

General Comments on Mormon 7-9

In ch. 7 Mormon gives his farewell to the remnant of Lehi, whom he intends to address and educate concerning their covenant status as part of natural Israel. In ch. 8-9, Moroni, Mormon's son, gives a farewell address to the Gentiles, whom he knows will largely reject his father's written work. Both the author and the intended audience change between ch. 7 and ch. 8-9, with a significant change in tone between the two sections of text as well.

Comments on Mormon 7

This chapter is Mormon's farewell to the Lehite remnant. He has witnessed firsthand the destruction of the Nephites, as predicted by Nephi (cf. 1 Ne. 12:11-19, 1 Ne. 15:5). Mormon knows a remnant will be preserved until the last days when these writings will be brought to them by the Gentiles, also as Nephi predicted (cf. 1 Ne. 13).

As such, Mormon wants to focus squarely on those points he feels are most important for the Lehite remnant to hear. He does so by listing four points (v. 2-7), and then presents those four points again in a unified discussion explaining how they are related (v. 8-10).

Mormon's comments here are a summary and distillation of the purpose and intent of the Book of Mormon.

The text of the chapter is structured as an inverted parallelism, centering on v. 5-6, which focuses on the resurrection of Christ.

I 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:

v1 The line of thought from the preceding chapter continues, only the target audience has changed. In 6:16-22 Mormon laments the eternal fate of the rebellious masses who have been slain before his eyes. In this present text he changes his focus to the future generations of the Lehites who will receive the record he is writing, but the subject is still their eternal fate.

Mormon's final comments to the Lehite remnant immediately follow his lament over the destruction of the Nephites (cf. 6:16-22). Note his lament is more over their unrighteousness

than their destruction. Had they not been so rebellious, they would not have been destroyed (cf. 6:18).

His perspective has remained spiritual despite the great tribulations he has faced. He has not resorted to blaming the Lamanites for massacring the Nephites. He has not turned bitter and hateful. In the present chapter Mormon is addressing the posterity of the people who just annihilated his people. He is even presently fleeing the Lamanites for his own life (cf. 8:2-3). Despite all of this, it doesn't change Mormon's long-term perspective. He knows what the task at hand is, he knows what he needs to do, and he does it.

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

v2-7 Mormon ticks off four points the future generations of the Lehtes need to know (e.g., "know ye" statements) in order to be saved in eternal happiness:

- 1) they are natural Israel (v. 2),
- 2) they must repent (v. 3),
- 3) they must abandon their warlike ways (v. 4), and
- 4) they must believe in Jesus Christ (v. 5-7).

Mormon spends the majority of the text on point four, explaining the basics of the atonement, namely Christ's role in the resurrection (v. 5), judgement (v. 6), and eternal life (v. 7).

v4 Put your weapons down, unless the Lord commands you to go and slaughter the Gentiles, cf. 3 Ne. 20:13-22.

v6 The resurrection is what brings a post-mortal spirit fully back into the presence of God, and therefore results in Judgement, cp. 6:21, 2 Ne. 9:15, Jacob 6:9, Mos. 16:10, Alma 33:22, Hela. 14:17. But, celestial quality post-mortal spirits apparently do enjoy access to the celestial kingdom, cf. D&C 137.

v7 "guiltless before him at the judgement day", the final point of Justification is at Judgement. A person can repent of their sins in mortality, be forgiven, and then return to sin again. A person might be forgiven and therefore justified (which means "to be made righteous" in the theological sense of the word as pertaining to salvation), but then return to sin and therefore no longer be justified. So, the ultimate point of Justification is at Judgement, when the Son is your advocate before the Father. If then Son accepts you because you have done His will, then you are Justified and receive eternal life. If you have not done his will then He rejects you before the Father and you receive eternal damnation.

When a person is justified causes considerable confusion among those who espouse the "saved by grace" notion that all there is to salvation is justification, ignoring the sanctification process or repentance and the need to endure to the end. It is common for them to believe that they are justified when they accept Christ as their Savior. But, what happens when they fall into sin or apostasy? The typical response is the person wasn't really "saved" and still needs to be "saved". This entire confusion is over semantic problems with the word "saved" and nothing else.

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. 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.

v8-10 Mormon now explains what the implications of the four points from v. 2-7 are to the Lehite reader.

As the four points he just made are true, the Lehite reader must repent and pay attention to the gospel as detailed in the Scriptures (v. 8). The Jewish Scriptures and the Josephite Scriptures are a unity, so the reader should believe both records and come to a knowledge of what the Lord has done for their fathers (v. 9). Since they are of the lineage of Joseph they are part of the covenant with Israel, so they accept Israel's savior, who is Jesus Christ. And if they do what Christ has taught, then things will go well for them at the day of Judgement. So be it (v. 10).

v9 As the Bible testifies of the Book of Mormon, and the Book of Mormon testifies of the Bible, and they are both the Lord's word through His prophets, then they are a unified text. Acceptance of one requires the acceptance of the other. Both records are an account of the Lord's dealings with Israel, so anyone who is a remnant of natural Israel can come to an understanding of the covenant with their fathers through these books.

v10 "it shall be well with you in the day of judgement", this phrase echoes the message of v. 7. The implicit message is if they fail to do the things detailed in v. 10 then they will not be found guiltless at the judgement seat as spoken in v. 7.

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