

Book of Mormon 44
I Speak Unto You As if Ye Were Present
(Mormon 7-9)
By Lenet Hadley Read

(Here is inspirational background and evidences supporting the Book of Mormon)

I. Dr. Hugh Nibley reminded us that the **"final battle" was only final for the Nephites.**

A. The final battle was not between "good people and bad people" but between the wicked and the wicked: "Nobody won." (*Since Cumorah*, p. 370).

B. **The war continued**, as was later shown in these chapters.

"And behold, it is the hand of the Lord which hath done it [allowed the destruction of the Nephites by withholding His support]. 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" (Mormon 8:8).

C. Too many of the Gentiles who came upon this land were also too violent, particularly to the natives. But **out of the Gentile nations who would inherit the land would come those who truly believed in Christ, and would treat the Natives with greater respect and kindness.**

1. I am personally grateful for my own ancestors' dealings with Native Americans in love and friendship, developing a mutually beneficial relationship of helpfulness and kindness.

II. After Mormon's death, Moroni was left alone to write this last portion of the sacred record, and to hide them all up to the Lord.

A. Moroni's words regarding his life spent in doing this are quite plaintive.

"... and I even remain alone to write the sad tale of the destruction of my people. But behold, they are gone, and I fulfill the commandment of my father; and whether they will slay me, I know not. Therefore I will write and hide up the records in the earth; and whither I go it mattereth not.... and how long the Lord will suffer that I may live I know not" (Mormon 8:3, 5).

III. Before he died, **Mormon saw and wrote to Lehi's descendants in our day** (Mormon 7:1-2).

A. He invited them to come unto Christ, promising through repentance and faith in Christ, they could receive all the blessings the Lord has to offer. They have marvelous hope!

B. He enlightened them: "Know that ye are of the House of Israel" (7:2).

C. He encouraged study of the Bible and Book of Mormon, and testified, "... 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" (Mormon 7:10).

IV. **Many Lamanites have indeed been blessed because of the Book of Mormon.**

A. Joseph Smith quickly sent missionaries to **the Lamanites, those living in Missouri at the bounds of the Native American lands.** The attempts were thwarted by anti-Mormon agents

B. When the Saints reached the West, **Brigham Young again initiated missions to the Lamanites.** [They were called that by Church leaders]. And there were many successes.

1. Under revelation, Brigham Young called William Lee on a mission to the Lamanites. He did many wonderful things in their behalf. And **he baptized over 1,000 into the church.**

2. Many others taught Lamanites in the West. In Kanab, an Indian chief who joined the Church fulfilled the prophecy of becoming a “white and delightful people” for **“his dark skin turned gradually lighter until he looked almost like a white man.”** (“Missions to the Indians” compiled by Emma R. Olsen, *An Enduring Legacy*, Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Vol 12, 1989, p. 381.)

2. In 1855, five elders were sent back to Indian lands in the East to teach them the Gospel.

3. **The whole tribe of Catawba Indians of South Carolina joined the Church.** They told interviewers they joined because knowing they were "of Israel" gave them self-respect.

This claim is not just bait dangled before the foolish. It is truth. There are evidences beyond the Book of Mormon that many Native Americans are indeed descendants of Israel. This includes DNA evidence, cultural similarities, religious traditions, oral traditions, etc.

There are reports of many Native Americans in earlier days joining the church. "Where are they today?" **Many are still faithful. A great many intermarried.** Some likely left because they were not made to feel welcome. The prophets have made clear what the responsibility is of those already in the Church. **We are to welcome all with love, and sin is upon us when we don't.**

V. When the Nephites were destroyed, wickedness grew even stronger.

A. "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; " (Mormon 8:10).

VI. The records Moroni buried up would be left to be translated only by one chosen of the Lord.

A. **"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, of the welfare of the ancient people of the Lord.** 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 shine forth out of darkness, and come unto the knowledge of the people; and it shall be done by the power of God." (Mormon 8:15-16).

B. The need to have a translator "chosen by the Lord" was strongly impressed upon me when I visited ancient Native American ruins in Moundsville, West Virginia. There on display was a stone artifact which **contained writings of the ancient Native Americans.** Posted beside the artifact were several different attempts to translate it. **Not one of them agreed with another.** And the supposed meanings varied widely. Imagine what would have become of the Golden Plates!

VII. Moroni testified nothing would be able to stop the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.

A. "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" (Mormon 8:26).

B. When one considers all the obstacles which lay before the coming forth of this book, it is indeed astonishing that it did come forth

C. One major obstacle was raising the money to print it. Joseph had no money. He relied upon Martin Harris to mortgage his farm. But Martin's wife was against it, and demanded a divorce if he did. Nevertheless, Martin did mortgage it, in spite of his wife's bitter resistance.

A divorce resulted and he had to split his property up and sell it. She was to get some of the most valuable portions, which included the buildings.

It was winter time. Few people buy farm property in the winter. Because of the divorce, he had only a part of the farm to sell, **without any buildings**, making it even less likely it would sell.

In spite of all obstacles, his property did sell. And the money they received was just the amount required for the printing of the Book of Mormon.

VIII. Moroni said the Book of Mormon would come when faith was most challenged.

A. "Yea, it shall come in a day when the power of God shall be denied..." (Mormon 8:28).

B. Not too long after its coming, Darwin's theories were published. Some have used Darwin's theories to claim there is no God and that man simply evolved by accident.

C. Near the same time "Higher Criticism" began to reach America. These studies challenged previous beliefs about the Bible, including the authorship of its many parts, saying Moses could not have written the Torah; that the Book of Isaiah must have been written by more than one author, etc. This set the trends where many people believe the Bible is merely a collection of myths, and that no one really knows how their stories began or where they came from.

D. Such beliefs contributed to priest craft, where many would profess to believe in God, but actually deny His power, ministering for the sole purpose of their own aggrandizement.

1. Dan Harris, a reporter on ABC World News, interviewed on T.V. several church ministers/pastors some time ago. He interviewed them (hiding their identity), because they had admitted that deep down they really did not believe the things they were preaching: that there was a God, that Jesus was divine, that the scriptures were sacred. Yet they continued to pretend to believe, never acknowledging to their congregations how they really felt.

2. Such church leaders and others fulfill Moroni's warning, "... and churches [will] become defiled and be lifted up in the pride of their hearts; yes, even in a day when leaders of churches and teachers shall rise in the pride of their hearts..." (Mormon 8:28).

3. This does not deny there are many fine and sincere ones as well.

IX. Moroni saw our day. "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" (Mormon 8:35).

A. His warnings about the sins of these latter-days are very pertinent and profound.

B. Serving as a second witness to the Bible, the Book of Mormon can help those who will search its pages to return to the solid foundation of faith in God and in His Holy scriptures.

X. The Book of Mormon calls people back to belief in further revelation and miracles.

A. As the Book of Mormon is new revelation and has come forth through miracle, those reading it with sincere and prayerful heart will know revelation and miracles haven't ceased.

B. Moroni speaks of these things with touching faith and knowledge.

"And again I speak unto you who deny the revelations of God, and say that they are done away, that there are no revelations, nor prophecies, nor gifts, nor healing, nor speaking with tongues, and the interpretation of tongues.

Behold I say unto you, he that denieth these things knoweth not the gospel of Christ: yea, he has not read the scriptures; **if so, he does not understand them**.... Behold, I will show unto you a God of miracles... [then he testifies of God's great works.] (Mormon 9:7-14).

"And now, O all ye that have imagined up unto yourselves a god who can do no miracles... Behold, are not the things that God hath wrought marvelous in our eyes?" (Mormon 9:16).

XI. The surprising numbers of people in the Book of Mormon.

A. I have always been somewhat uncomfortable about the astonishing numbers of people of whom the Book of Mormon speaks towards its end. Perhaps other students may feel this as well.

B. However, calculations have been made which show that just 25 people who doubled their number every 30 years through births, which is a generation and very do-able, could become as many as 10 million in 500 years. **We need not fear that the numbers of people spoken of in the Book of Mormon are unrealistic!**

C. Furthermore, the most recent scientific evidences are that the American continents were teeming with millions before they were discovered by the Europeans. Unfortunately, the diseases which came with the Europeans are now believed to have wiped out over 90% of those living here, and the evidences of their vast numbers of structures in North, Middle and South America were covered over by wilderness by the time the Europeans actually came to settle here, only to be recently re-discovered. (See Charles C. Mann, *1491*, as one source).