

# Gospel Doctrine Lesson 44: "I Speak unto You As If Ye Were Present" (Mormon 7-9)

**LESSON GOAL:** To help us understand the warnings and counsel given by Mormon and Moroni to people living in the latter days.

- These chapters come from Mormon and his son Moroni.
- Mormon was given responsibility for the plates in 321 AD and actually received them 14 years later in 335 AD.
- He died about 385 AD, so he labored on the plates for about 50 years.
- Moroni received the plates in 385 AD and completed his record in 421 AD—36 years later.
- Between them, these two had responsibility for the record for 100 years and worked on it for 86 years.

## 1. Mormon exhorts the latter-day descendants of Lehi to repent, believe in Christ, and be baptized.

**Rex C. Reeve, Jr.:** "In a special way, the Book of Mormon was written to the Lamanites, the descendants of Lehi, as a major tool to restore them to Christ. It seems that the righteous Nephite prophets, knowing the destruction of their own people, wrote with special feelings to the future Lamanites. Mormon in his final chapter said, 'And now, behold, I would speak somewhat unto the remnant of this people who are spared' (7:1); and Moroni in his last chapter said, 'Now I, Moroni, write somewhat as seemeth me good; and I write unto my brethren, the Lamanites' (10:1)" (*Book of Mormon Symposium Series, 2 Nephi*, edited by PR Cheesman, MS Nyman, and CD Tate, Jr., 1988, 2).

### **Mormon 7: In Mormon's final plea and loving advice to our civilization, Mormon proclaimed the following:**

- a. "Know ye that **ye are of the house of Israel**." (Mormon 7:2)
  - **Cannot reach your potential until you know who you are.**
- b. "Know ye that ye must come unto **repentance or ye cannot be saved**." (Mormon 7:3)
- c. 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." (Mormon 7:4)
  - These words come from Mormon, a military leader of fifty years.
- d. "Know ye that ye must **come to the knowledge of your fathers** . . ." (Mormon 7:5)
- e. ". . . And **repent of all your sins** and iniquities **and believe in Jesus Christ** that He hath risen and bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead." (Mormon 7:5)
- f. "And He hath brought to pass the **redemption of the world** whereby he that is found guiltless at judgment day [will] dwell in the presence of God . . . in a state of happiness which hath no end." (Mormon 7:7)
- g. Therefore **repent and be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ and lay hold upon the gospel of Christ." (Morm. 7:8-9)
  - **Study both the Bible and the Book of Mormon** (Mormon 7:9)

## 2. Moroni prophesies that the Book of Mormon will come forth in a day of great wickedness.

**L. Tom Perry:** "Moroni must have mourned as he described how his people had been hunted by the Lamanites until they were all destroyed. Imagine the **loneliness** he experienced as he reported that **his father** was among those who were killed. We sense that after that great destruction, **Moroni was only living to complete the record**. . . He realized that the record would be a **voice of warning** to nations of the consequences of turning away from the teachings of the Lord. It is from the depths of his **heart** that Moroni cries out to those who will eventually receive this record. **He wants to spare those who read his account the heartache and misery that come from disobedience to God's laws**" (*Living With Enthusiasm*, 63-64).

### **In Mormon 8, Moroni writes prophecy about the time that the Book of Mormon shall come forth.**

- In a day when it shall be said that **miracles are done away with** (v26).
- The blood of the saints shall cry to the Lord because of **secret combinations, the works of darkness** (v27).
- A day when the **power of God shall be denied** (v28).
- **Churches defiled and lifted up in their pride** (v28).
- A day when there shall be **fires, and tempests, and vapors of smoke** in foreign lands (v29).
- **Wars, rumors of wars, and earthquakes** (v30).
- A day when there shall be **great pollutions** upon the face of the earth (**physical and spiritual**) (v31).
- A day of **murders, robbing, lying, deceivings, whoredoms, and all manner of abominations** (v31).
- A day when there is a **lack of responsibility for one's actions**: "...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" (v31).
- A day when **churches** will say that you can be forgiven your sins by **giving money** to the church (v32).

"...when Joseph Smith went to the hill to obtain the plates, he was beset by conflicting emotions. The adversary **sorely tempted him** to desire the plates to relieve his family's poor financial situation. When the Prophet attempted to get the plates, he was forbidden to do so because, as Moroni stated, 'You have not kept the commandments of the Lord.' (cited in Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History*, 49). This lesson had a lasting impression on Joseph Smith as he more clearly saw **how Satan was determined** to stop the coming forth of this sacred record." (*BoM Student Manual*, 1981, 471).

**Spencer W. Kimball:** "Many people spend most of their time **working in the service of a self-image** that includes sufficient money, stocks, bonds, investment portfolios, property, credit cards, furnishings, automobiles, and the like to guarantee carnal security throughout, it is hoped, a long and happy life. Forgotten is the fact that our assignment is to use these many resources in our families and quorums **to build up the kingdom of God**—to further the missionary effort and the genealogical and temple work; to raise our children up as fruitful servants unto the Lord; to bless others in every way, that they may also be fruitful. Instead, **we expend these blessings on our own desires**, and as Moroni said, '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.**' (Morm. 8:39.)" (quoted by Marion G. Romney, (CR, May 1977 Ensign).

**Neal A. Maxwell:** "In urging members of the Church to be more sensitive to other people we seek to avoid the trap the Book of Mormon predicted when it spoke of an age when men and women would allow the needy 'to pass by you and notice them not' (Mormon 8:39). **The Book of Mormon speaks of the need for us to 'be familiar with all.'** (Jacob 2:17.) This is not simply a matter of economic familiarity and of imparting of our economic and material substance to others, for **in an affluent society, food and clothing often are not people's primary needs. We need to be familiar with others psychologically and spiritually—to know them well enough to know their other kinds of needs: spiritual, intellectual, and emotional. We should assist in the meeting of these needs"** (A More Excellent Way, 58).

### 3. Moroni exhorts people in the last days to believe in Christ.

**President Joseph Fielding Smith:** "There can be no salvation without repentance. A man cannot enter into the kingdom of God in his sins. It would be a very inconsistent thing for a man to come into the presence of the Father and to dwell in God's presence in his sins. . . I think there are a great many people upon the earth, many of them perhaps in the Church—at least some in the Church—who have an idea **they can go through this life doing as they please**, violating the commandments of the Lord and yet eventually they are going to come into his presence. They think they are going to repent, perhaps in the spirit world. They ought to read these words of Moroni: '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?"**' (Doctrines of Salvation, 2:196).

**David O. McKay:** "An outstanding doctrine of the Church is that each individual carries the responsibility to work out his own salvation, and salvation is a process of gradual development. The Church does not accept the doctrine that a mere murmured belief in Jesus Christ is all that is necessary. **A man may say he believes, but if he does nothing to make that belief or faith a moving power to do, to accomplish, to produce soul growth, his professing will avail him nothing.** 'Work out your own salvation' is an exhortation to demonstrate by activity, by thoughtful, obedient effort the reality of faith. But this must be done with a consciousness that absolute dependence upon self may produce pride and weakness that will bring failure. **With 'fear and trembling' we should seek the strength and grace of God for inspiration to obtain the final victory.** "To work out one's salvation is not to sit idly by dreaming and yearning for God miraculously to thrust bounteous blessings into our laps. It is to perform daily, hourly, momentarily, if necessary, the immediate task or duty at hand, and to continue happily in such performance as the years come and go, leaving the fruits of such labors either for self or for others to be bestowed as a just and beneficent Father may determine. . . The Lord, through his grace, appeared to man, gave him the gospel or eternal plan whereby he might rise above the carnal and selfish things of life and obtain spiritual perfection. **But he must rise by his own efforts and he must walk by faith"** (Conference Report, Apr. 1957, 7).

**Moroni taught lessons of scriptures to show the Lord is a God of miracles, summarizing the plan of redemption:**

- The creation of the heavens, the earth, and mankind (Mormon 9:11-12, 17).
- The Fall (Mormon 9:12).
- Redemption through Jesus Christ (Mormon 9:12-13).
- The resurrection of all people (Mormon 9:13).
- The return of all people to the Lord's presence to be judged (Mormon 9:13-14).
- Mormon 9:18 Moroni referred to the "**many mighty miracles**" performed by Jesus and His Apostles.

**Important principles within in Mormon 9:27-31:**

- Doubt not, but be believing (v27).
- Come unto the Lord **with all your heart** (v27).
- Strip yourselves of **all uncleanness** (v28).
- Pray for strength to **yield to no temptation** (v28).
- Donot partake of the **sacrament unworthily** (v29).
- **Endure to the end** (v29).
- Learn from the record "**to be more wise than we have been**" (v31).

### 4. Conclusion

**President Ezra Taft Benson:** "If they 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? What lesson can I learn from that to help me live in this day and age?**" From the Book of Mormon we learn how disciples of Christ live in times of war. From the Book of Mormon we see the **evils of secret combinations** portrayed in graphic and chilling reality. In the Book of Mormon we find lessons for dealing with **persecution and apostasy**. We learn much about **how to do missionary work**. And more than anywhere else, we see in the Book of Mormon the **dangers of materialism and setting our hearts on the things of the world. Can anyone doubt that this book was meant for us and that in it we find great power, great comfort, and great protection?"** (A Witness and a Warning, 20-21),

**Pride is the universal sin, the great vice. Yes, pride is the universal sin, the great vice.**

**The antidote for pride is humility—meekness, submissiveness.** (See Alma 7:23.) It is the broken heart and contrite spirit. (See 3 Ne. 9:20; 3 Ne. 12:19; D&C 20:37; D&C 59:8; Ps. 34:18; Isa. 57:15; Isa. 66:2.) As Rudyard Kipling put it so well:

*The tumult and the shouting dies; The captains and the kings depart. Still stands thine ancient sacrifice, An humble and a contrite heart. Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet, Lest we forget, lest we forget.* (Hymns, 1985, no. 80.)

God will have a humble people. Either we can choose to be humble or we can be compelled to be humble. Alma said, "Blessed are they who humble themselves without being compelled to be humble." (Alma 32:16.)

<b>LET US CHOOSE TO BE HUMBLE.</b>
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We can choose to humble ourselves **by conquering enmity toward our brothers and sisters**, esteeming them as ourselves, and lifting them as high or higher than we are. (See D&C 38:24; D&C 81:5; D&C 84:106.)

We can choose to humble ourselves **by receiving counsel and chastisement.** (See Jacob 4:10; Hel. 15:3; D&C 63:55; D&C 101:4–5; D&C 108:1; D&C 124:61, 84; D&C 136:31; Prov. 9:8.)

We can choose to humble ourselves **by forgiving those who have offended us.** (3 Ne. 13:11, 14; D&C 64:10.)

We can choose to humble ourselves **by rendering selfless service.** (See Mosiah 2:16–17.)

We can choose to humble ourselves **by going on missions and preaching the word** that can humble others. (See Alma 4:19; Alma 31:5; Alma 48:20.)

We can choose to humble ourselves **by getting to the temple more frequently.**

We can choose to humble ourselves **by confessing and forsaking our sins and being born of God.** (See D&C 58:43; Mosiah 27:25–26; Alma 5:7–14, 49.)

We can choose to humble ourselves **by loving God, submitting our will to His, and putting Him first in our lives.** (See 3 Ne. 11:11; 3 Ne. 13:33; Moro. 10:32.)

Let us choose to be humble. We can do it. I know we can.

My dear brethren and sisters, we must prepare to redeem Zion. It was essentially the sin of pride that kept us from establishing Zion in the days of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It was the same sin of pride that brought consecration to an end among the Nephites. (See 4 Ne. 1:24–25.)

**Pride is the great stumbling block to Zion. I repeat: Pride is the great stumbling block to Zion.**

**We must cleanse the inner vessel by conquering pride.** (See Alma 6:2–4; Matt. 23:25–26.)

We must yield "to the enticings of the Holy Spirit," put off the prideful "natural man," become "a saint through the atonement of Christ the Lord," and become "as a child, submissive, meek, humble." (Mosiah 3:19; see also Alma 13:28.)

That we may do so and go on to fulfill our divine destiny is my fervent prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.