

General Comments on Moroni 2-6

These five chapters cover matters of ecclesiastical order and practice among the Lehiters after the resurrected Christ's visitation to them.

Note Moroni gives no personalized context or personally related experience in the text. He is relating what was very likely around 200-400 year old history of what the church was like during the good times after the resurrected Christ appeared to the Lehiters (e.g., both 2:1 and 3:1 explicitly reference the original twelve disciples). It is very unlikely Moroni experienced anything like this in the church during his lifetime, as it was falling apart because of rebellion and wickedness, as seen in ch. 7 and 8.

Moroni's presentation is intended to communicate to future Lamanites what the ideal church should be like. He hasn't ever personally experienced it, hence the cut and dry presentation. But, he wants these last-days Lamanites to know what the correct order of church organization and worship is under ideal circumstances, so they will know how they should organize themselves when they receive the gospel record.

Comments on Moroni 2

Moroni gives some details omitted in the preceding text of 3 Ne. 18:36-37. These few verses clarify the ambiguous "touch" of 3 Ne. 18:36 with the explicit mention of laying on of hands (v. 1), as well as the admonition to give people the Holy Spirit even as the apostles were told to (v. 2).

Moroni probably got the additional details from the disciples themselves (cf. Mormon 8:10-11). He might have got it from some additional large plate writings that his father Mormon omitted or passed over, but it seems unlikely Moroni had access or opportunity to read those records given the constant war and the final repository apparently being deep in Lamanite territory (cf. Mormon 6:6).

1 THE words of Christ, which he spake unto his disciples, the twelve whom he had chosen, as he laid his hands upon them-- 2 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. 3 Now Christ spake these words unto them at the time of his first appearing; and the multitude heard it not, but the disciples heard it; and on as many as they laid their hands, fell the Holy Ghost.

v1 This verses explicitly forwards sacerdotalism and ordination by laying on of hands, eliminating any ambiguity in 3 Ne. 18:36 by providing details formalizing the event.

v2 Jesus tells the disciples to pray for inspiration before laying on of hands for reception of the Holy Spirit.

Note Jesus explicitly says to do it "in my name", identifying the priesthood and the authority in which the ordinance is done. The ordinance is for the reception of the Holy Spirit, but is not done under the authority of the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus Christ sends the Holy Spirit to His disciples to teach, lead and guide them as part of the new dispensation, cf. John 14-16.

Jesus also differentiates between the New World disciples and the Old World apostles, but clearly intends that their behavior be the same with respect to ecclesiastical matters.

v3 This verse echoes and clarifies 3 Ne. 18:37 and 3 Ne. 19:14, which reads as though the disciples didn't lay on hands for reception of the Holy Spirit.

Laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Spirit is absent in the Book of Mormon prior to Jesus' appearance in 3 Nephi 11. Prior to that it falls on people of its own accord (cf. Mosiah 18:14), suggesting whatever order of priesthood the Lehites operated under was similar to the Aaronic/Levitical priesthood.

"on as many as they laid their hands, fell the Holy Ghost", this is referring to the events of 3 Ne. 18, which events were preceded by the cataclysmic destruction of the wicked, where only the more righteous were spared (cf. 3 Ne. 9:13). The population was humbled and prepared for the event, having gathered to the temple to see the resurrected Messiah (cf. 3 Ne. 19:9-14). It is likely also referring to later events as well, as the disciples were active in converting the population at large (cf. 4 Ne. 1:1-4).

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