

03 Introduction to the Book of Mormon

Well hello my friends, and welcome to our book of Mormon class. I'm pleased to be with you in this endeavor and pray that the Lord will bless us with His Holy Spirit as we seek to better understand this marvelous volume of Scripture. I pray for the companionship of the Holy Ghost to be with us, and to teach us as we go through the Book of Mormon. I also pray that our experience together will act as a revelatory trigger for all of us, that as we are studying the words of this book, there will be things that we read, things that we see, that will trigger and open us up to greater revelation and deeper understanding.

What is the Book of Mormon? The Book of Mormon is a volume of Scripture written by holy men who lived in the ancient Americas and wrote down what they received from the Lord. In other places, prophets have written on papyrus, they've written on animal skins, and parchment. The interesting thing about this particular record, it was engraven laboriously on metal plates. There were reasons for that. One of the main obvious reasons being the record would endure and last much longer written on metal than it would if it were written on paper, papyrus, or on animal skins. But with that also came the difficulty in making the plates and then engraving them. I can only imagine this process involved to prepare one plate and how much could be written on those plates was quite an effort for these ancient chroniclers and prophets.

The Book of Mormon covers about 1000 years of history from approximately 600 B.C. through to a little over 400 years A.D. Records as we mentioned were kept on metal plates and preserved and added to until there became, over a period of time, rather enormous libraries that were kept. Towards the end of the Book of Mormon history, one of the last prophets, a man named Mormon, was given the assignment by the Lord to go through one of these libraries, one of these depositories of sacred records, and to abridge all of these records into a smaller set of plates. This he did and it took a good portion of his life. When he wasn't performing this labor under assignment from the Lord, he was a warrior general leader of his people and was one of the last people to witness the complete extinction and demise of his civilization.

The Book of Mormon is called the Book of Mormon out of respect for, and love and appreciation for this great prophet that performed this work and made it possible for these plates to come into our day and be translated into the English language.

The Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God by Joseph Smith Junior, and is currently published and distributed throughout the world by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Book of Mormon is another testament of Jesus Christ. Another word for the word "testament" is "covenant." The Old Testament is a covenant made with God's people in older times. The New Testament represents a covenant made with God's people in the New Testament period. And the Book of Mormon is a new covenant that has come forth in our day. All of these covenants/testaments come together to do one thing, and that is to testify that Jesus Christ is the son of God and the Redeemer and Savior of the world. Just as the word "testament" indicates, they testify of the living reality of the Lord Jesus Christ. That he was born, that he lived on this world, that he had a mortal ministry among men and women, that he was crucified, put to death and rose again on the third day. This is the testament of the Book of Mormon.

When we look at the word "testament" and replace it with the word "covenant," it becomes interesting that God is inviting us through these books, these testaments, to enter into a covenant relationship with Him.

This covenant that He invites us to enter has certain privileges and rights and powers and promises. That if we accept the invitation, and by the way the covenant process is always initiated by our Father in Heaven. He is the one that outlines the details of the covenant. And you and I are invited to enter in if we accept that invitation and enter into this covenant relationship with our Father in Heaven and his son Jesus Christ. Then there are promises extended to us that our precious. Such promises as revelation upon revelation, happiness in this world, prosperity, power over darkness, infusion of light, the very change of our nature so that we become more like they are and less like we are in this world. All of these things take place as a result of the covenants that our Father extends to us, invites us to enter into, and if we do, He then gives us the grace and power to access the privileges and promises there.

The invitation is for us to accept it, but if we never read it, if we don't study it, if we don't take it seriously, if we don't spend significant time in it, then we have not completely entered into the invitation the Lord has given us, and with a greater determination and desire to receive the beautiful messages, the promises and the privileges and the power that are contained within this book; it is up to us. He extends the invitation by providing us with the book, and we decide either to accept it, to take it seriously, and to study its content, or to reject it because of false beliefs, false concepts, the traditions of men; the choice is ours.

Let's go to the title page of the Book of Mormon and look at a couple of things here. I want to go to the second paragraph of the title page. We are told in the history of the church, volume 1, page 71, that Moroni is the author of the title page. In that same resource, you can also find out that this is a literal translation taken from a certain place upon the stack of plates that Joseph Smith removed from the hill Cumorah.

We talked a little bit about covenants. I would like to go down to about the middle of the second paragraph and it talks about the Book of Mormon and it says this:

Title Page, middle of the second paragraph:

Which is (designed) to show unto the remnant of the house of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; (Three things here I'd like you to notice) and that they may know the covenants of the Lord,

We talked a little bit about covenants and how important those things are. I find it interesting that pretty much the only people that really talk about covenants in any depth are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Jewish people. Covenants are mentioned in other places but more emphasis is given in covenant relationships with God among these two groups of people in my experience than any other group.

Keep your finger here on the title page; let's go to 1 Nephi chapter 13. I want us to go to verse 25.

1 Nephi 13:25 is talking about the coming forth of the Bible. You need to know that these words were written somewhere between 590-600 B.C. and the great prophet who is speaking here. a man named Nephi, who said:

1 Nephi 13:25

25] *Wherefore, these things (meaning the Gospel of the Lord) go forth from the Jews in purity unto the Gentiles, according to the truth which is in God.*

Now that took place after the ascension of Christ and the day of the Gentile begins when Peter visits Cornelius in Joppa and that whole story with the great sheet that is lowered down with unclean animals in and Peter is asked to kill and eat, and he says "Nay Lord, I have never eaten that which is unclean." And the Lord said to him, "call thou not unclean what I have cleansed." This begins what we call the day of the Gentile. Paul becomes the great Gentile apostle and you can see that the gospel moves forward in a mighty way from there.

1 Nephi 13:26

26] And after they go forth by the hand of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, from the Jews unto the Gentiles, thou seest the formation of that great and abominable church, which is most abominable above all other churches;

Now look what happens; the gospel in its purity now goes through this organization that the Book of Mormon calls the great and abominable church of the devil. We will talk more about that in future podcasts.

After it goes through this organization:

26] ...they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious and also many covenants of the Lord have they taken away.

Now why does this happen? Verse 27. Now remember the purpose is to understand the importance of covenants that are mentioned in the title page where the Lord says, "that they may know the covenants of the Lord."

Well, you can't know them if they're taken away or perverted. Verse 27 tells us why were perverted.

27] And all this have they done that they might pervert the right ways of the Lord, that they might blind the eyes and harden the hearts of the children of men.

Now skip on down to verse 29.

*29] And after these plain and precious things were taken away it (meaning the Book of the Jews, the Bible) it goeth forth unto all the nations of the Gentiles; and after it goeth forth unto all the nations of the Gentiles, yea, even across the many waters which thou hast seen with the Gentiles which have gone forth out of captivity, (that means it comes across into America, and we know that the Bible was brought with the Puritan fathers and those early pioneers that came to this land. In fact Nephi says) *thou seest—because of the many plain and precious things which have been taken out of the book, which were plain unto the understanding of the children of men, according to the plainness which is in the Lamb of God—(this part, watch) because of these things which are taken away out of the gospel of the Lamb, an exceedingly great many do stumble, yea, insomuch that Satan hath great power over them.**

So, why would the dark forces want to pervert the covenants that the Lord reveals to his children? Because it allows them to gain great power and control over people who don't have the covenants in their purity and in plainness. This is one reason why the Article of Faith in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Article of Faith that says:

Article of Faith 1:8

8] We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.

We have that belief in the Articles of Faith because of these writings that you can find in the Book of Mormon in 1 Nephi chapter 13 concerning the Bible and what it has gone through by the time it gets down to us at this point. The Bible is beautiful, it is filled full of wonderful truths. It is Holy Scripture. There's a reason why it is called the Holy Bible and it should be called such. However, over generations and generations of time, uninspired men have added their own interpretations and in some cases outright have removed these plain and precious parts of this wonderful book for the purpose of perverting the covenants that were revealed by the Lord to His children so that it gives Satan power over them and causes them to walk in darkness and to stumble.

So as it says in the **title page**, it says:

Which is to show unto the remnant of the house of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord.

And so what the Book of Mormon is doing, my friends, is restoring lost covenants, or altered covenants, so that we don't stumble and that Satan does not have the power over us he has enjoyed for the last 2000 years. This is one of the main purposes of the Book of Mormon, is the restoration of God's covenants to His chosen people.

The second purpose in the **title page** mentions, right after the covenants of the Lord is:

"that they are not cast off forever."

The Book of Mormon teaches us about two great events that take place concerning God's people. One is the scattering of Israel and the Bible talks extensively about that. And the other is the gathering of that house of Israel which has taken place in several different times. And the Bible and the Book of Mormon both talk extensively about the scattering and the gathering of God's covenant people, why that happened, and gathering which has taken place right now, we are living in the day of the gathering of the House of Israel. The purpose of that is to show people that the Lord's arm is extended toward them and they are not cast off forever. (**marker 15:03/608**) To teach them the process of repentance, to teach them the power of the atonement; to teach them to come unto Christ and be saved and redeemed by Him. Otherwise, you have the feeling that there's no hope. That you are lost and cast off forever. So one of the purposes in the literal translation of this title page from the Book of Mormon plates is that we can know that we are not cast off forever. And the third thing is:

--And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God,

There we go, there's that testament. Another testament of Jesus Christ. And not only to Jew and Gentile, but to all of God's children throughout the world. To get a feel for the word "Gentile," I would refer you to podcast number 37 that we will include on this site so that you can listen and that will give you a good understanding of the use of the word Gentile and how it is used in the Scriptures, specifically, in the Book of Mormon. Because the word Gentile is found throughout the Book of Mormon and it's a term that's not well-

understood. Or we think we understand it, but our understanding is incorrect. So I include that podcast with this Book of Mormon podcast for you to go back and review.

The very next part that comes on this it says:

to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, (this part right here) manifesting himself unto all nations—

Now that's a statement right there that we don't pay a lot of attention to –

manifesting himself unto all nations

Not some nations, not to a specific or particular nation, but to all nations, anciently in the New Testament time, and in our day. Now when it says “manifest himself unto them,” that means that He has appeared to these people. They have seen Him. The Book of Mormon is a record that chronicles the visit of Jesus Christ to these ancient people who lived in America after His death and resurrection. I want to testify to you that He appeared to many, many people in different places upon the earth. All of these people, no matter where they are, are His sheep. These are children of His Father. And He goes to them; He teaches them; He manifests Himself to them; He appears and invites them to come up and to see Him face-to-face. This is after His resurrection and ascension in Jerusalem. They come up and touch His body and then He instructs them for a period of time, and instructs them further that they should write down everything that has occurred here.

Writing down the things that are revealed is very important to God our Eternal Father and to the Lord Jesus Christ. We can see that in the book of 3 Nephi in the Book of Mormon when He is personally on these people. He stands there and asks the leader of the people at the time, a man named Nephi, whether or not certain things had been written down concerning an earlier prophet and his prophecies. This earlier prophet was a man named Samuel the Lamanite. When they got to looking at the Scriptures, they found out that certain words that Samuel the Lamanite had been omitted from their Scripture and the Lord told them they are to record that down. It is so important that everything that God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ reveals to these holy prophets, that it be written down and recorded.

It's my opinion that the Book of Mormon and the plates coming out of the hill Cumorah is a pattern of things that will yet take place. I believe there are sacred records hidden unto the Lord all over the world. That do what? That testify that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God to convince those people, and others that He appeared to, that this is verily the case.

One of the privileges of living in our day is to have additional Scripture come forth, that at this point has not been revealed to us. I believe that this testament, this witness, this covenant of the Book of Mormon will be one of many yet to come forth, because our God, brothers and sisters, is a God of witnesses. He said to Paul in Thessalonians:

Thessalonians 5:21

21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

And **Corinthians 13:1**

1] in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall all truth be established.

Well, the Bible, the Old and New Testament is one witness. It is a record of God's dealings in the eastern continent through prophets and then later through the personal ministry of His son Jesus Christ who performed His sacred mission and atoning sacrifice upon that continent. We have that record. And glorious it is.

Now he has provided a second witness. What does Paul say, "in the mouths of two or three witnesses shall all truth be established." And so now we have the Book of Mormon, another covenant, another testament of Jesus Christ, testifying that He is the eternal God, the son of God, the Redeemer. And it's my feeling that in the not-to-distant future, many more records are going to come forth testifying of the same thing.

Now the last sentence on the title page says this:

And now, if there are faults they are the mistakes of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment-seat of Christ.

There are people who pick up the Book of Mormon with the intent be to prove that it is wrong – to find fault, to accuse, to condemn. This is not godly. This is not from our Father. This is not what the ancient apostles have taught, what the apostles at the time of Christ taught.

Thessalonians 5:21

21 Prove all things; (Paul said, and) hold fast to that which is good.

The Book of Mormon says that we should read this volume, and here are some criteria for us: to not be found in a place where we condemn the things of God, and that is this – read the book. That's the first step of you entering into the covenant extended – read the book. And then there are these details that are given by the Lord, through revelation. Read it with a sincere heart – sincere heart. Where is your heart at? When you come across this sacred volume of scripture, where is your heart at when you open its pages and start to read?

The next thing that is mentioned is with real intent. What is your intention? Where is your heart and what is your intention as you read the words in this book? With the intention to prove that it is false? Where is your heart at?

And the next one is having faith in Jesus Christ. And then the promise is there. And if you do it – you read the book with these criteria, a sincere heart with real intent having faith in Christ, then the Lord promises He will reveal the truth of it unto you by the power of the Holy Ghost.

And so I look at this last statement in the **title page** where the Lord says,

condemn not the things of God,

If there are mistakes in the Book of Mormon, they are the mistakes of men. You need to be careful. You need to not be so caught up in looking for the fallibility of men who are involved, whether they were the ancient writers and chroniclers of this event, or whether they are those in latter days who are commissioned to see that this book is distributed throughout the world. It is so easy to find fault, to accuse and condemn. And none of that is godly and it puts you in the wrong path to receive the promises of Mormon.

Again, if there are faults they are the mistakes of men, and all men make mistakes. Wherefore condemn not the things of God that you may be found spotless at the judgment seat of Christ. Good advice then – good advice now. Whether it's reading the Book of Mormon, whether it's evaluating your standing in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, whether it's taking a look at where your faith is founded, and what your core belief is, what you hold is true – this is good advice. To me, some of the most important statements made in the title page of the Book of Mormon.

Now let's talk for a minute about the witnesses that the Lord has provided for the Book of Mormon. As we just mentioned, He is a God of witnesses. Let's go to the Book of Mormon, Ether chapter 5, and look at heading in Ether chapter 5. This is Moroni speaking. Moroni was the last prophet to survive the genocidal wars of the Nephites and Lamanites that effectively wiped out this whole civilization. He writes these words towards the end of his ministry as he is preparing to seal up the plates which his father, Mormon, gave him, after he has added some information and some writing to it, he now gives us these words in chapter 5 verse one.

Ether 5:1

1] And now I, Moroni, have written the words which were commanded me, according to my memory; and I have told you the things which I have sealed up; therefore touch them not in order that ye may translate; for that thing is forbidden you, except by and by it shall be wisdom in God.

Who is Moroni talking to here? As he is adding these words, the plates which he had custodian for, which he received from his father, have been buried up in the hill Cumorah in what is today up-state New York. And now he is adding some interesting information, talking to somebody in the future. He says:

Ether 5:1

1] ...I have told you the things which I have sealed up; therefore touch them not in order that ye may translate;

So the person he is talking to is the future translator of these plates which he and sealed up and very hill Cumorah.

Ether 5:1

1] ...for that thing is forbidden you, except by and by it shall be wisdom in God.

Ether 5:2

2] And behold, ye may be privileged that ye may show the plates unto those who shall assist to bring forth this work;

Now keep in mind that these words are being written somewhere around 400+ years after the death and resurrection of Christ. This is the end of the civilization of the Nephite and Lamanite people. And the Book of Mormon is the book that chronicles their history. Who are the three, notice that he says (**Marker 28:33**) notice what he says in verse three.

Ether 5:3

3 And unto three shall they be shown by the power of God; wherefore they shall know of a surety that these things are true.

And then in verse 4 quotes a scripture

Ether 5:4

4 And in the mouth of three witnesses (in the mouth of three witnesses) shall these things be established; and the testimony of three, and this work, in the which shall be shown forth the power of God and also his word, of which the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost bear record—and all this shall stand as a testimony against the world at the last day.

Now Joseph Smith was one who was instructed by his man Moroni who returned back to this world as a heavenly messenger and showed Joseph Smith where these plates were hidden and instructed him in the process of bringing them forth into the book that we now have in front of us.

I find it interesting that this man was speaking to Joseph Smith while he was still alive on the earth, roughly 1400 years before this book is translated, in 1827, 28, and 29. How must Joseph Smith have felt, along with his scribe Oliver Calgary, and others, and he read these words that are found in ether chapter 5, and new that this ancient prophet was speaking to him 1400 years into the future and instructing him that there should be others who would witness the golden plates that came out of the hill Cumorah, and also have witnesses and testimonies from God himself concerning this work.

Now this law of witnesses is very important, not only for things that were taking place in the past but also important for us, because when we receive anything from the Lord, that comes to us through personal revelation, you have the right – the obligation – to put this principle to the test. Nothing that God gives you is expected to be given and received without additional witnesses.

Over in the Doctrine and Covenants we go to section 6 verse 28 the Lord says this

D&C 6:28

28 And now, behold, I give unto you, and also unto my servant Joseph, the keys of this gift, which shall bring to light this ministry; and in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.

See there it is again. So this is an eternal principle that we can use in one way to know that we are on the correct path and that the things we are receiving from the Lord are truly coming from him, because it is an eternal principle that will be accompanied by witnesses.

Now let's turn to the testimony of the three witnesses which is on next page after the title page. The three witnesses mentioned here are Oliver Cowdery, David Witmer, and Martin Harris. And in this witness you can see--go down three lines--you can see that they all testify that they have seen the plates.

Go down a little bit further and it also says:

Testimony of Three Witnesses

...we know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God (watch this) for his voice (God's voice) hath declared it unto us.

So, not only have they seen the plates, but they heard the voice of God declare that it had been properly translated by Joseph Smith Junior, by the gift and power of God. Go down a couple more lines.

Testimony of Three Witnesses

...we have seen the engravings ...

They picked up the plates, they hefted the plates, they turned the plates, they saw the engravings. And not only that, but go down a couple more lines and it says:

Testimony of Three Witnesses

And we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon;

So look at these witnesses that were given to the witnesses. You have God's own voice declare that the work that Joseph completed was true. You were able to see the plates, hefted them, turn them with your fingers, listening to the tinkling sound they make as they turn over the three rings that went in them.

And then at the end of that you can go down and you will see, and they close this, almost to the bottom:

Testimony of Three Witnesses

And we know that if we are faithful in Christ, we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found spotless before the judgment-seat of Christ, and shall dwell with him eternally in the heavens. And the honor be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen

Now, it's interesting, brothers and sisters, that all three of these men left their membership in the church. All three were excommunicated from the church. They fell out of favor with the church membership and found fault with the prophet Joseph Smith. All of them declared that he was a false witness and he was a fallen prophet and as a result they lost their membership and standing in the church.

Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris later in life returned to membership in the church. David Witmer never did return. It is interesting that if these men were deceivers, what a great opportunity this would have been, having been cut off from fellowship from the church and no longer being friendly with the leadership of the church, what a great opportunity that would have been to expose the lie and it meant to any deception that they were part of, but they did not. All three of these men, to their dying breath, maintained this witness that you are reading about here in the testimony of the three witnesses. All three of them. And at times they were severely

persecuted for his testimony, and every effort was made by the enemies of this work to get them to recant and deny their testimony that we have in print here. None of them ever did. In fact, on their deathbeds, some of them asked for attorneys to come and to record deathbed confessions, which usually stands up in any court of law as truthful. And in these deathbed confessions none of these three men, the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, denied the testimony you're reading here.

Let's go down to the next one, the testimony of the eight witnesses. Now these eight men, and you can look down and see their names, these eight men did not see the angel, did not hear the voice of God, but they were able to see plates, and if you will go down to the third line it says:

Testimony of Eight Witnesses

That Joseph Smith, Jun., the translator of this work, has shown unto us the plates of which hath been spoken,

Go down about five more lines and it says:

Testimony of Eight Witnesses

...for we have seen and hefted, and know of a surety that the said Smith has got the plates of which we have spoken. And we give our names unto the world, to witness unto the world that which we have seen. And we lie not, God bearing witness of it.

You see this is that powerful eternal law of witnesses that God has always operated within, and does to this day. It's interesting that the following out of those eight, Jacob Whitmer, John Whitmer and Hiram Page were excommunicated, again. There were jarring's, there were contentions, there were accusations, fault finding, condemnation, circumstances that tested the loyalty of all of these men involved in this work. Those three men never did come back into membership in the church. The other five maintained their membership in the church.

One of them you can see, there is the father and two others, the brothers of the prophet Joseph Smith. And the Whitmer family, which befriended the prophet Joseph Smith at a time when he was having difficulty finding the time, the piece, and in the to finish the translation of the Book of Mormon, the Whitmer family very, very hospitable to him, allowed him to come into their home, they boarded him, his wife, and Oliver Cowdery so they could finish that translation of the Book of Mormon – which they did. All through the translation process, Joseph was on the move. The word was out from the dark side, front Devils and unclean spirits, and other demons to try and take these plates from him. Those on the dark side new what this record was. They understood its importance to the gathering of Israel and for the redemption of God's children in the latter days, and they did everything they could to get that record from him. It was only through divine intervention that the prophet Joseph was able to maintain custody and control over those plates, except for one instance when they were taken from him by Moroni, but then later returned, and we'll talk about that a little bit later in the story of the book of Mormon.

(Marker 39:20)Marvelous witnesses. Now you find it interesting that the very next page over says, The Testimony of the Prophet Joseph Smith. So look what we've got here. We've got three witnesses, we've got eight witnesses, and we got one more which makes a total of 12 witnesses. A sacred number that the Lord uses to show completion and fullness – 12 witnesses.

I'd like you to go to one place, let's turn over to Doctrine and Covenants, section 17, verse 6 and let's look at one more witness, and this is the ultimate witness to the Book of Mormon, that it was translated correctly, that it's true, and that we are the recipients of this marvelous record. Section 17, let's go to verse 5.

This is a revelation given to the three witnesses in June 1829 and the Lord is speaking to them and he says in verse 5:

D&C 17:5-6

5] And ye shall testify that you have seen them, even as my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., has seen them (that means the plates); for it is by my power that he has seen them, and it is because he had faith.(Now watch this right here, verse 6.)

6] And he has translated the book, even that part which I have commanded him, and as your Lord and your God liveth it is true.

Now that is a sacred oath by God himself, there is no more sacred oath that God nor man can make then upon the living reality of himself and of God.

D&C 17:6

...as your Lord and your God liveth it is true.

Well, that puts it square in our [seat]. It has now been 189 years since the Book of Mormon translation was completed and it went to the publisher and was published in 1830 as the Book of Mormon. One hundred eighty-nine years ago. My friends, we were not there. We didn't witness this. We didn't see the plates. We can lift them. We didn't turn the leaves. We didn't see the engravings. We did not hear the voice of God. And we did not see an angel that stood before them in broad daylight.

Book What are we going to do with this book that has come down to us? Well the promise is there. The first thing we've got to do is read it. And we have to read with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ. Any other approach to this book is a waste of your time- you should close it and stop now-if your desire is any other than to test the promise of God Almighty, that this is from him. And that it bears his Son's name. The burden of proof now is not 189 years ago it's now on us. (**Marker 43:07**)

What are you going to do with this book? If you will meet that formula that is found in the end of the book, then the results are guaranteed. Let's go to Moroni chapter 10 and let's look at verse 3, 4, 5. This again is Moroni speaking to us at the end, look at your dates, if you go to the lower right-hand (page)(corner) of any page in the book of Mormon then you will see dates, 421 A.D. His people are gone, he is alone, he has wandered alone were a number of years, he has been hunter because the mighty warrior and there is a high price upon his head. And yet, as he closes out the record he writes into it this unique promise that I don't know that is found in any other book.

Moroni 10: 3

3] Behold, I would exhort you (that's us) that when ye shall read these things,(that's now) if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, (and it is) that ye would remember (This is a part of your heart, this is a part of your intent, remember) how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts.

See, that's where your heart needs to be. You need to have a heart that is filled full of gratitude, a heart that is full of praise, a heart that is filled full of love for your Father in Heaven and the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the state that is most conducive to obtain promise and the results of this promise. And after you've read these things, look what he says at the end of verse three, ponder it. Ponder these things in your heart.

We'll talk a little bit more about pondering. One way that you can ponder is to take things that have happened 1400 years ago or 189 years ago, at any rate it happened in the past, that you personally are not a witness of, and ask yourself this question. What do these things that happen to them, there, and then, have to do with me here and now? In other words the Book of Mormon uses to describe the process is called likening the Scriptures unto us. This is a good way to ponder.

I know a leader in the past has said this which I think was neat, before you turn each page, stop as you are reading and as you turn the page to the next side of the page, ask yourself this question. Could any man have written this book? Joseph Smith did not write this book. Joseph Smith was given the power and instrumentality to take his record which is of ancient origin and through the gift and power of God, translated from an unknown lost language into the English language so that we can have this record in our day. What are you going to do with this?

Look at verse 4.

Moroni 10: 4-5

4] And when ye shall receive these things, (and you've got them in front of you right now) I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, (There's the formula. Catch those things? Read it, ask God if it's not true, and if he asked with a sincere heart with real intent having faith in Christ...) he (meaning God) will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. (And the last verse)
5] And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things.

There's the great promise of the Book of Mormon found in the last chapter in some of the last verses of the last book in the Book of Mormon. There it is, brothers and sisters, laid squarely at our feet. What will you do with this record? Remember what it said in the title page? Be careful. Do not look for the mistakes of men. There are mistakes, you're going to find mistakes no matter where you go. If you are in this world this is a world where we operate behind a veil and we have to learn to trust and follow the promptings of the Holy Ghost which leads us to greater things.

While you're in this world, all men in this world are subject to error. You have to be able to discern. Part of discerning the truth of the Book of Mormon is to ponder it. As you read it ask yourself this question. Stop, don't be in a rush. Ask. What does this mean for me now?

When Mormon was given the assignment to go through this large library of Nephite records that had accumulated 1000 years of records. Some of the early leaders of the church, Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdrey, went into one of these Nephite repositories and they describe what they saw there. They said a large room that was filled from floor to the ceiling, stacked up against the wall with metal plates, enough to fill many, many wagons full. One thousand years of recorded history of these people who are a remnant of the tribe of Joseph. We will get into that a little more.

Mormon was given the assignment, towards the end of his people's existence, to go through these records and under the direction of the Holy Ghost, operating with the gift of the spirit of prophecy and revelation, to go through these records and make an abridgment. He just gather the plates out of various places and put them into one. He made his own set of plates and he went through these records of 1000 years of history and broke with his own hand and abridgment of the information that was contained within this sacred Nephite library. No wonder we call it the Book of Mormon. Making the plates, as mentioned earlier, is extremely tedious and difficult. And then using a stylus or some kind of an engraver to engraven the message upon each one of these plates – can you imagine chronicling 1000 years of a civilization's history, and doing it by hand, engraving it with a metal stylus upon metal plates.

And you have to also realize that plate space was limited. It was difficult, as we mentioned, therefore, what was put onto this abridgment that he made was very specific and very particular, especially that generation who would receive these things at a future date. That's us. So every word, we need to look at, we need to go slowly, you need to slow down your reading pace. Forget going through the Book of Mormon from the beginning to the end and meeting some date. Forget that. That has served its purpose. That's over.

We now need to read this book in a different way. We should never, ever opened its pages unless we first kneel down and ask our Father in the name of Jesus Christ to enlighten our minds and quicken our intellect, and broaden our understanding, and express gratitude for this book. Get a feel through revelation, through the Holy Ghost, what it took to get this book.

I had a vision a few years ago where I saw a man running through a forest. It was not a jungle forest, it was a hardwood forest. And I recognize that type of the forest when Marty and I were on a mission in New Jersey, and we went hiking in some of those beautiful New Jersey hardwood forests back there. I remember stopping in several places and saying, "Margie, do you remember that vision I saw of that man running through the woods? These are the woods. This is what it looked like." It wasn't some jungle in Central America. It was a hardwood forest. This man was dressed in white I would imagine were Nephite/Lamanite clothing of his era. I knew that he had something to do with the Book of Mormon for that was taught to me in the visionary state. I was wide-awake, kneeling in prayer when I saw this man running – and he was running, dodging through the trees, and it was like I was following with the camera. I could see him looking so I decided, over his shoulders as if somebody was following him. And then all of a sudden he ran forward and disappeared into the forest and I didn't see anything else. I knew he was carrying something but I could not make out what it was. And then the spirit of the Lord taught me and said, "He's protecting sacred scriptural records and that somebody was trying to get them from him." And then later on the Spirit whispered, "He was killed."

I could never read the Book of Mormon ever the same since that nor see it the same. I wonder how many men and women have given their lives to protect the sacred records whose destiny was not only to teach these people, contemporary, the laws and commandments and the gospel of Christ, but more especially were destined to come down to us in the latter days at the time of the great gathering of Israel.

How I love this book. How grateful I am that it has come down to us. We must be in that way. We need to do things differently now as we study the Book of Mormon, than we have ever done before. If you want different results from what you have received volume in the past, and expect to receive those different results by doing the same things, you are deceiving yourself and will end up frustrated. You must do things differently now if you want to receive and have bestowed upon you greater knowledge, greater power and greater understanding.

Oh how I love the book of Mormon. I was a missionary – a 19-year-old in Munich, Germany, in 1963. When the book was placed before me, circumstances for dyer, and I had to answer the question, "What are you going to do with this book?" Because what I did from that point on the results in the having a marvelous experience as a missionary for the Church of Jesus Christ of latter-day Saints in southern Germany or to go home and tune us out on all of those things. I had a very wise mentor who was the president of the mission who treated me as though I'm working on member – that I had never been baptized even though I was times when I was age 8 and had grown up in church all of my life. I had been inactive and was only on a mission because I was in love with the girl that said she would marry me unless I went on a mission. That was my motivation for going. That quickly turned to ashes as I found myself 9000 miles away looking at 2 ½ years to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to the German people and be an ambassador to the Lord – and I don't know anything about this. I don't think I had ever prayed up to that point. I certainly had not read this book. At the circumstances quickly put me in place where something different had to be done or I would go home.

This license and introduced me to the book of Mormon and gave me a challenge. He said, "I want you to read the Book of Mormon front cover. Started at the beginning and every day actually ask your father in

heaven, in the name of his son Jesus Christ if the book is true. And you go through from 1 Nephi chapter 1 through to the last book and last chapter, Moroni chapter 10. And if you still want to go home at the end of that, I will help you go.”

Well I really didn't want to go home but I just couldn't see myself staying in this circumstance for two and half years. I was so totally miserable. And so after his mentorship I took upon myself the challenge to read the book. And after several months of reading that book, well over two thirds of the way through it, struggling, not understanding because I had no experience. I didn't know how to read. I know the things you and I are going to talk about in these podcasts. And yet, the Lord in his mercy, one evening in Munich, Germany, I was able to see and feel and hear and touch – things that I read upon the written page became real. And I received a witness from the Holy Ghost just exactly as Moroni promised that we have read. I received a witness that the Book of Mormon is true. It is what it says it is. It is a sacred volume of Scripture. It is another Testament of Jesus Christ. It was written by holy men who lived on the American continent. God honored their discipleship and their love of him I sending his Son to visit them. And the account of the visitation of the resurrected Jesus Christ to the ancient inhabitants of America is written with in this book.

It was that account that gave me a witness that I bear to you now that I know that the Book of Mormon is true. I love this book. I love my Father in Heaven. I am so grateful for my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. And I look forward to studying this book from here on.

The next podcast first Nephi chapter 1 and dive right in. And the Lord bless you all I pray in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Master and Friend Amen