jesus.**

**verse 11** These members of the Lord’s latter-day Church will feel sorrow because of the wickedness of scattered Israel and the corruption of the scattered remnants of the Book of Mormon people. It is poignant to note that had the book of Mormon peoples repented at the time of the prophet Mormon, their history might have been much different—a much happier tale.

**“that this people . . . might have been clasped in the arms of Jesus”** I recall reading of a survey taken in 1983 among American Catholics, reported in a prominent Catholic publication. It revealed that many American Catholics “want to ‘hug God’ when they arrive in heaven” (Colleen McDannell and Bernhard Lang, *Heaven: A History* [New Haven: Yale university Press, 1988] 309). Isn’t it interesting that these surveyed Catholics, their doctrine of the Godhood notwithstanding, have an intuitive yearning for such a relationship with a physical, personal, and manly God who is willing (and anxious I’m sure) to be hugged (see also D&C 6:20)? Another related observation of interest was pointed out by BYU’s David Paulsen (“Early Christian Belief in a Corporeal Deity: Origen and Augustine as Reluctant Witnesses,” *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 83, no. 2 [April 1990]: 105). He documents that “ordinary Christians for at least the first three centuries” after Christ believed that God had a body. Brother Paulsen shows that beginning in the fourth century, Christianity gradually abandoned its belief in God’s

physical body, because that idea was unacceptable to the Greek philosophy that pervaded the Roman Empire.

**12 Now these things are written unto the remnant of the house of Jacob; and they are written after this manner, because it is known of God that wickedness will not bring them forth unto them; and they are to be hid up unto the Lord that they may come forth in his own due time.**

**verse 12** Mormon continues to explain the brevity of his record that has omitted some of the more graphic details of his people's history. He states that his writings are intended for latter-day scattered Israel. They are abbreviated ("are written after this manner") because God knows that a more complete record documenting even more wickedness and depravity would not be a positive factor in attracting the Israelite remnants to the Book of Mormon ("bring them [these things that are written] forth unto them [the scattered Israelite remnant]").

**"and they are to be hid up unto the Lord that they may come forth in his own due time"** Now Mormon seems to be referring to the eventual coming forth of the writings of the Book of Mormon record.

**13 And this is the commandment which I have received; and behold, they shall come forth according to the commandment of the Lord, when he shall see fit, in his wisdom.**

**verse 13** This verse repeats the idea that Mormon has been obedient to the Lord's commandment to make an abridgment and that his abridgment, the Book of Mormon, will come forth in the latter days when the Lord sees fit. The antecedent of the word *they* in this verse and in the next verse is *these things* in verse 12—the things written into the Book of Mormon record.

**14 And behold, they shall go unto the unbelieving of the Jews; and for this intent shall they go—that they may be persuaded that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God; that the Father may bring about, through his most Beloved, his great and eternal purpose, in restoring the Jews, or all the house of Israel, to the land of their inheritance, which the Lord their God hath given them, unto the fulfilling of his covenant;**

**verse 14** The first two "they"s refer to the record of Mormon on the plates of Mormon and the small plates of Nephi—the entire Book of Mormon. The third "they" refers to the unbelieving Jews.

**15 And also that the seed of this people may more fully believe his gospel, which shall go forth unto them from the Gentiles; for this people shall be scattered, and shall become a dark, a filthy, and a loathsome people, beyond the description of**

**that which ever hath been amongst us, yea, even that which hath been among the Lamanites, and this because of their unbelief and idolatry.**

**verse 15** Mormon prophesies that the Lamanites will be scattered and become a “dark, filthy, and a loathsome people.” Were not the Lamanites already a dark skinned people (see 2 Nephi 5:21)? The answer is that the Lamanites had a dark skin only during the first phase of their history, from their separation from the Nephites in the land of their first inheritance and to the time of their conversion a few years before the Savior’s appearance to the people in Bountiful (3 Nephi 2:15). After that the Holy Ghost was restored to them and the “mark” was removed. Thus began the second phase of Lamanite history during which they were a wholesome righteous people and did not really exist as Lamanites separate from the Nephites. The people were one homogenous righteous whole. The third phase began in about AD 214, when some of the people dissented, and there began again to be Lamanites in the land (4 Nephi 1:20). There is no mention in the Book of Mormon that a dark skin returned to these dissenters after their apostasy. Therefore, the battles between Nephites and Lamanites of Mormon’s day was not likely waged between light and dark races, but between groups that were simply divergent culturally. Mormon’s prophecy indicates that all of those who survived the great final battles between Lamanites and Nephites would eventually have the “mark” restored to them as a sign of their estrangement from God.

**16 For behold, the Spirit of the Lord hath already ceased to strive with their fathers; and they are without Christ and God in the world; and they are driven about as chaff before the wind.**

**verse 16** President Harold B. Lee commented on this verse in general conference. He stated that he was inspired to know that the phrase “the Spirit of the Lord hath already ceased to strive with their fathers; and they are without Christ and God in the world” referred to more than a withdrawal of the influence of the Holy Ghost. He said that it also referred to “that light of truth to which every one born into the world is entitled and which will never cease to strive with the individual unless he loses it through this own sinning” (*CR*, April 1956, 108). As the verse states, this closing off of the light of Christ results in their becoming spiritual chaff, blown in every direction by the tempests of Satan.

**17 They were once a delightsome people, and they had Christ for their shepherd; yea, they were led even by God the Father.**

**18 But now, behold, they are led about by Satan, even as chaff is driven before the wind, or as a vessel is tossed about upon the waves, without sail or anchor, or without anything wherewith to steer her; and even as she is, so are they.**

**verse 18** “**even as she is, so are they**” The pronoun *she* refers to the “vessel [which is] tossed about upon the waves, without sail or anchor, or without anything

wherewith to steer her.” The Nephite and Lamanite peoples of Mormon’s day were like a helpless, rudder-less boat, without sail or anchor.

**19 And behold, the Lord hath reserved their blessings, which they might have received in the land, for the Gentiles who shall possess the land.**

**verse 19** The blessings which the Lamanite remnants could have had in the Americas have gone to the Israelite/Gentiles in America.

**20 But behold, it shall come to pass that they shall be driven and scattered by the Gentiles; and after they have been driven and scattered by the Gentiles, behold, then will the Lord remember the covenant which he made unto Abraham and unto all the house of Israel.**

**verse 20** “after they have been driven and scattered by the Gentiles, behold, then will the Lord remember the covenant which he made unto Abraham and unto all the house of Israel” This verse serves as a warning to the latter-day Gentile inhabitants. After the Gentile founders of the great Gentile nation are allowed by the Lord to scatter the Israelite remnants of the Book of Mormon people, there will eventually come a time when the Lord’s wrath will be directed less toward the scattered remnants of the Book of Mormon people and more upon the Gentiles because of the iniquity among them. The Lord will remember his covenants with his people Israel—including the Book of Mormon remnants.

**21 And also the Lord will remember the prayers of the righteous, which have been put up unto him for them.**

**verse 21** The Lord will answer the prayers of those who have prayed for the Israelite remnants of the Book of Mormon people.

**22 And then, O ye Gentiles, how can ye stand before the power of God, except ye shall repent and turn from your evil ways?**

**verse 22** Mormon continues his warning to the latter-day Gentiles, both in and out of the Church, among whom there will be a major apostasy in the latter days just prior to the Lord’s second coming.

**23 Know ye not that ye are in the hands of God? Know ye not that he hath all power, and at his great command the earth shall be rolled together as a scroll?**

**verse 23** “at his great command the earth shall be rolled together as a scroll” The warning to the latter-day Gentiles continues. *Rolled* means wrapped; wound; folded; enclosed. This verse describes the great destruction by great heat of the celestial elements of earth at the time of the Lord’s second coming. At this time the

old earth shall pass away making way for a new millennial earth (see 3 Nephi 26:3 and its commentary).

**24 Therefore, repent ye, and humble yourselves before him, lest he shall come out in justice against you—lest a remnant of the seed of Jacob shall go forth among you as a lion, and tear you in pieces, and there is none to deliver.**

**verse 24** Mormon concludes his warning to the latter-day Israelite/Gentiles both in and out of the Church. He recalls a theme initially introduced by the Savior during his visit to the temple at Bountiful (see the commentary for 3 Nephi 16:15 and 3 Nephi 20:16). It has engendered considerable discussion as to its meaning. Some have suggested that it prophesies of a major “Lamanite” uprising against the people of the United States. It seems more likely that this image of Israel rending its Gentile enemies, like a “young lion among the flocks of sheep” (Micah 5:8- 14), is symbolic of Israel’s ultimate victory over its foes. This victory will come when the Savior returns and the wicked are destroyed.

## Mormon Chapter 6

---

### Scripture Mastery

#### Mormon 6 The Great and Final Battle Between the Lamanites and Nephites

1 And now I finish my record concerning the destruction of my people, the Nephites. And it came to pass that we did march forth before the Lamanites.

2 And I, Mormon, wrote an epistle unto the king of the Lamanites, and desired of him that he would grant unto us that we might gather together our people unto the land of Cumorah, by a hill which was called Cumorah, and there we could give them battle.

**verse 2 “Cumorah”** The most plausible etymology for *Cumorah* is the Hebrew *Kemorah*, meaning “priesthood,” a noun based on the word *komer* or “priest.” Some have privately objected that this explanation is unlikely because the term *komer* is always used in the Old Testament in reference to false priests (see 2 Kings 23:5; Hosea 10:5; Zephaniah 1:4), while the word *kohen* is used to denote Israelite priests. It seems more likely that the term *komer* was simply used to denote a priest who was not of the tribe of Levi, while *Kohen* in all cases refers to a Levitical priest. Since Lehi’s party did not include descendants of Levi, they probably used *komer* wherever the Book of Mormon speaks of priests (see John A. Tvedtnes, *Ensign* [October 1986], 65).

3 And it came to pass that the king of the Lamanites did grant unto me the thing which I desired.

4 And it came to pass that we did march forth to the land of Cumorah, and we did pitch our tents around about the hill Cumorah; and it was in a land of many waters, rivers, and fountains; and here we had hope to gain advantage over the Lamanites.

5 And when three hundred and eighty and four years had passed away, we had gathered in all the remainder of our people unto the land of Cumorah.

6 And it came to pass that when we had gathered in all our people in one to the land of Cumorah, behold I, Mormon, began to be old; and knowing it to be the last struggle of my people, and having been commanded of the Lord that I should not suffer the records which had been handed down by our fathers, which were sacred, to fall into the hands of the Lamanites, (for the Lamanites would destroy them) therefore I made this record out of the plates of Nephi, and hid up in the hill Cumorah all the records which had been entrusted to me by the hand of the Lord, save it were these few plates which I gave unto my son Moroni.

**verse 6 “these few plates”** This phrase likely refers to the set of plates consisting of the plates of Mormon plus the appended small plates of Nephi.

7 And it came to pass that my people, with their wives and their children, did now behold the armies of the Lamanites marching towards them; and with that awful fear of death which fills the breasts of all the wicked, did they await to receive them.

8 And it came to pass that they came to battle against us, and every soul was filled with terror because of the greatness of their numbers.

9 And it came to pass that they did fall upon my people with the sword, and with the bow, and with the arrow, and with the ax, and with all manner of weapons of war.

10 And it came to pass that my men were hewn down, yea, even my ten thousand who were with me, and I fell wounded in the midst; and they passed by me that they did not put an end to my life.

**verse 10** We will learn that twenty-three Nephite captains were each given command over ten thousand Nephite soldiers. Mormon and Moroni were two of these military leaders.

11 And when they had gone through and hewn down all my people save it were twenty and four of us, (among whom was my son Moroni) and we having survived the dead of our people, did behold on the morrow, when the Lamanites had returned unto their camps, from the top of the hill Cumorah, the ten thousand of my people who were hewn down, being led in the front by me.

**verse 11** This verse makes clear that the approximately 230,000 Nephites who had come up to battle against the Lamanites had all been killed the previous day, save only twenty-four survivors and a few others who had either fled the battle or surrendered to the Lamanites. These twenty-four had fled to the top of the hill Cumorah and are viewing the dead Nephites on the ground below.

12 And we also beheld the ten thousand of my people who were led by my son Moroni.

13 And behold, the ten thousand of Gidgiddonah had fallen, and he also in the midst.

14 And Lamah had fallen with his ten thousand; and Gilgal had fallen with his ten thousand; and Limhah had fallen with his ten thousand; and Jeneum had fallen with his ten thousand; and Cumenihah, and Moronihah, and Antionum, and Shiblom, and Shem, and Josh, had fallen with their ten thousand each.

**verse 14** The use of the name “Josh” in the Book of Mormon has been criticized since it is a non-biblical name. Perhaps, the critics say, Joseph Smith just made up the name. The critics are right in one sense—“Josh” is not found in the Bible, and it is found in only two places in the Book of Mormon (this verse and 3 Nephi 9:10). It is

interesting that this name is found in some writings found in Palestine—in a city called Lachish, located in Judah south of Jerusalem. These are the Lachish Letters and are thought to have been written in the period 600-590 BC. It is notable, though certainly coincidental, that in the Lachish Letters, Josh (Jaush) is a high ranking military officer (Hugh Nibley, “Dark Days in Jerusalem,” a FARMS reprint). See also the supplemental article, *Names in the Book of Mormon*.

“**Gilgal**” For commentary on the derivation of the name Gilgal, see the supplemental article, *Names in the Book of Mormon*.

**15 And it came to pass that there were ten more who did fall by the sword, with their ten thousand each; yea, even all my people, save it were those twenty and four who were with me, and also a few who had escaped into the south countries, and a few who had deserted over unto the Lamanites, had fallen; and their flesh, and bones, and blood lay upon the face of the earth, being left by the hands of those who slew them to molder upon the land, and to crumble and to return to their mother earth.**

**verses 11-15** If you tally them, these verses suggest that some 230,000 men were killed. It is possible that the number was significantly smaller since all twenty-three “ten thousands” may not have been fully staffed. What about the Nephite men, women, and children who did not fight in the final battle. Did they survive? We will learn from the prophet Moroni that following the final battle, the remaining Nephites were hunted down and slaughtered (see Mormon 8:7).

To “molder” is to decay, disintegrate, turn to dust (Webster).

**verses 16-22** Mormon concludes this chapter with heart-felt and heart-sick lament for the spiritual fate of his people.

**16 And my soul was rent with anguish, because of the slain of my people, and I cried:**

**17 O ye fair ones, how could ye have departed from the ways of the Lord! O ye fair ones, how could ye have rejected that Jesus, who stood with open arms to receive you!**

**18 Behold, if ye had not done this, ye would not have fallen. But behold, ye are fallen, and I mourn your loss.**

**19 O ye fair sons and daughters, ye fathers and mothers, ye husbands and wives, ye fair ones, how is it that ye could have fallen!**

**verse 19** The destruction of the Nephites is not meant to be read as merely a historical fact, but also as a metaphor of judgment, a shadow of the everlasting destruction known as second death or spiritual death (see Alma 12:16-17). It is obvious that Mormon wants us to understand and feel the destruction of the Nephites on a



personal level. For one thing, he has spent much more time on their decline and fall than is necessary for a simple history. Mormon chooses to use his entire personal record to describe the Nephites' plunge to destruction at Cumorah with an account that moves with the cadence of a funeral dirge. He seems determined that we personally experience a degree of the horror that he felt as he watched his own society deteriorate in wickedness, hoping that we will do all we can to prevent our own destruction.

**20 But behold, ye are gone, and my sorrows cannot bring your return.**

**21 And the day soon cometh that your mortal must put on immortality, and these bodies which are now moldering in corruption must soon become incorruptible bodies; and then ye must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ to be judged according to your works and if it so be that ye are righteous, then are ye blessed with your fathers who have gone before you.**

**verse 21** “**these bodies which are now moldering in corruption must soon become incorruptible bodies**” For a discussion of the terms *corruption* and *incorruption*, see the commentary for 2 Nephi 2:11.

**22 O that ye had repented before this great destruction had come upon you. But behold, ye are gone, and the Father, yea, the Eternal Father of heaven, knoweth your state; and he doeth with you according to his justice and mercy.**

## Mormon Chapter 7

---

### Scripture Mastery

**Mormon 7:8-9** Just before his death, the prophet Mormon writes to the latter-day Lamanites: Therefore repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus. For this is written for the intent that ye may believe that.

Let us consider for a moment the many contributions to the blood lines of the Lamanites who overcame the Nephites at the great and final battle at Cumorah. Their descendants would become part of the “Israelite” remnant which would inhabit the areas of North and Central America at the time of their discovery and settlement by Gentiles. These Book of Mormon remnants would initially be driven at the hands of the Gentiles, and later they would be taught the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is this group that is part of the intended latter-day audience for the Book of Mormon.

It is fundamental that there was a complete admixing of the blood lines of all of the Book of Mormon peoples, particularly during the century and a half following the Savior’s appearance to the Nephites at Bountiful (see 4 Nephi 1:17 and the commentaries for Helaman 6:1-6 and 4 Nephi 1:36-38). Thus, these Lamanite remnants included descendants of Nephi and Jacob, Laman and Lemuel, Ishmael, Laban’s servant Zoram, the descendants of Mulek, the descendants of the Phoenician sailors who likely crewed the ship or ships which brought Mulek to the New World, and the descendants of all of the native peoples who inhabited the Book of Mormon lands when Lehi and his party first arrived (this latter group would doubtless have included some with Jaredite blood).

Spencer W. Kimball taught:

The Lamanites are a mixture of many lines. Undoubtedly, there is in their veins the blood of Nephi, Joseph, and Jacob, as well as that of Laman, Lemuel, and Sam, and also that of the Mulekites of Judah. . . . The name “Indian” was given to the early possessors of the Americas by Columbus. As they intermarried with the invading European conquerors and nations were formed, they became Mexicans, Peruvians, Bolivians, Guatemalans, and others. But the correct name for all the descendants of Lehi and Ishmael is “Lamanites.” This is an honorable name. It was the Lord who so designated them, and every descendant of Lehi should proudly say, “I am Lamanite, and I am proud of my heritage” (“The Lamanites: Their Burden—Our Burden,” *BYU Speeches of the Year*. Provo: BYU Press, 1967, 1-3).

This chapter concludes the writings of the magnificent prophet Mormon. These ten verses are written to the people of the last days, and in them he summarizes what is most important to all of the Nephite prophet-writers. We have previously noted that this

chapter, as well as the prior chapter were written by the prophet Mormon directly onto the plates of Mormon, and therefore come to us as an unabridged record.

**1 And now, behold, I would speak somewhat unto the remnant of this people who are spared, if it so be that God may give unto them my words, that they may know of the things of their fathers; yea, I speak unto you, ye remnant of the house of Israel; and these are the words which I speak:**

**verse 1** Though Mormon is specifically addressing the latter-day “Lamanites,” his message is applicable to all of scattered Israel of the latter days.

**2 Know ye that ye are of the house of Israel.**

**verse 1** Joseph Fielding McConkie, Robert L. Millett, and Brent L. Top in their book *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon* have made a most pertinent observation:

We sense a particular problem among many Latter-day Saints as this century draws to a close and as we draw nearer to the time when the Holy One of Israel will return to reign over his covenant people. There is evidenced frequently among young and old a lack of covenant consciousness, not necessarily in regard to covenants and ordinances required for salvation but rather in a lack of feeling appropriate kinship and identity with ancient Israel and with the fathers—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—and of understanding and carrying out the responsibilities we have inherited from them.

In our democratic and egalitarian society, in a time when equality and brotherhood are all-important, perhaps we are losing a feel for what it means to be a covenant people, what it means to be a chosen people. Too many, even among the Latter-day Saints, cry out that such sentiments are parochial and primitive, that they lead to exclusivism and racism. Others contend that to emphasize Israel’s chosen status is to denigrate and degrade others not designated as Israel.

Careful and prayerful study of the scriptures—especially the Old Testament and the Book of Mormon—will not only bring people to understand in their minds the origin and destiny of the descendants of Jacob but will also cause them to know in their hearts what it means to come to earth through a chosen lineage and what God would have them do to be a light to the world, particularly to so many who sit in spiritual darkness. The words of the Lord to ancient Israel should be received by modern Israel with sobriety and humility, but they must be received and believed if we are to realize our potential to become a holy people and a royal priesthood. Jehovah spoke millennia ago of “Israel, whom I have chosen” (Isaiah 44:1) and assured the Israelites that “you only have I known of all the families of the earth” (Amos 3:2) (volume 4, 237-38).

**3 Know ye that ye must come unto repentance, or ye cannot be saved.**

**4 Know ye that ye must lay down your weapons of war, and delight no more in the shedding of blood, and take them not again, save it be that God shall command you.**

**verse 4** Here is a concise reiteration of the ancient law of war. This law has been reiterated in modern revelation. The Lord's law of war is still very much in force:

Behold, this is the law I gave unto my servant Nephi, and thy fathers, Joseph, and Jacob, and Isaac, and Abraham, and all mine ancient prophets and apostles. And again, this is the law that I gave unto mine ancients, that they should not go out unto battle against any nation, kindred, tongue, or people, save I, the Lord, commanded them. And if any nation, tongue, or people should proclaim war against them, they should first lift a standard of peace unto that people, nation, or tongue; and if that people did not accept the offering of peace, neither the second nor the third time, they should bring these testimonies before the Lord; then I, the Lord, would give unto them a commandment, and justify them in going out to battle against that nation, tongue, or people. And I, the Lord, would fight their battles, and their children's battles, and their children's children's, until they had avenged themselves on all their enemies, to the third and fourth generation (D&C 98:32-37).

**5 Know ye that ye must come to the knowledge of your fathers, and repent of all your sins and iniquities, and believe in Jesus Christ, that he is the Son of God, and that he was slain by the Jews, and by the power of the Father he hath risen again, whereby he hath gained the victory over the grave; and also in him is the sting of death swallowed up.**

**verse 5 “your fathers”** The word “fathers” here refers not just to Lehi, but also to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The covenants and blessings and responsibilities that devolve on any branch of the house of Israel devolve also on the Lamanites. Not only must latter-day Israel come to an awareness of their fathers, but they must recall the “knowledge of your fathers”—that is, their fathers’ knowledge about Christ and his gospel.

**“and also in him is the sting of death swallowed up”** In what way does a belief in the Savior and in his atoning death mitigate one's fear of death? The Lord revealed to Joseph Smith what we may call the “law of mourning”: “Thou shalt live together in love, insomuch that thou shalt weep for the loss of them that die, and more especially for those that have not hope of a glorious resurrection. And it shall come to pass that those that die in me shall not taste of death, for it shall be sweet unto them; And they that die not in me, wo unto them, for their death is bitter” (D&C 42:45-47). This is not to say that the death of a righteous man who understands the Lord's atonement will be free of physical pain and some emotional travail. But the Lord's revealed love and comfort will remove that haunting fear of death that surely exists among the unrighteous.

**6 And he bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead, whereby man must be raised to stand before his judgment-seat.**

**7 And he hath brought to pass the redemption of the world, whereby he that is found guiltless before him at the judgment day hath it given unto him to dwell in the presence of God in his kingdom, to sing ceaseless praises with the choirs above, unto the Father, and unto the Son, and unto the Holy Ghost, which are one God, in a state of happiness which hath no end.**

**verse 7** “hath it given unto him to dwell in the presence of God in his kingdom” It is true that our concerted efforts are necessary to “earn” sufficient spiritual gifts and qualify for the blessings of the atonement, but ultimately exaltation is a gift that we have not really earned.

**“unto the Father, and unto the Son, and unto the Holy Ghost, which are one God”** Rodney Turner (*Studies in Scripture, volume seven, 1 Nephi to Alma 29*) has suggested the following explanation for the concept of “one God”: “The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost constitute the one God. This ‘one God’ is not a triune god—three in one—but three individual personages bound together by the common bonds of light, truth, and eternal priesthood. Indeed, in the ultimate sense, the ‘one God’ is the sum of all the Gods that were, are, and ever will be. In the abstract, the ‘one God’ may be defined as all of the attributes and powers of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” (245).

**8 Therefore repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus, and lay hold upon the gospel of Christ, which shall be set before you, not only in this record but also in the record which shall come unto the Gentiles from the Jews, which record shall come from the Gentiles unto you.**

**verse 8** “This record” is the Book of Mormon. “The record which shall come unto the Gentiles from the Jews” is the Bible.

A valid purpose of the Book of Mormon is to function as a witness for the truths in the Bible. It does this by providing many confirmatory, “alternate manuscripts,” Bible quotations (largely taken from the plates of brass and predominantly from the prophet Isaiah), and by giving independent accounts of several biblical events. President Heber J. Grant said, “All my life I have been finding additional evidence that the . . . Book of Mormon is the greatest witness for the truth of the Bible that has ever been published” (*Improvement Era*, November 1936, 660).

**9 For behold, this is written for the intent that ye may believe that; and if ye believe that ye will believe this also; and if ye believe this ye will know concerning your fathers, and also the marvelous works which were wrought by the power of God among them.**

**verse 9** The two “this’s” are the Book of Mormon, and the two “that’s” refer to the Bible. The verse implies that the Book of Mormon was written in part for the purpose of strengthening our belief in and our appreciation for the Bible. How does the Book of Mormon accomplish this? After all, we have learned in 1 Nephi 13:28-29 that “many plain and precious things” have been removed from the Bible by the great and abominable church, and thus the Bible we have today is imperfect and incomplete. Does this knowledge actually help in our understanding of and our appreciation for the Bible? I will defer the answer for a moment.

Modern scripture teaches us that the Book of Mormon contains the fulness of the gospel (D&C 20:9). It may be acknowledged that there are certain deficiencies in the Book of Mormon relative to specifics of the gospel doctrines as we understand them in this dispensation. For example, we cannot go to the Book of Mormon to find a clear explanation of the three degrees of glory or the temple ordinances or celestial marriage. However, in the Book of Mormon many things are made clear that one might not understand after studying only the Bible. The Book of Mormon, for example, contains correct explanations of the divinity, the mission, and the atonement of Christ. The Book of Mormon restores many of the Lord’s covenants. It provides us with the words of the baptismal prayer, along with instructions concerning the meaning and proper mode of baptism (Mosiah 18; 3 Nephi 11; Moroni 6) and of confirmation (Moroni 2). It has preserved for us from ancient times the words of the sacrament prayers (Moroni 4-5), and the book makes the Lord’s covenants to the house of Israel understood. It also teaches the necessity of priesthood authority and the manner of ordination (Moroni 3).

Back to the question then. Does the Book of Mormon augment our appreciation for the Bible? Without the restored gospel and the Book of Mormon, one may come to regard the Bible, because of its deficiencies, as simply confusing and difficult to understand. Armed with a knowledge of the principles of the restored gospel and a knowledge as to why the Bible has deficiencies, we are better able to understand the Bible and appreciate it for what it is.

**10 And ye will also know that ye are a remnant of the seed of Jacob; therefore ye are numbered among the people of the first covenant; and if it so be that ye believe in Christ, and are baptized, first with water, then with fire and with the Holy Ghost, following the example of our Savior, according to that which he hath commanded us, it shall be well with you in the day of judgment. Amen.**

**verse 10 “the first covenant”** This is the Lord’s covenant with Abraham: “Thy seed . . . shall bear this ministry and Priesthood unto all nations. . . . And in thy seed . . . shall all the families of the earth be blessed, even with the blessings of the Gospel, which are the blessings of salvation, even of life eternal” (Abraham 2:9-10). This is the promise of godhood to the house of Israel, and thus it applies to Lamanites today as it does to all Israel.

For the convenience of the reader, we will again review the tenets of the covenant the Lord made with Abraham. They include:

1. Abraham will become the “father of many nations” (Genesis 17:19), and his posterity will be exceedingly numerous—even “as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is upon the seashore (Genesis 17:2; 22:17-18).

2. The posterity of Abraham will be blessed with certain lands as an eternal inheritance. This was the land of Canaan (Genesis 17:8) extending from the Nile River to the Euphrates (Genesis 15:18).

3. Abraham’s posterity will prove to be a blessing to all families of the earth (Genesis 12:3). They will do this by bearing the priesthood and preaching the gospel to them. Thus, will every family have the opportunity, through the posterity of Abraham, to enjoy the blessings of the gospel, which include the “blessings of salvation, even of life eternal” (Abraham 2:9-11).

4. All of these blessings of the gospel and the priesthood will be offered to all of Abraham’s mortal posterity. These covenants were renewed with Isaac (Genesis 26:1-4,24) and again with Jacob (Genesis 28; 35:9-13; 48:3-4).

**“if it so be that ye . . . are baptized, first with water, then with fire and with the Holy Ghost”** For an explanation of the concept of baptism of fire and of the Holy Ghost, see *Baptism, the Ordinance that Brings Spiritual Growth in Ye Shall Know of the Doctrine*, volume 1, chapter 18.

## Mormon Chapter 8

---

### Scripture Mastery

**Mormon 8-9** Moroni's warning to the people of this final dispensation.

Mormon's son Moroni has now taken possession of the plates of Mormon. He will "finish" the record of his father (Mormon 8-9). He will then engrave onto the plates of Mormon his abridgment or translation of the record of the Jaredites (the book of Ether), his own writings (the book of Moroni), and he will conclude by engraving the title page of the Book of Mormon directly onto final page of the plates of Mormon.

Moroni was probably born close to AD 350. Other than his father Mormon, we know nothing about any other family members. We don't know his mother's name or whether he had siblings or whether or not he was married. As mentioned elsewhere, Mormon probably named his son after Captain Moroni whom Mormon admired immensely.

**1 Behold I, Moroni, do finish the record of my father, Mormon. Behold, I have but few things to write, which things I have been commanded by my father.**

**2 And now it came to pass that after the great and tremendous battle at Cumorah, behold, the Nephites who had escaped into the country southward were hunted by the Lamanites, until they were all destroyed.**

**3 And my father also was killed by them, and I even remain alone to write the sad tale of the destruction of my people. But behold, they are gone, and I fulfil the commandment of my father. And whether they will slay me, I know not.**

**verses 1-3** The reader may read between the lines of these verses and sense the respect and admiration which Moroni had for his father.

**4 Therefore I will write and hide up the records in the earth; and whither I go it mattereth not.**

**5 Behold, my father hath made this record, and he hath written the intent thereof. And behold, I would write it also if I had room upon the plates, but I have not; and ore I have none, for I am alone. My father hath been slain in battle, and all my kinsfolk, and I have not friends nor whither to go; and how long the Lord will suffer that I may live I know not.**

**verse 5** Moroni's comments imply that the plates of Mormon are almost full. He will write the "few things" which "have been commanded by [his] father," which is apparently only this brief farewell in verses 1-5. But he does not have room on the plates to also write "the sad tale of the destruction of [his] people," which he refers to in this verse as "it."



**verses 6-13** After his farewell in verse 5, Moroni likely did not intend to write further. However, he now returns, likely surprised that he is still alive, to the record some fifteen years following his farewell in verse 5. He will now add eight verses and then bid farewell yet again. The succinctness of his farewell again implies that the plates of Mormon are full.

Moroni will yet survive at least another twenty-one years (Moroni 10:1).

**6 Behold, four hundred years have passed away since the coming of our Lord and Savior.**

**7 And behold, the Lamanites have hunted my people, the Nephites, down from city to city and from place to place, even until they are no more; and great has been their fall; yea, great and marvelous is the destruction of my people, the Nephites.**

**verse 7** It would appear that the Lamanites effected a near extinction of the “Nephite” people. This verse suggests that those who did not fight in the great final battle, including the men, women, children of the Nephites were systematically slaughtered.

**“yea, great and marvelous is the destruction of my people, the Nephites”**

The word *marvelous* usually places a positive spin on the events it modifies. Here, however, the word means astonishing, unusual, out of the ordinary.

**8 And behold, it is the hand of the Lord which hath done it. And behold also, the Lamanites are at war one with another; and the whole face of this land is one continual round of murder and bloodshed; and no one knoweth the end of the war.**

**9 And now, behold, I say no more concerning them, for there are none save it be the Lamanites and robbers that do exist upon the face of the land.**

**10 And there are none that do know the true God save it be the disciples of Jesus, who did tarry in the land until the wickedness of the people was so great that the Lord would not suffer them to remain with the people; and whether they be upon the face of the land no man knoweth.**

**11 But behold, my father and I have seen them, and they have ministered unto us.**

**12 And whoso receiveth this record, and shall not condemn it because of the imperfections which are in it, the same shall know of greater things than these. Behold, I am Moroni; and were it possible, I would make all things known unto you.**

**verse 12 “the same shall know of greater things than these”** Again a promise to those who receive and believe in the Book of Mormon—they will one day receive more revelations than are contained in the present-day Book of Mormon,

including even more of the Savior's teachings during his visit to the temple in Bountiful (3 Nephi 26:9).

**“were it possible, I would make all things known unto you”** As Moroni translated the Jaredite record, he included the vision of the brother of Jared in which Jared's brother saw all things from beginning to end. Moroni likely intended that we have his account of that vision, and he entered it onto the plates of Mormon. But he was then later constrained by the Lord to seal up that portion of the plates of Mormon so that they would not be available for Joseph Smith to translate. That portion of the revealed record will also one day be made available to the scripturally diligent.

### **13 Behold, I make an end of speaking concerning this people. I am the son of Mormon, and my father was a descendant of Nephi.**

**verses 12-13** This is Moroni's second farewell (see verse 5). Again, he apparently intended that this would be the end of his writing. His third farewell is found at the end of Mormon (Mormon 9:37), and his fourth farewell is found in Ether 12:38-41. His fifth and final farewell will be found at the end of the book of Moroni (Moroni 10:34).

Dr. Sidney B. Sperry and others have speculated that Moroni wrote the two paragraphs of the title page at two different times of his life (*A Book of Mormon Treasury*, 123-25). He suggests that Moroni wrote the first paragraph after he had written Mormon 8:12-13 and the second after he had translated the account of the people of Jared. His translation or abridgment of the Jaredite record was made apparently between the time he wrote the last verse in Mormon (Mormon 9:37) and the first verse in Moroni. One point against Moroni's writing the title page in two different sessions is that it was found on the “last leaf” of the plates of Mormon. Unless he designated beforehand a page to be used for the title page and then wrote on it on two different occasions, it is more likely that he entered the title page at one time as his last entry onto the plates of Mormon.

### **14 And I am the same who hideth up this record unto the Lord; the plates thereof are of no worth, because of the commandment of the Lord. For he truly saith that no one shall have them to get gain; but the record thereof is of great worth; and whoso shall bring it to light, him will the Lord bless.**

**verse 14** Moroni returns yet again to the plates to write further. He gives no date for this entry. One peculiarity is worth noting. Previously Moroni had implied that the plates of Mormon were full and that he had no resources from which to make new plates (Mormon 8:5). Now, however, room on the plates no longer seems a problem. Moroni will finish the record of his father (Mormon 8:14-41 and Mormon 9); abridge the twenty-four gold plates of Ether (including the extensive visions and teachings of the brother of Jared which comprise the sealed portion of the plates of Mormon); write his own book (Moroni); and write the title page. It would seem likely that in spite of the fact

that he previously lamented that “ore I have none,” he likely found a way to add to the plates of Mormon.

It also seems likely that since his previous entry onto the plates, Moroni had been shown several visions of the future importance of the Book of Mormon record. Also he had probably been given the “keys of the record of the stick of Ephraim” (D&C 27:5). With these keys, Moroni’s calling would extend beyond the grave to the last dispensation when he would give the sacred text to a new young prophet.

**15 For none can have power to bring it to light save it be given him of God; for God wills that it shall be done with an eye single to his glory, or the welfare of the ancient and long dispersed covenant people of the Lord.**

**verse 15 “save it be given him of God”** He who brings the record to light in the final dispensation will do it “by the gift and power of God.”

**“with an eye single to his glory”** In part, the Book of Mormon will come forth in the latter days for the purpose of bringing honor and respect to God.

**16 And blessed be he that shall bring this thing to light; for it shall be brought out of darkness unto light, according to the word of God; yea, it shall be brought out of the earth, and it shall shine forth out of darkness, and come unto the knowledge of the people; and it shall be done by the power of God.**

**verse 16 “blessed be he that shall bring this thing to light”** This is an obvious reference to Joseph Smith.

**“by the power of God”** Again, Joseph Smith taught that the plates were translated “by the gift and power of God.”

The reader may wish to review the supplemental article, *Biblical Prophecies of the Book of Mormon*.

**17 And if there be faults they be the faults of a man. But behold, we know no fault; nevertheless God knoweth all things; therefore, he that condemneth, let him be aware lest he shall be in danger of hell fire.**

**verse 17** He who condemns the book of Mormon, condemns that which God approves.

**18 And he that saith: Show unto me, or ye shall be smitten—let him beware lest he commandeth that which is forbidden of the Lord.**

**verse 18** The experience Martin Harris had with Professor Charles Anthon reflected the spirit of this verse:

**He gave me a certificate, certifying to the people of Palmyra that they were true characters, and that the translation of such of them as had been translated was also correct. I took the certificate and put it into my pocket, and was just leaving the house,**

when Mr. Anthon called me back, and asked me how the young man found out that there were gold plates in the place where he found them. I answered that an angel of God had revealed it unto him. He then said to me, 'Let me see that certificate.' I accordingly took it out of my pocket and gave it to him, when he took it and tore it to pieces, saying that there was no such thing now as ministering of angels, and that if I would bring the plates to him he would translate them. I informed him that part of the plates were sealed, and that I was forbidden to bring them" (JS-H 1:63-65).

This verse is a warning to him who would seek for signs relative to the Book of Mormon.

**19 For behold, the same that judgeth rashly shall be judged rashly again; for according to his works shall his wages be; therefore, he that smiteth shall be smitten again, of the Lord.**

**verse 19** "For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (3 Nephi 14:2).

**20 Behold what the scripture says—man shall not smite, neither shall he judge; for judgment is mine, saith the Lord, and vengeance is mine also, and I will repay.**

**21 And he that shall breathe out wrath and strifes against the work of the Lord, and against the covenant people of the Lord who are the house of Israel, and shall say: We will destroy the work of the Lord, and the Lord will not remember his covenant which he hath made unto the house of Israel—the same is in danger to be hewn down and cast into the fire;**

**22 For the eternal purposes of the Lord shall roll on, until all his promises shall be fulfilled.**

**verses 21-22** Let him who would fight against the Lord's latter-day kingdom beware.

**23 Search the prophecies of Isaiah. Behold, I cannot write them. Yea, behold I say unto you, that those saints who have gone before me, who have possessed this land, shall cry, yea, even from the dust will they cry unto the Lord; and as the Lord liveth he will remember the covenant which he hath made with them.**

**verse 23** Moroni urges his readers to search the prophecies of Isaiah who emphasizes, in his writings, that the Lord will never forget his chosen people or the covenants he has made with them. Moroni avers with a sacred oath that the Lord will remember his covenant people. For further discussion on the subject of a chosen people, see the commentary for 1 Nephi 1:19-20.

**24 And he knoweth their prayers, that they were in behalf of their brethren. And he knoweth their faith, for in his name could they remove mountains; and in his**

**name could they cause the earth to shake; and by the power of his word did they cause prisons to tumble to the earth; yea, even the fiery furnace could not harm them, neither wild beasts nor poisonous serpents, because of the power of his word.**

**verse 24 “And he knoweth their prayers”** The Lord is aware of the prayers offered by the Book of Mormon prophets, including especially the twelve Nephite disciples, on behalf of the latter-day remnant of their seed (see D&C 10:46-51). Their prayers were also uttered on behalf of Joseph Smith (see the following verse).

**25 And behold, their prayers were also in behalf of him that the Lord should suffer to bring these things forth.**

**verse 25** Referring to the Prophet Joseph, Elder Bruce R. McConkie wrote: “Holy prophets spoke of him, by name, thousands of years before his mortal birth (2 Nephi 3). And as to the mighty work to be started by him—there are as many prophecies foretelling it as there are about any other single subject, not even excepting the host of prophetic utterances about our Lord and his redemptive sacrifice” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 396).

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

**verse 26 “no one need say they shall not come”** The writings of the Book of Mormon prophets will come forth in the latter days.

**“it shall come in a day when it shall be said that miracles are done away”** Moroni comments on our day. Many believe that, for centuries, revelation and the gifts of the Spirit have been lost from the world following the death of the early apostles, and thus they must be no longer needed. Some believe that God has revealed all that will ever need to be revealed and is no longer active in the affairs of humanity: “He hath done his work” (2 Nephi 28:5-6).

**27 And it shall come in a day when the blood of saints shall cry unto the Lord, because of secret combinations and the works of darkness.**

**verse 27** Many have given their lives for the kingdom of God in this and other dispensations, and yet the wicked on earth persist in their efforts to thwart the work.

**28 Yea, it shall come in a day when the power of God shall be denied, and churches become defiled and be lifted up in the pride of their hearts; yea, even in a day when leaders of churches and teachers shall rise in the pride of their hearts, even to the envying of them who belong to their churches.**

**verse 28** The leaders of the apostate churches of the latter days will be lifted up in pride even to the envying or coveting the things possessed by members of their own congregations.

**29** Yea, it shall come in a day when there shall be heard of fires, and tempests, and vapors of smoke in foreign lands;

**30** And there shall also be heard of wars, rumors of wars, and earthquakes in divers places.

**verses 29-30** Moroni speaks of some of the “signs of the times (latter days).”

**31** Yea, it shall come in a day when there shall be great pollutions upon the face of the earth; there shall be murders, and robbing, and lying, and deceivings, and whoredoms, and all manner of abominations; when there shall be many who will say, Do this, or do that, and it mattereth not, for the Lord will uphold such at the last day. But wo unto such for they are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity.

**verse 31** Moroni’s expression “great pollutions” likely refers to evil causes and deeds rather than air quality.

“many who will say, Do this, or do that, and it mattereth not” Here, again, is an expression of the philosophy of humanism (see the commentary for Jacob 7:2).

“wo unto such for they are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity” Following this mortal life, they will find themselves in hell—the spirit prison—where they will begin to work out their salvation through their own suffering.

**32** Yea, it shall come in a day when there shall be churches built up that shall say: Come unto me, and for your money you shall be forgiven of your sins.

**verse 32** It was practices such these, the selling of “indulgences,” that infuriated Martin Luther and produced in him a drive to play a significant role in the Protestant reformation which laid the foundation for the restoration of the fulness of the gospel.

**verses 26-32** These verses contain an apt description of today.

**33** O ye wicked and perverse and stiffnecked people, why have ye built up churches unto yourselves to get gain? Why have ye transfigured the holy word of God, that ye might bring damnation upon your souls? Behold, look ye unto the revelations of God; for behold, the time cometh at that day when all these things must be fulfilled.

**verse 33** Here the word “transfigured” is used in a negative sense meaning altered or corrupted.

“that ye might bring damnation upon your souls” For a brief discussion of what it means to be damned, see the commentary for 2 Nephi 9:24.

**34 Behold, the Lord hath shown unto me great and marvelous things concerning that which must shortly come, at that day when these things shall come forth among you.**

**35 Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing.**

**verse 35** Here it is clearly stated that the Book of Mormon was written to people in our day—to us in this final dispensation. The Lord intended that it address our particular problems and questions, and to that end he showed us and our society to Moroni in vision. President Ezra Taft Benson said: “The Nephites never had the book; neither did the Lamanites of ancient times. It was meant for us. Mormon wrote near the end of the Nephite civilization. Under the inspiration of God, who sees all things from the beginning, he abridged centuries of records, choosing the stories, speeches, and events that would be most helpful to us. . . . If they [the keepers of the plates] saw our day and chose those things which would be of greatest worth to us, is not that how we should study the Book of Mormon? We should constantly ask ourselves, ‘Why did the Lord inspire Mormon (or Moroni or Alma) to include that in his record?’” (*A Witness and a Warning*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1988, 19).

**36 And I know that ye do walk in the pride of your hearts; and there are none save a few only who do not lift themselves up in the pride of their hearts, unto the wearing of very fine apparel, unto envying, and strifes, and malice, and persecutions, and all manner of iniquities; and your churches, yea, even every one, have become polluted because of the pride of your hearts.**

**37 For behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your churches, more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted.**

**38 O ye pollutions, ye hypocrites, ye teachers, who sell yourselves for that which will canker, why have ye polluted the holy church of God? Why are ye ashamed to take upon you the name of Christ? Why do ye not think that greater is the value of an endless happiness than that misery which never dies—because of the praise of the world?**

**39 Why do ye adorn yourselves with that which hath no life, and yet suffer the hungry, and the needy, and the naked, and the sick and the afflicted to pass by you, and notice them not?**

**verses 36-39** We should not make the mistake of assuming that Moroni’s warnings, in these verses, about the sin of pride applies only to other churches and other peoples today and not to us. Review the commentary for Mosiah 4:26 as a reminder of the essential nature of the commandment to impart of our substance to the needy.

For a discussion of the concept of hypocrisy, see the commentary for 3 Nephi 13:5.

**40** Yea, why do ye build up your secret abominations to get gain, and cause that widows should mourn before the Lord, and also orphans to mourn before the Lord, and also the blood of their fathers and their husbands to cry unto the Lord from the ground, for vengeance upon your heads?

**41** Behold, the sword of vengeance hangeth over you; and the time soon cometh that he avengeth the blood of the saints upon you, for he will not suffer their cries any longer.

**verses 40-41** Moroni warns against the evils of pride and failure to look after the needy in a most dramatic and ominous fashion!



## Mormon Chapter 9

---

### Scripture Mastery

**Mormon 9:3-4** Do ye suppose that ye shall dwell with him under a consciousness of your guilt? Do ye suppose that ye could be happy to dwell with that holy Being, when your souls are racked with a consciousness of guilt that ye have ever abused his laws? Behold, I say unto you that ye would be more miserable to dwell with a holy and just God, under a consciousness of your filthiness before him, than ye would to dwell with the damned souls in hell.

**Mormon 9:18-20** Moroni gives a logical discourse on miracles. And if there were miracles wrought then, why has God ceased to be a God of miracles and yet be an unchangeable Being? And behold, I say unto you he changeth not; if so he would cease to be God; and he ceaseth not to be God, and is a God of miracles.

**1 And now, I speak also concerning those who do not believe in Christ.**

**2 Behold, will ye believe in the day of your visitation—behold, when the Lord shall come, yea, even that great day when the earth shall be rolled together as a scroll, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, yea, in that great day when ye shall be brought to stand before the Lamb of God—then will ye say that there is no God?**

**verse 2 “in the day of your visitation”** Moroni asks the non-believers, “Will you believe in Christ on the day you actually see him?” This “day of visitation” is the day when the Lord visits the earth, to rule and reign for a thousand years. Since we will not all live to see his second coming, there is another meaning to the phrase “in the day of your visitation.” At the time of our death we will be brought before him for the partial judgment. Then we shall be either lifted up in paradise and quickened by his transforming glory or suffer with others in spirit prison who have spurned his message and scoffed at his sufferings and death.

**“the earth shall be rolled together as a scroll, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat”** Here is a graphic description of the dramatic physical changes the earth will undergo at the onset of the Millennium. The glory of the Lord will effect this change, and only those of a terrestrial or celestial glory will be able to abide his presence and tolerate the conditions on earth at that time. We will have a new heaven and a new earth, and all the corruptible things on earth will be removed. The bodies of those who are telestial or even lower will be consumed in the fires of his glory, and their spirits sent immediately to “hell” in the spirit world—the spirit prison. There they will remain until the time of the second resurrection at the end of the Millennium.

Moroni, betraying a bit of frustration over the intransigence he sees in the latter days, also asks, “And in the day of the final judgment, when you are brought to stand

before the Savior, will you still say there is no God?" I do not wish to make light of Moroni's frustration, but I can almost hear him saying, "HELLO! Is there anyone in there?!!"

**3 Then will ye longer deny the Christ, or can ye behold the Lamb of God? Do ye suppose that ye shall dwell with him under a consciousness of your guilt? Do ye suppose that ye could be happy to dwell with that holy Being, when your souls are racked with a consciousness of guilt that ye have ever abused his laws?**

**verse 3** Moroni begins this verse with a question to the non-believer that has an obvious answer. The non-believer will then be compelled to answer: "No, I see him and can't continue to say I don't believe in him."

Moroni then asks the non-believer, whose conscience is racked with guilt, if he thinks he would be happy living with Christ in that condition. The obvious answer is that no one who feels unworthy will be happy living with the Savior and with the Father.

**4 Behold, I say unto you that ye would be more miserable to dwell with a holy and just God, under a consciousness of your filthiness before him, than ye would to dwell with the damned souls in hell.**

**5 For behold, when ye shall be brought to see your nakedness before God, and also the glory of God, and the holiness of Jesus Christ, it will kindle a flame of unquenchable fire upon you.**

**verses 4-5** The unrighteous would be miserable living in the presence of God. Orson Pratt declared:

I have often heard blasphemers and drunkards and abominable characters say, I really hope I shall at last get to heaven. If they get there, they will be in the most miserable place they could be in. Were they to behold the face of God, or the angels, it would kindle in them a flame of unquenchable fire; it would be the very worst place a wicked man could get into: he would much rather go and dwell in hell with the Devil and his host (*JD*, 7:89).

**verse 5** "it will kindle a flame of unquenchable fire upon you" Joseph Smith taught that the inner torment of disappointment in the mind of man, the pangs of conscience in the face of his wilful sin, is as a lake of fire and brimstone (*TPJS*, 357).

**6 O then ye unbelieving, turn ye unto the Lord; cry mightily unto the Father in the name of Jesus, that perhaps ye may be found spotless, pure, fair, and white, having been cleansed by the blood of the Lamb, at that great and last day.**

**verse 6** Then Moroni counsels the unbeliever to repent and receive Christ. Speaking of all those in the world of spirits, we know that eventually "every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess" that Jesus is the Christ" (*Mosiah* 27:31), including all of those in spirit prison who will eventually be judged worthy of terrestrial or telestial glory.

The only exceptions are those few who remain “filthy still” (2 Nephi 9:16). These latter few will go with Satan and become sons of perdition.

**7 And again I speak unto you who deny the revelations of God, and say that they are done away, that there are no revelations, nor prophecies, nor gifts, nor healing, nor speaking with tongues, and the interpretation of tongues;**

**8 Behold I say unto you, he that denieth these things knoweth not the gospel of Christ; yea, he has not read the scriptures; if so, he does not understand them.**

**verses 7-8** A loving God will always manifest himself to his people and speak to them through his prophets. Only an absence of any person on the earth with sufficient righteousness—a state of apostasy—would prevent him from doing so.

**9 For do we not read that God is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and in him there is no variableness neither shadow of changing?**

**verse 9** The concept explained in this verse is a rich and vital one. We are governed by God’s law. That law is absolute, completely reliable, unvarying, and its consequences are inescapable. For every action there is an identical result. These results follow without respect to person. It has always been thus, in Adam’s day just as in ours and in the eternities to come. An expression which is closely related to this verse is “the course of the Lord is one eternal round” (1 Nephi 10:18-19). Our God was a God of miracles, he is a God of miracles, and he will always be so. He has always spoken to the people of earth through his prophets and will continue to do so.

**10 And now if ye have imagined up unto yourselves a god who doth vary, and in whom there is shadow of changing, then have ye imagined up unto yourselves a god who is not God of miracles.**

**11 But behold, I will show unto you a God of miracles, even the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and it is that same God who created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are.**

**12 Behold he created Adam, and by Adam came the fall of man. And because of the fall of man came Jesus Christ, even the Father and the Son; and because of Jesus Christ came the redemption of man.**

**verses 11-12** It is clear that these two verses refer to the Son, Jesus Christ—Jehovah.

**“Behold he created Adam”** This phrase needs a bit of explanation. We know that neither the Father or Jesus created the intelligence that is the essence of Adam’s individuality. Indeed, intelligences are not created but are co-eternal with God (D&C 93:29). We know that somehow Jesus did participate in the organization of the spirit bodies in which the intelligences were clothed (D&C 93:10), even though these bodies were begotten of the Father and an Eternal Mother by a divine procreative process.

Jesus may also be said to be the Creator of Adam in the sense that he organized the earthly materials which became the mortal tabernacle of Adam. Adam's paradisiacal or terrestrial body, in which he lived in the garden of Eden, was likely born to parents with celestial eternal bodies. Their identity is unknown though it is possible that the Father himself came to earth, "charged" himself with the materials of this earth, and then sired Adam (*JD*, 4:218).

**"And because of the fall of man came Jesus Christ"** This sentence refers to the atonement of the Savior.

**verse 12** This verse provides a succinct summary of the creation, the fall, and the atonement. These are, according to Elder Bruce R. McConkie, "the three pillars of eternity" and are inextricably linked to one another.

**verses 13-14** Please do not take these next two verses for granted. They are vital and contain some of the clearest teachings on the doctrine of the atonement found in all of the scripture. There is no clear explanation of this vital doctrine found in the Old Testament, and a study of the New Testament has led to much confusion (see also 2 Nephi 2:6-13; 2 Nephi 9:6-16; Alma 34:13-16; and Alma 42:13-26).

**13 And because of the redemption of man, which came by Jesus Christ, they are brought back into the presence of the Lord; yea, this is wherein all men are redeemed, because the death of Christ bringeth to pass the resurrection, which bringeth to pass a redemption from an endless sleep, from which sleep all men shall be awakened by the power of God when the trump shall sound; and they shall come forth, both small and great, and all shall stand before his bar, being redeemed and loosed from this eternal band of death, which death is a temporal death.**

**verses 12-13** The words *redeem* and *redemption* mean something like rescue, or effect a release from captivity, often by payment. It is used in the scriptures with a few different meanings:

1. The first and ultimate meaning is that Christ redeems us when he grants us the opportunity for salvation or exaltation. This redemption is, of course, conditional and based upon man's accepting Christ, being obedient to his gospel and repenting. This verse speaks of this redemption—"And because of the redemption of man, which came by Jesus Christ, they are brought back into the presence of the Lord."

2. The second meaning is that all mankind is redeemed in that they will all be resurrected. "Now, verily I say unto you, that through the redemption which is made for you is brought to pass the resurrection from the dead. And the spirit and the body are the soul of man. And the resurrection from the dead is the redemption of the soul" (D&C 88:14-16; see also Mormon 9:12-13; Helaman 14:17). This verse also speaks of

this type of redemption: “this is wherein all men are redeemed, because the death of Christ bringeth to pass the resurrection.”

The scriptures teach that Christ came into the world to “redeem the children of men from the fall” (2 Nephi 2:26). This redemption includes both definitions 1 and 2.

3. It is also possible to be redeemed in this life. Forgiveness of sin constitutes redemption from sin. By virtue of Christ’s atoning blood, a man may be redeemed from sin as he repents and comes to (obeys) Christ (2 Nephi 1:15; Alma 5:21; 9:27; Mosiah 27:24). A mortal who persists in righteousness may receive an assurance of his eventual exaltation. This is the gift of hope (D&C 131:5-6). Father Lehi rejoiced: “The Lord hath redeemed my soul from hell; I have beheld his glory, and I am encircled about eternally in the arms of his love” (2 Nephi 1:15).

**“the death of Christ bringeth to pass the resurrection, which bringeth to pass a redemption from an endless sleep, from which sleep all men shall be awakened by the power of God”** Moroni’s language is figurative here for there is no “endless sleep,” or, for that matter, “sleep” of any kind at death. Had the atonement not been made, the physical body, figuratively speaking, would have “slept in the grave,” that is, remained in the grave. This is the same sense as that in which Paul speaks of Jesus’s becoming the “firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Corinthians 15:20), that is, the first among all those who have died to overcome death, be resurrected, and come forth from the grave.

These two verses illustrate an example of the Hebrew poetic form called *climax*. In 1898 the biblical scholar E. W. Bullinger identified this poetic form in the Bible. Climax is Greek for “ladder.” He described this unique form in the Bible as “a beautiful figure, very expressive; and at once attracts our attention to the importance of a passage” (*Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, 256-259). Climax occurs when the same word or words found at the end of one clause are repeated at or near the beginning of the next clause. The structure of a passage presents an ascension of thought, going up by steps from one level to the next. Bullinger provides the following biblical example of climax, found in Joel 1:3-4. To make the form easily recognizable, the verse has been structured with the repeated words aligned on the left:

Tell ye  
 your children of it, and let  
 your children tell  
 their children, and  
 their children another generation. That which the  
 palmerworm hath left hath the  
 locust eaten; and that which the  
 locust hath left hath the  
 cankerworm eaten; and that which the  
 cankerworm hath left hath the caterpillar eaten.

Note the four sets of repeated words: *your children, their children, locust, and cankerworm*. This duplication creates a continuation of thought from one segment to the next. In a dramatic way, four generations of one family are spoken of (ye, your children, their children, and another generation). This structure indicates an ascension of thought from the first generation to the last. The four generations parallel another gradation of thought—the four “generations” of the caterpillar family: the palmerworm, locust, cankerworm, and caterpillar.

In this particular verse here in Mormon 9, this poetic form may be illustrated as follows:

Behold, he created  
Adam, and by  
Adam came  
the fall of man. And because of  
the fall of man came  
Jesus Christ, even the Father and the Son; and because of  
Jesus Christ came the  
redemption of man. And because of the  
redemption of man, which came by  
Jesus Christ, they are brought back into the  
presence of the Lord.

The key words and concepts repeated in this passage are *Adam, fall of man, Jesus Christ, and redemption of man*. They create a series of parallel statements. Through these statements Adam is seen as a character complementary to Jesus Christ, and the concept of the fall of man stands opposite to the redemption of man. Through Adam (the “first man Adam,” the Apostle Paul says) came the fall of man, but through Jesus Christ came the redemption of man (see 1 Corinthians 15:45).

A similar passage is found in 1 Corinthians 15:22, where the words *Adam, Jesus, die, and alive* are found in the couplet—“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Because of Jesus Christ’s infinite atonement, repentant souls “are brought back into the presence of the Lord.”

Bullinger discovered climax in the Bible more than six decades after the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. For that reason, and because of the scarcity of climax in the Old Testament, it is highly improbable that Joseph Smith was aware of this poetic device. Rather than attribute the approximately ten examples (see 1 Nephi 15:13-20, 33-35; 2 Nephi 1:13; Mosiah 2:17-19; Alma 42:17-20; Helaman 5:6-8; Ether 3:15-16; Moroni 8:25-26) of climax in the Book of Mormon to happenstance or to Joseph Smith’s uncommon literary knowledge and skill, it is more reasonable to accept that the Book of Mormon authors who used climax belonged to an ancient Near Eastern literary tradition corresponding to that of the Old Testament.

**14 And then cometh the judgment of the Holy One upon them; and then cometh the time that he that is filthy shall be filthy still; and he that is righteous shall be righteous still; he that is happy shall be happy still; and he that is unhappy shall be unhappy still.**

**verse 14** Here again, the scriptures speak of the great final judgment which follows the resurrection. We have mentioned previously that this judgment is a formal pronouncement of blessings and condemnations. We have also spoken previously of a hierarchy of judges who will preside at this formal ceremonial judgment (see Mormon 3:18-19). But the essence of the judgment has already been made since the resurrected beings will stand at the judgment bar with celestial, terrestrial, telestial, or perdition bodies.

This verse also speaks of the “law of restoration” or the law of the harvest: “Whatsoever ye sow, that shall ye also reap; therefore, if ye sow good ye shall also reap good for your reward” (D&C 6:33; see also the introductory commentary for Alma 41).

**“he that is filthy shall be filthy still”** Because of the wording, this seems to be a reference to the sons of perdition.

**15 And now, O all ye that have imagined up unto yourselves a god who can do no miracles, I would ask of you, have all these things passed, of which I have spoken? Has the end come yet? Behold I say unto you, Nay; and God has not ceased to be a God of miracles.**

**verse 15 “have all these things passed, of which I have spoken”** Moroni has been speaking of resurrection and the judgment and the end of the earth. He now asks, “Have these things passed?” The implication is that since they have not yet passed, then life continues on, and God is still a God of miracles.

**16 Behold, are not the things that God hath wrought marvelous in our eyes? Yea, and who can comprehend the marvelous works of God?**

**17 Who shall say that it was not a miracle that by his word the heaven and the earth should be; and by the power of his word man was created of the dust of the earth; and by the power of his word have miracles been wrought?**

**verse 17 “man was created of the dust of the earth”** We know, of course, that all men and women, including Adam and Eve were literally born and not merely created in the sense that a sculptor creates a statue. This phrase is figurative only and suggests that man’s mortal body is made up mortal materials of this earth.

**18 And who shall say that Jesus Christ did not many mighty miracles? And there were many mighty miracles wrought by the hands of the apostles.**

**19 And if there were miracles wrought then, why has God ceased to be a God of miracles and yet be an unchangeable Being? And behold, I say unto you he**

changeth not; if so he would cease to be God; and he ceaseth not to be God, and is a God of miracles.

**verse 19** “I say unto you he changeth not; if so he would cease to be God”

Is it actually possible for God to cease to be God? Apparently, it is theoretically possible, though we know it will never happen (see the commentary for Alma 42:13).

**20** And the reason why he ceaseth to do miracles among the children of men is because that they dwindle in unbelief, and depart from the right way, and know not the God in whom they should trust.

**21** Behold, I say unto you that whoso believeth in Christ, doubting nothing, whatsoever he shall ask the Father in the name of Christ it shall be granted him; and this promise is unto all, even unto the ends of the earth.

**verse 21** Moroni refers, in this verse, to the thoroughly converted individual who enjoys a closeness of the Spirit of God. When this individual prays, he asks for those things for which he should pray, as taught him by the Spirit (see 2 Nephi 32:5). It is for this reason that he is granted whatsoever he asks.

**22** For behold, thus said Jesus Christ, the Son of God, unto his disciples who should tarry, yea, and also to all his disciples, in the hearing of the multitude: Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;

**23** And he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned;

**verses 22-23** It is interesting that in the midst of warning that only the believers in Christ will be spared the terrible latter-day destruction that is coming, Moroni cites a statement by the Savior during his earthly sojourn with his Nephite disciples regarding the importance of promulgating the gospel. Bruce A. Van Orden wrote:

My interpretation of this quotation, taken in Moroni’s context, is that the latter-day readers of the Book of Mormon will reap untold blessings by contributing to the preaching of the gospel to all the world. They will thereby strengthen their faith in their Savior Jesus Christ, they will turn from their sins and unto the God of Mercy, they will witness and be blessed by wondrous miracles in the course of their ministry, and they will abide the day of the second coming and be found on the right hand of the Lord Jesus Christ (“Preach the Gospel to Every Creature” in *The Book of Mormon: Fourth Nephi through Moroni, from Zion to Destruction*, 324).

**24** And these signs shall follow them that believe—in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover;



**verses 22-24** Moroni is obviously quoting here from words spoken by the Savior to his Nephite “disciples who should tarry”—the three translated Nephite apostles. It is interesting that we have no record in the Book of Mormon text of these words. We do have a record of the Savior’s having spoken these words during his Palestine ministry (Mark 16:15-18). We also know that Mormon was able to include in his record only a small part of that which was spoken by the Savior to the Nephites (3 Nephi 26:6-7).

**“he that believeth not shall be damned”** For a brief discussion of what it means to be damned, see the commentary for 2 Nephi 9:24.

**25 And whosoever shall believe in my name, doubting nothing, unto him will I confirm all my words, even unto the ends of the earth.**

**verse 25** The resurrected Lord charged his eleven apostles in the Old World: “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover” (Mark 16:15-18).

When Jesus gave to the Nephite Twelve the command to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, he also did so with the promise that signs would follow them that believed. This verse is the Nephite version of that same charge to the Old World apostles recorded in Mark.

**26 And now, behold, who can stand against the works of the Lord? Who can deny his sayings? Who will rise up against the almighty power of the Lord? Who will despise the works of the Lord? Who will despise the children of Christ? Behold, all ye who are despisers of the works of the Lord, for ye shall wonder and perish.**

**verse 26 “ye shall wonder and perish”** To the non-believers, Moroni promises that they will “wonder” and “perish.” To “wonder” is to doubtfully consider. To “perish” is to die spiritually.

**27 O then despise not, and wonder not, but hearken unto the words of the Lord, and ask the Father in the name of Jesus for what things soever ye shall stand in need. Doubt not, but be believing, and begin as in times of old, and come unto the Lord with all your heart, and work out your own salvation with fear and trembling before him.**

**verse 27 “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling”** We are counseled by Moroni to “work out our own salvation,” that is, concentrate on good works and obedience and repentance. We must “come unto the Lord with all [our] heart” and

seek to do whatever he should ask of us. But his plan is that we should do these things with “fear and trembling”—in the realm of faith wherein our knowledge of him is imperfect. We are lost without him and therefore utterly dependent upon him. Yet, he will allow us to serve and worship him here in mortality without perfect knowledge, without experiencing him with our five senses. In the end he will reward us for our “fear and trembling” with peace and sure knowledge.

**28 Be wise in the days of your probation; strip yourselves of all uncleanness; ask not, that ye may consume it on your lusts, but ask with a firmness unshaken, that ye will yield to no temptation, but that ye will serve the true and living God.**

**verse 28 “ask not, that ye may consume it on your lusts”** When we pray, we must learn to pray for those things in which the Spirit prompts us. If we pray for something that merely appeases our earthly or worldly appetites, then we are said to be asking for that thing “that [we] may consume it on [our] lusts.” James explained: “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume [it] upon your lusts” (James 4:3).

**29 See that ye are not baptized unworthily; see that ye partake not of the sacrament of Christ unworthily; but see that ye do all things in worthiness, and do it in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God; and if ye do this, and endure to the end, ye will in nowise be cast out.**

**verse 29 “ye will in nowise be cast out”** Moroni could have said instead, “ye will be blessed.” Here he uses a figure of speech called antenantiosis which is discussed in the commentary for Jacob 4:8. In using this figure of speech, which involves stating an expression in terms of its negated opposite, his intent is to promise that the faithful who endure will be blessed beyond measure.

**30 Behold, I speak unto you as though I spake from the dead; for I know that ye shall have my words.**

**verse 30** Our generation was shown to Moroni. He knew about us and our times and challenges. He is writing to no audience other than us, people in this final dispensation, both in and out of the Church. Elder Russell M. Nelson pointed out, “Most books contained in libraries of the world, were authored for contemporary readers. . . . Not so with the Book of Mormon. It was written anciently for our day” (*CR*, October 1999, 69-70).

**31 Condemn me not because of mine imperfection, neither my father, because of his imperfection, neither them who have written before him; but rather give thanks unto God that he hath made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may learn to be more wise than we have been.**

**verse 31** Moroni advises us to be grateful for his weaknesses and the weaknesses and errors of the other Book of Mormon prophets because we can learn from them. It's probably fair to say that we are justified in regarding Moroni as being overly modest.

**32 And now, behold, we have written this record according to our knowledge, in the characters which are called among us the reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech.**

**verse 32** This is the only verse in the Book of Mormon that applies a name to the form of writing or "language" in which the Book of Mormon plates were written. And, what is "reformed Egyptian"? It is fundamentally the Hebrew language recorded using a reformed or cursive version of Egyptian hieroglyphics. It is likely that Moroni's reformed Egyptian is different than Nephi's reformed Egyptian, since over the centuries it had been "handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech." Please review the supplemental article, *The Language of the Book of Mormon*.

**33 And if our plates had been sufficiently large we should have written in Hebrew; but the Hebrew hath been altered by us also; and if we could have written in Hebrew, behold, ye would have had no imperfection in our record.**

**verse 33** Make note of the fact that some one thousand years after Lehi's family left Jerusalem, the people of the Book of Mormon are still speaking the Hebrew language, albeit an "altered" form of Hebrew. See also the supplementary article *The Hebrew Language and the Book of Mormon*. Moroni clearly implies that he is more comfortable with his abilities to compose in Hebrew than he is writing in reformed Egyptian. This suggests that an altered form of Hebrew was in continual use as a spoken tongue throughout the Nephites' tenure in the Americas.

**34 But the Lord knoweth the things which we have written, and also that none other people knoweth our language; and because that none other people knoweth our language, therefore he hath prepared means for the interpretation thereof.**

**verse 34 "none other people knoweth our language"** This is a rather remarkable statement for Moroni to make after some 1,000 years of Nephite history. After all, did not the Hebrew language spoken by the Nephites and Mulekites pervade the entire area of Book of Mormon lands? See the important commentary on this statement by Moroni in the supplemental article, *Book of Mormon Myths* (see especially myth six).

**"he hath prepared means for the interpretation thereof"** Truly, one of the most remarkable aspects of the restoration of the gospel is the miraculous way in which the plates were "translated" by the Prophet Joseph. See *Ye Shall Know of the Doctrine*, volume 2, Appendix A, *The Process of Translating the Book of Mormon*.

**35 And these things are written that we may rid our garments of the blood of our brethren, who have dwindled in unbelief.**

**verse 35** Moroni and the other prophet-writers of the Book of Mormon have absolved themselves of any responsibility for our sins. They have conveyed the Lord's doctrines to us. They have warned us. And now the "ball is in our court." They bear no blame or responsibility for our response to the book.

**36 And behold, these things which we have desired concerning our brethren, yea, even their restoration to the knowledge of Christ, are according to the prayers of all the saints who have dwelt in the land.**

**verse 36** The term "restoration to the knowledge of Christ" refers to the spiritual gathering explained in the commentary for 1 Nephi 19:14.

**"according to the prayers of all the saints who have dwelt in the land"** It is poignant to know that not only did the Book of Mormon prophets pray that scattered Israel would gather to Zion in the latter days, but also all the righteous people in Mormon and Moroni's day knew of us and prayed for our welfare.

**37 And may the Lord Jesus Christ grant that their prayers may be answered according to their faith; and may God the Father remember the covenant which he hath made with the house of Israel; and may he bless them forever, through faith on the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.**

**verse 37** If the reader wishes to review, yet again, the Abrahamic covenant, see the commentary for Mormon 7:10.