

# Gospel Doctrine Lesson 47: To Keep Them in the Right Way (Moroni 1-6)

**LESSON GOAL:** To increase our understanding of gospel ordinances and the need to strengthen one another.

**Orson Hyde:** "By whose power victory so often perched on our banner? It was **by the agency of that same angel of God [Moroni]** that appeared unto Joseph Smith, and revealed to him the history of the early inhabitants of this country, whose mounds, bones and remains of towns, cities and fortifications speak from the dust in the ears of the living with the voice of undeniable truth. **This same angel presides over the destinies of America**, and feels a lively interest in all our doings. He was in the camp of Washington; and, by an invisible hand, led on our fathers to conquest and victory; and all this to open and prepare the way for the Church and kingdom of God to be established on the western hemisphere, for the redemption of Israel and the salvation of the world" (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol.6, 368).

**Ted Gibbons:** Moroni first appeared in 1823, and then yearly until 1827 when Joseph received custody of the plates. From late 1827 until early 1830 he was involved in the translation of the record, although most of the work was done in a short period in 1829... **He was a major figure in the restoration of this church. We have records of 22 different appearances of Moroni to Joseph Smith.** There is likewise an account of his appearance to Heber C. Kimball two weeks before Pres. Kimball's death. **And there are indications that he dedicated the sites of at least four temples.** (tedgibbons@yahoo.com)

**H. Donl Peterson:** "The Lord chose Moroni to complete the Nephite dispensation of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

- He finished his father's inspired abridgment of the Nephite millennial-long history.
- He commanded 10,000 soldiers at Cumorah in their final battles with the Lamanites.
- He abridged the writings of Ether, the record of the Jaredites.
- He recorded the lengthy writings of the brother of Jared on the gold plates and sealed them up.
- He wandered alone about the land for about 37 years, not only concerned for his own safety but also fully aware of his responsibility to preserve the plates until he was commanded to hide them in the earth.
- Finally, after traveling extensively and fulfilling priesthood responsibilities, he deposited the plates in a hillside in western New York state.

("Moroni, the Last of the Nephite Prophets," in *Fourth Nephi, From Zion to Destruction*, ed. Monte S. Nyman, 235-40).

## 1. Having survived the destruction of the Nephites, Moroni continues his writings.

**Moroni 1:4:** Wherefore, I write a few more things, contrary to that which I had supposed; for I had supposed not to have written any more; but I write a few more things, **that perhaps they may be of worth unto my brethren**, the Lamanites, **in some future day**, according to the will of the Lord.

"These words ("perhaps they may be of worth" in a latter-day perspective) not only reveal to us Moroni's purpose in writing the book, but lay open to our minds **the magnanimous character of the man. A person who can love his enemies so much that he contributes to the eternal welfare of their descendants has a great soul.**" (*FARMS: Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1, Spring-1995, 38).

## 2. Moroni teaches about essential gospel ordinances.

It is interesting to think that Moroni's society had the exact ordinances that we do with the exact same wording.

**Jeffrey R. Holland:** "What Moroni first recorded in the book carrying his own name were vignettes—a **brief catalog, if you will—of things he felt needed to be recorded before he died** and the Book of Mormon saga ended. These included **the words of Christ** to his twelve disciples when they were commissioned to bestow **the Holy Ghost** by the laying on of hands, the prayer by which **priests and teachers were ordained**, the **sacramental prayers**, and instructions as to how those who were **baptized** were to be received into the 'church of Christ' and numbered among the 'people of Christ.'" (*Christ And The New Covenant*, 332 - 333).

### 1) The Savior instructed the disciples to bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost

**Moroni 2:1-2:** The words of Christ, which he spake unto his disciples, the twelve whom he had chosen, as he laid his hands upon them—And he called them by name, saying: Ye shall call on the Father in my name, in mighty prayer; and after ye have done this **ye shall have power that to him upon whom ye shall lay your hands, ye shall give the Holy Ghost; and in my name shall ye give it, for thus do mine apostles.**

### 2) How the disciples ordained priests and teachers

**Moroni 3:2-3:** After they had prayed unto the Father in the name of Christ, they laid their hands upon them, and said: **In the name of Jesus Christ I ordain you to be a priest (or if he be a teacher, I ordain you to be a teacher) to preach repentance and remission of sins through Jesus Christ, by the endurance of faith on his name to the end. Amen.**

### 3) They administered the sacrament according to the commandments of Christ

**Moroni 4:2-3:** And they did kneel down with the church, and pray to the Father in the name of Christ, saying: O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and **sanctify** this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it; that they may eat **in remembrance** of the body of thy Son, and **witness** unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they are **willing** to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always **remember him**, and **keep his commandments** which he hath given them, that they may **always have his Spirit** to be with them. Amen.

**Moroni 5:1-2:** Behold, they took the cup, and said: 2 O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee, in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and **sanctify** this wine to the souls of all those who drink of it, that they may do it in **remembrance** of the blood of thy Son, which was shed for them; that they may **witness** unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they do **always remember** him, that they **may have his Spirit** to be with them. Amen.

**Spencer W. Kimball:** "We attend sacrament meetings to worship the Lord. If we attend with any other thought, we have missed the spirit of the occasion. Those who attend meeting only when the speaker is eloquent, the lecturer is noted, or the music is excellent, are far ahead of the high purpose and loftiness of this meeting in the house of prayer...**we do not go to Sabbath meetings to be entertained or even solely to be instructed. We go to worship the Lord.** It is an individual responsibility, and regardless of what is said from the pulpit, if one wishes to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth, he may do so by attending his meetings, partaking of the sacrament, and contemplating the beauties of the gospel. **If the service is a failure to you, you have failed. No one can worship for you; you must do your own waiting upon the Lord.**" (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, 514-15.)

### 4) Moroni taught the requirements for baptism

**Moroni 6:1-2:** They were not baptized save they brought forth fruit meet **that they were worthy of it.** Neither did they receive any unto baptism save they came forth with **a broken heart and a contrite spirit**, and witnessed unto the church that **they truly repented of all their sins.**

**Breck England:** "The moment we feel ourselves beyond contrition, when we see nothing in particular in ourselves to repent of, when we become "wilfull," **when we become indifferent to the suffering of the Savior in our behalf, that is the moment we start on the way to destruction**" *Meridian Magazine*, November 28, 2016).

### Baptism cleanses and prepares men to serve God and Christ

**Moroni 6:3-4:** And none were received unto baptism save **they took upon them the name of Christ**, having a **determination to serve him to the end.** And after they had been received unto baptism, and were wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost, they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ; and **their names were taken**, that they might **be remembered** and **nourished by the good word of God**, to keep them in the right way, to keep them continually watchful unto prayer, **relying alone upon the merits of Christ**, who was the author and **the finisher** of their faith.

### 3. Moroni explains the requirements for Church membership and the need for record keeping and fellowshiping.

**Moroni 6:5:** And the church did meet together oft, to fast and to pray, and **to speak one with another concerning the welfare of their souls.**

**Moroni 6:7-9:** And they were strict to observe that **there should be no iniquity among them**; and whoso was found to commit iniquity, and three witnesses of the church did condemn them before the elders, and if they repented not, and confessed not, their names were blotted out, and they were not numbered among the people of Christ.  
8 **But as oft as they repented and sought forgiveness, with real intent, they were forgiven.**  
9 And their **meetings were conducted by the church after the manner of the workings of the Spirit**, and by the power of the Holy Ghost; for **as the power of the Holy Ghost led them whether to preach, or to exhort, or to pray, or to supplicate, or to sing, even so it was done.**

**President Gordon B. Hinckley:** "Any convert whose faith grows cold is a tragedy. Any member who falls into inactivity is a matter for serious concern. The Lord left the ninety and nine to find the lost sheep. His concern for the dropout was so serious that He made it the theme of one of His great lessons. We must constantly keep Church officers and the membership aware of the, **tremendous obligation to fellowship in a very real and warm and wonderful way those who come into the Church as converts and to reach out with love to those who for one reason or another step into the shadows of inactivity**" (in *Church News*, 8 Apr. 1989, 6).

**President Hinckley:** "With the ever increasing number of converts, we must make an increasingly substantial effort to assist them as they find their way. **Every one of them needs three things: a friend, a responsibility, and nurturing with 'the good word of God'** (Moroni 6:4)" (*Ensign*, May 1997, 47).