

General Comments on Moroni

After telling us he probably wouldn't be writing much more (cf. Mormon 8:4-5), Moroni writes some more. The text of Mormon 8 reads like Moroni is quite depressed. He has clearly survived and is doing better at the time of writing the present text than he was when writing that of Mormon 8.

While Moroni appears to be wandering in a solitary fashion, he may have had some contact with other people in order to know the Lamanites are systematically hunting executing all Nephites who will not deny Christ (we are informed in Mormon 6:15 that some few Nephites escaped the wholesale slaughter at Cumorah by fleeing South, but they were apparently hunted to extinction by Mormon 8:2 and 8:7) and that there are numerous internal wars among the Lamanites. Also, in Mormon 8:5 he says he has no ore to make plates to write on, so he cannot write. But, now he is writing some more, so he must have obtained ore or plates somehow, and the easiest source would have been from someplace already civilized. Perhaps as Moroni travelled North he came into contact with descendants of Lehites who were separated from the wars by distance (cf. Alma 63:4-9, Hela. 3:3-12). If that was the case, he says nothing about them, when it seems likely he would have. More likely, Moroni simply left and traveled North, leaving it all behind and making assumptions about the conditions based on what he knew things were like when he last had contact. If this is the case, he would have had to smelt ore and forge plates himself.

Moroni's final writings are aimed at latter-day Lamanites, as he knows at a future time they will receive the record. Moroni includes some ecclesiastical organizational details (ch. 2-6), some writings of his father (ch. 7-9), and his farewell admonition (ch. 10). Even though the contemporary Lamanites annihilated his people and would kill him given the opportunity, he sets aside this potential bias and focuses on the future Lamanites. In ch. 7-9, Mormon is commenting on how bad the Nephites have become, resulting in their destruction. Moroni's inclusion of Mormon's lecture on faith and two letters shows neither of them blame the Lamanites for the extinction of the Nephites. They blame the wickedness of the Nephites themselves. The future Lamanites who read the text will know from this Mormon and Moroni harbor no hostility to them, but can see past their present situation towards the eternal context.

Comments on Moroni 1

The text of these few verses can be arranged in a parallelism, as follows:

A - 1 NOW I, Moroni, after having made an end of abridging the account of the people of Jared, I had supposed not to have written more, but I have not as yet perished;

B - and I make not myself known to the Lamanites lest they should destroy me. 2 For behold, their wars are exceedingly fierce among themselves;

C - and because of their hatred they put to death every Nephite that will not deny the Christ.

C - 3 And I, Moroni, will not deny the Christ;

B - wherefore, I wander whithersoever I can for the safety of mine own life.

A - 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.

The A's inform the reader that while he had not intended to write anymore, the situation has changed sufficiently that he now has opportunity to do so. His intent is that after finishing the Jaredite record, which abridgment was primarily aimed at Gentile readers, he is now going to address the Lamanites, who are the remnants of natural Israel.

The B's inform the reader Moroni is wandering, probably in a solitary fashion (cf. Mormon 8:5), avoiding the Lamanite's internal conflict.

But, the C's inform us that he is also avoiding the Lamanites because if he were caught by them he would be killed because of their hatred (cp. 4 Ne. 1:38-39) of his religious beliefs.

1 NOW I, Moroni, after having made an end of abridging the account of the people of Jared, I had supposed not to have written more, but I have not as yet perished; and I make not myself known to the Lamanites lest they should destroy me. 2 For behold, their wars are exceedingly fierce among themselves; and because of their hatred they put to death every

Nephite that will not deny the Christ. 3 And I, Moroni, will not deny the Christ; wherefore, I wander whithersoever I can for the safety of mine own life.

v1-2 Moroni might be referring to the hunting down of the Nephites referenced in Mormon 6:15, Mormon 8:2, Mormon 8:7. Or, it may have persisted past the end of the war. In Mormon 8:6 we are informed it is 400 years past the time of Christ. We don't get another fixed time until Moroni 10:1. The lack of intervening timing in the text makes it difficult to know when Moroni is writing, as we don't know when Moroni wrote this section of text. Was it closer to the events of Mormon 6-8 or Moroni 10? If the entire book of Moroni was written later, at the same time as ch. 10, then ch. 1 summarizes 20 years of wandering on Moroni's part, as opposed to predating it and potentially excluding details of his travels.

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.

v4 Even though the present Lamanites would kill him, he writes to their descendants, whom he hopes will accept his writings.

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