

General Comments on Mormon 8-9

In reading the text of these two chapters, one cannot help but notice how negative, and probably depressed, Moroni was and how it affected what he wrote. For example, take Moroni's comments on his personal situation:

...the Nephites...were all destroyed. And my father also was killed by them, and I even remain alone to write the sad tale of the destruction of my people....whether they will slay me, I know not....whither I go it mattereth not....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. (8:2-5)

Note how many times he uses negatives like "no", "not", "nor" and "none" and he consistently frames his statements in the negative. Also consider the comment Mormon makes to Moroni concerning the affect all he has seen is having on him in Moroni 9:25.

Moroni's condition affects the text of these two chapters. The subject he is discussing is the same as that of 5:19-24 and the 2 Ne. 27 reinterpretation of Isa. 29. While both of those preceding texts are aimed at the Gentiles and are rather accusatory and harsh, they are nowhere near as negative and unrelenting as Moroni's blistering attack in 8:27-41.

Where his father Mormon was quite measured in his tone in addressing the remnant of Lehi in ch. 7, Moroni tears into the Gentiles in ch. 8-9. After Moroni recounts his personal history in the beginning on ch. 8, he then turns his attention to the record that is going to the Gentiles. He casts a series of accusations at the Gentiles, explaining why they will reject the record of the Lehites. Then in ch. 9 Moroni presents a series of confrontations where the Gentiles will be forced to admit their errors at Judgement.

Another point worth noting is Moroni has seen some kind of vision or had some kind of revelation concerning the purpose and importance of the plates he has been entrusted with. It is plain from 8:35 and 9:30, as well as the various very detailed descriptions from 8:26-9:29, that Moroni has had some sort of revelation. Why would the Lord grant such a thing? Moroni has been through a lot, and he still has a lot to get through yet before he deposits the plates. It is safe to assume the Lord reveals to him the importance of the plates and the extent to which they will impact future generations.

Given Moroni's depressed state as manifested in v. 2-5, it would be easy to see him just giving up and wandering off if he didn't really understand what the implications of doing something like that would be.

Comments on Mormon 8

The text of this chapter is highly structured. Recommend review of D. Lynn Johnson's [textual arrangement](#).

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.

v1 Moroni identifies himself as the new author, and his intent is to wrap up a few things his father told him to take care of before depositing the plates.

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. 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.

v2-5 Moroni discusses his rather bleak personal situation. After the massive battle at Cumorah, all surviving Nephites are hunted down and killed by the Lamanites (v. 2), even his father Mormon. Moroni is apparently the lone survivor and whether he will be killed by the Lamanites as well remains to be seen. Moroni's only real purpose now is to finish the record as commanded by his father (v. 3). So, he will write some more in the record, hide them, and then whatever happens doesn't really matter as far as he is concerned (v. 4). Moroni would continue the record as his father did, but he doesn't have any additional plates and no means of getting them, and his future isn't looking good so he probably isn't going to be able to write much more (v. 5).

As noted above in the general comments on ch. 8-9 Moroni's comments and speech indicate he is quite depressed, and given the situation he describes it is no wonder he is.

v3 "to write the sad tale", his father Mormon had prayed that he be spared to be a witness and documentor of the events, cf. Moroni 9:22

v5 "he hath written the intent thereof", i.e., the intent or purpose of the record, or in other words the substance of ch. 7.

"ore I have none, for I am alone", being on the run and having to avoid populated places (cf. Moro. 1:1-3) would make it difficult for him to get his hands on ore and then fashion it into plates. However, circumstances do change sufficiently that he apparently does get more ore and make plates, hence the books of Ether and Moroni and his comments in Moro. 1:1 and Moro. 1:4. Does his getting ore and making plates mean he is not alone? Perhaps he came into the company of some other Nephites, as Moro. 1:2 suggests some other Nephites did survive. But it seems unlikely as whenever he does comment on his personal situation he is always alone and on the run.

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. 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.

v6-11 Moroni discusses the general situation of the Nephites and Lamanites. Four hundred years have passed away since Christ's birth (v. 6) and the Nephites have been destroyed by the Lamanites (v. 7). The Lord's hand was guiding the destruction of the Nephites because of their gross wickedness, and now the Lamanites are at war amongst themselves as the whole culture spirals downward in killing (v. 8). The Nephite race is effectively extinct, leaving only the Lamanites and the Gadianton Robbers (v. 9), all of whom are godless. No Christians remain and the three translated disciples are not among the people (v. 10), but they have made exclusive appearances to Mormon and Moroni (v. 11).

v6 "four hundred years have passed away", the prophetic predictions concerning the destruction of the Nephites has been fulfilled, cp. Alma 45:10, 3 Ne. 27:32.

v8 "the hand of the Lord", this phrase is a Semitism having reference to the will and power of the Lord as it is manifested among mankind. Sometimes it is an overt and miraculous manifestation (cf. Exod. 7:5, Joshua 4:23-24), but more often it is a covert manifestation through social engineering (cf. Deut. 2:14-15, Judges 2:14-15, 1 Sam. 7:13, Isa. 19:16, Isa. 41:20, 1 Ne. 5:14, 2 Ne. 5-6).

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. 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.

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. 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. 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.

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. 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. 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. 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.

v12-22 Moroni next comments on the plates he is keeping and will be depositing for future readers. Verses 12-16 address those who react favorably to the record on the plates and v. 17-22 address those who react unfavorably to the record on the plates.

Moroni provides a segue from the history of the plates to the future of the plates (v. 12-13). Moroni identifies himself as the final possessor of the plates and the one who will hide them up for future retrieval. The true value of the plates is the record they contain and not the metal they are composed of

(v. 14) as the Lord will only permit the plates to be revealed for His own purposes (v. 15). And blessed is the one who will bring forth the record and manifest it to the world, as the record will be like a light in the darkness to Israel (v. 16).

Moroni then turns his attention to those who will treat the record skeptically and find faults where there are none. Those who condemn the things of God are in danger of damnation (v. 17). Those who demand signs do so against the will of Lord (v. 18), and those who judge recklessly and attack unjustifiably will get their reward from Him (v. 19) as He is the Judge (v. 20). Those who fight against the Lord and His covenant people will be damned (v. 21) because they cannot stop the work of the Lord. All His promises to Israel will be fulfilled (v. 22).

v12-13 In v. 13 Moroni explicitly states his review of current events (v. 2-11) is ended and his attention has turned to future events. To the Western reader who is used to reading text linearly, v. 13 would be better placed before v. 12. But to the Semitic reader it is plain v. 12-13 are a unity in an A-B-A-B parallelism, as follows:

A - 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.

B - Behold, I am Moroni; and were it possible, I would make all things known unto you.

A - 13 Behold, I make an end of speaking concerning this people.

B - I am the son of Mormon, and my father was a descendant of Nephi.

The first A in v. 12 introduces the new subject addressed in v. 14-22 while the second A indicates the former subject of v. 2-11 is completed. The B's follow the same pattern with the first B being Moroni in the present saying he will reveal the future to the reader and the second B being Moroni's father and his past lineage back to the original author of the plates. Thus, v. 12 points to the future of the record and v. 13 concludes the history of the record.

v16 Clearly the verse refers primarily to Smith, but it can also apply to those who assisted in that work as well as the missionaries who spread the Book of Mormon throughout the world.

v17 "faults", those who seek to dismiss the Book of Mormon as Scripture are constantly trying to detect flaws in it to justify their a priori rejection of it. Such behavior flatly contradicts Jesus' teachings (cf. Matt. 7:3-5), particularly when the faults are attacks on Smith's person.

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

v23-25 Moroni expands on the subject of v. 22 concerning the promises to Israel which are yet to be fulfilled. Moroni refers the reader to all of Isaiah's predictions concerning Israel in the last days (which are many hence the repeated references to search Isaiah, cf. 2 Ne. 25:5, 3 Ne. 20:11). In addition to this all the prayers of all the faithful in the New World will ring in the ears of the Lord (v. 23), and these people had great faith so the Lord has heard their prayers (v. 24) requesting that this record should come forth (v. 25).

v23 "those saints who have gone before me", the clearest case of this is Enos (cf. Enos 1:13-15), but there are many others who discuss the importance of keeping the record from Nephi (cf. 2 Ne. 5:29-32) to king Benjamin (cf. Mosiah 1:3-6) to Alma (cf. Alm 37:1-18) to Mormon (cf. Moroni 9:24).

v24 "in his name could they remove mountains", the text doesn't actually say they did remove mountains, only that they could, hence the cross references to Jacob 4:6 and Hela. 10:9. The only explicit reference to the actual moving of a mountain in the Book of Mormon is by the brother of Jared, cf. Ether 12:30.

v25 "their prayers were also in behalf of him", I would assume the "him" is referring to the Lord. In the preceding v. 23-24 the pronoun "he" is used in reference to the Lord, but it does seem odd that the prayers of the various Book of Mormon prophets would be to the Lord in His own behalf. However, Moroni may be referring to passages such as 2 Ne. 29:11-14 and Mosiah 12:8 which are prophetic quotations of the Lord. The "prayers" would then be more of a prophetic sayings wherein the Lord is bound by what He tells His prophets to say.

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. 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. 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.

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. 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. 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.

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. 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. 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? 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.

v26-41 Moroni addresses the real reasons why people, the target audience being the Gentiles, will generally reject the record when it comes forth. It is because they love themselves and sin more than God.

These verses are an expansion on 5:19-24 and echo the substance of 2 Ne. 27-29. Moroni's comments are a searing attack on apostate Gentiles who reject the Nephite record when it is revealed. His knowledge of these events which are some 1500 years in his future are a result of some kind of revelation, cf. v. 35.

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