

January 1–7: Introductory Pages of the Book of Mormon, "Another Testament of Jesus Christ"

The Title Page

Who wrote the Title Page?

Joseph Smith

"I wish also to mention here, that the Title Page of the Book of Mormon is a literal translation, taken from the very last leaf, on the left hand side of the collection or book of plates." (The Joseph Smith Papers, History, 1838–1856, volume A-1 [23 December 1805–30 August 1834])

Given the content and the fact that it was the last leaf we can conclude that it was written by Moroni

What does the Title Page tell us about the Book of Mormon?

What it is

An Account Written by the Hand of Mormon upon Plates Taken from the Plates of Nephi—Wherefore, it is an abridgment of the record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites...

An abridgment taken from the Book of Ether also, which is a record of the people of Jared, who were scattered at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, when they were building a tower to get to heaven

For whom was it written

Written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile

How it was prepared

Written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of prophecy and of revelation—Written and sealed up, and hid up unto the Lord, that they might not be destroyed—To come forth by the gift and power of God unto the interpretation thereof—Sealed by the hand of Moroni, and hid up unto the Lord, to come forth in due time by way of the Gentile—The interpretation thereof by the gift of God...

And now, if there are faults they are the mistakes of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment-seat of Christ.

It's purpose

Which is to show unto the remnant of the house of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever—And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD, manifesting himself unto all nations

The Purpose of the Book of Mormon

Moroni wasn't the only writer who stated the purpose of the Book of Mormon. Let's read some others

Witness Jesus is the Christ

Nephi, in his closing chapter, stresses that what he has written are the words of Christ and that they are written to persuade us to believe in Christ

2 Nephi 33:10

10] And now, my beloved brethren, and also Jew, and all ye ends of the earth, hearken unto these words and believe in Christ; and if ye believe not in these words believe in Christ. And if ye shall believe in Christ ye will believe in these words, for they are the words of Christ, and he hath given them unto me; and they teach all men that they should do good.

Mormon stated the same intent towards the end of his writings.

Mormon 3:21

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.

Note the he states, "that ye may believe the gospel of Jesus Christ, which ye shall have among you". The Book of Mormon is to help us believe in the restored gospel of Jesus Christ.

Restore Truth and Knowledge

An angle speaking to Nephi said that many plain and precious parts of the gospel would be restored through the Book of Mormon

1 Nephi 13:34-36

34] And it came to pass that the angel of the Lord spake unto me, saying: Behold, saith the Lamb of God, after I have visited the remnant of the house of Israel—and this remnant of whom I speak is the seed of thy father—wherefore, after I have visited them in judgment, and smitten them by the hand of the Gentiles, and after the Gentiles do stumble exceedingly, because of the most plain and precious parts of the gospel of the Lamb which have been kept back by that abominable church, which is the mother of harlots, saith the Lamb—I will be merciful unto the Gentiles in that day, insomuch that I will bring forth unto them, in mine own power, much of my gospel, which shall be plain and precious, saith the Lamb.

35] For, behold, saith the Lamb: I will manifest myself unto thy seed, that they shall write many things which I shall minister unto them, which shall be plain and precious; and after thy seed shall be destroyed, and dwindle in unbelief, and also the seed of thy brethren, behold, these things shall be hid up, to come forth unto the Gentiles, by the gift and power of the Lamb.

36] And in them shall be written my gospel, saith the Lamb, and my rock and my salvation.

Why do the Gentiles “stumble exceedingly”?

(because of the most plain and precious parts of the gospel of the Lamb which have been kept back)

How will the Book of Mormon resolve this?

(which shall be plain and precious
in them shall be written my gospel, saith the Lamb, and my rock and my salvation)

Can you think of any doctrine of the gospel that is clarified in the Book of Mormon?

Resurrection and Atonement (Amulek to the Zoramites)

Christ's teachings while in mortality (3Ne)

The name of Christ's church (3Ne)

Sacrament (Moroni)

Four principle of the gospel:

Faith explanation (Alma) example (Bro of Jared)

Repentance (King Benjamin)

Baptism (Alma and Mormon)

Holy Ghost (Moroni)

The point that the Book of Mormon contains a fullness of His gospel is also made clear in the D&C

D&C 20:8-12

8] And gave him power from on high, by the means which were before prepared, to translate the Book of Mormon;

9] Which contains a record of a fallen people, and the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles and to the Jews also;

10] Which was given by inspiration, and is confirmed to others by the ministering of angels, and is declared unto the world by them—

11] Proving to the world that the holy scriptures are true, and that God does inspire men and call them to his holy work in this age and generation, as well as in generations of old;

Confirm the Bible is the Word of God

Another purpose of the Book of Mormon is to confirm the Bible contains the word of God

From the Title Page we can feel confident that the Book of Mormon has not been corrupted.

Title Page

“Written and sealed up, and hid up unto the Lord... to come forth by the gift and power of God.... The interpretation thereof by the gift of God”

Mormon speaks of how the Book of Mormon and the Bible work together

Mormon 7:8-9

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.

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.

How does the Book of Mormon help us believe the Bible?

(Spoke to prophets, Bible authenticity, confirms Bible stories)

Jeffrey R. Holland

"About the only thing these contending religions [at the time of Joseph Smith] had in common was, ironically, a belief in the Bible... Clearly the Bible, so frequently described at that time as 'common ground,' was nothing of the kind—unfortunately it was a battleground.

"Thus one of the great purposes of continuing revelation through living prophets is to declare to the world through additional witnesses that the Bible is true. 'This is written,' an ancient prophet said, speaking of the Book of Mormon, 'for the intent that ye may believe that.'" (CR, April 1991)

Affirm God's Covenants to Israel

This point was made by Moroni in the Title Page

Title Page

“Which is to show unto the remnant of the House of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever”

Lets read what Mormon said towards the end of his record

Mormon 5:14-15

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;

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.

How is the message to the Jews different from the message to the Lamanites?

(Jews – that they may be persuaded that Jesus is the Christ)

(Lamanites – more fully believe his gospel, which shall go forth unto them from the Gentiles)

Warn This Generation

Towards the end of his writings Mormon makes it clear that he has seen our day and warns us of our iniquities.

Mormon 8:35-38

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.

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?

What conditions does he warn us about?

(pride, greed, lack of charity, false teachers)

Moroni also has a specific warning to us in our day

Ether 8:23-22

22 And whatsoever nation shall uphold such secret combinations, to get power and gain, until they shall spread over the nation, behold, they shall be destroyed; for the Lord will not suffer that the blood of his saints, which shall be shed by them, shall always cry unto him from the ground for vengeance upon them and yet he avenge them not.

23 Wherefore, O ye Gentiles, it is wisdom in God that these things should be shown unto you, that thereby ye may repent of your sins, and suffer not that these murderous combinations shall get above you, which are built up to get power and gain—and the work, yea, even the work of destruction come upon you, yea, even the sword of the justice of the Eternal God shall fall upon you, to your overthrow and destruction if ye shall suffer these things to be.

What conditions does he warn us about?

(And whatsoever nation shall uphold such secret combinations, to get power and gain, until they shall spread over the nation, behold, they shall be destroyed)

Prove and Prepare His Children

3 Nephi 26:6,9-11

6 And now there cannot be written in this book even a hundredth part of the things which Jesus did truly teach unto the people;

9 And when they shall have received this, which is expedient that they should have first, to try their faith, and if it shall so be that they shall believe these things then shall the greater things be made manifest unto them.

10 And if it so be that they will not believe these things, then shall the greater things be withheld from them, unto their condemnation.

11 Behold, I was about to write them, all which were engraven upon the plates of Nephi, but the Lord forbade it, saying: I will try the faith of my people.

According to this passage, what is a purpose of the Book of Mormon?

(I will try the faith of my people)

And if the Book of Mormon is believed, what then?

(then shall the greater things be made manifest unto them)

And if they are not believed?

(then shall the greater things be withheld from them)

What might these 'greater things' include?

The last verse written by both Nephi and Moroni all talk about the judgment. Mormon also states that a purpose of the Book of Mormon is to judge our works

2 Nephi 33:15

15 For what I seal on earth, shall be brought against you at the judgment bar; for thus hath the Lord commanded me, and I must obey. Amen.

Moroni 10:34

34 And now I bid unto all, farewell. I soon go to rest in the paradise of God, until my spirit and body shall again reunite, and I am brought forth triumphant through the air, to meet you before the pleasing bar of the great Jehovah, the Eternal Judge of both quick and dead. Amen.

Mormon 3:20

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;

What is stated here as a purpose of the Book of Mormon?

(And for this cause I write unto you, that ye may know that ye must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ)

Spiritual Blessings

Marion G. Romney emphasized how the Book of Mormon can be a source of spiritual blessing for individuals and families

Marion G. Romney

“By [reading the Book of Mormon] we will fill and refresh our minds with a constant flow of that ‘water’ which Jesus said would be in us ‘... a well of water springing up into everlasting life.’ (John 4:14) We must obtain a continuing supply of this water if we are to resist evil and retain the blessings of being born again....

“We must pursue a course which will daily feed our minds with and call them back to the things of the spirit. I know of no better way to do this than by reading the Book of Mormon....

“All of us need continuing close contact with the Spirit of the Lord. We need to take the Holy Spirit for our guide that we be not deceived. I am persuaded by my

own experience and that of my loved ones, as well as by the statement of the Prophet Joseph Smith, that one can get and keep closer to the Lord by reading the Book of Mormon than by reading any other book. Don't be content with what someone else says about what is in it. Drink deeply from the divine fountain itself". (CR, April 1960)

And for our family

Marion G. Romney

"I feel certain that if, in our homes, parents will read from the Book of Mormon prayerfully and regularly, both by themselves and with their children the spirit of that great book will come to permeate our homes and all who dwell therein. The spirit of reverence will increase, mutual respect and consideration for each other will grow. The spirit of contention will depart. Parents will counsel their children in greater love and wisdom. Children will be more responsive and submissive to that counsel. Righteousness will increase. Faith, hope, and charity - the pure love of Christ - will abound in our homes and lives, bringing in their wake peace, joy, and happiness". (CR, April 1960)

Testimony of the Three and Eight Witnesses

Joseph was under pressure to show the plates that he was given if he wanted people to believe the work he was doing was true. In Section 5 he was promised that this would eventually happen

D&C 5:7,10-11,15-16

7 Behold, if they will not believe my words, they would not believe you, my servant Joseph, if it were possible that you should show them all these things which I have committed unto you.

10 But this generation shall have my word through you;

11 And in addition to your testimony, the testimony of three of my servants, whom I shall call and ordain, unto whom I will show these things, and they shall go forth with my words that are given through you.

15 And the testimony of three witnesses will I send forth of my word.

16 And behold, whosoever believeth on my words, them will I visit with the manifestation of my Spirit; and they shall be born of me, even of water and of the Spirit

What does the Lord say about whether or not seeing the plates would have an impact on Joseph's detractors?

(if they will not believe my words, they would not believe you... if it were possible that you should show them all these things)

What is he told will be given to those who do believe on the Lords words even if they don't see the plates?

(whosoever believeth on my words, them will I visit with the manifestation of my Spirit; and they shall be born of me)

In verse 11 he is told that 3 others, besides himself, will witness the plates thru the power of God and that their testimony will “go forth with my words”

The Testimony of the Three Witnesses

“And we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; and we know that it is by the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true.”

Dallin H. Oaks

“The testimony of the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon stands forth in great strength. Each of the three had ample reason and opportunity to renounce his testimony if it had been false, or to equivocate on details if any had been inaccurate. As is well known, because of disagreements or jealousies involving other leaders of the Church, each one of these three witnesses was excommunicated from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints by about eight years after the publication of their testimony. All three went their separate ways, with no common interest to support a collusive effort. Yet to the end of their lives—periods ranging from 12 to 50 years after their excommunications—not one of these witnesses deviated from his published testimony or said anything that cast any shadow on its truthfulness.” (CR, April 1999)

Joseph’s mother recorded the impact of have these witnesses had on him personally

Lucy Mack Smith

“When Joseph came in [to the Whitmer home], he threw himself down beside me. ‘Father! Mother! you do not know how happy I am. The Lord has caused the plates to be shown to three more besides me, who have also seen an angel and will have to testify to the truth of what I have said, for they know for themselves that I do not go about to deceive the people. And I do feel as though I was relieved of a dreadful burden which was almost too much for me to endure. But they will now have to bear a part, and it does rejoice my soul that I am not any longer to be entirely alone in the world.’” (“The History of Joseph Smith by his Mother, pg. 66)