

Mosiah

1 The lack of a preface for the book of Mosiah in the present Book of Mormon is probably because the text takes up the Mosiah account some time after its original beginning. The original manuscript of the Book of Mormon, written in Oliver Cowdery's hand, has no title for the Book of Mosiah. It was inked in later, prior to sending it to the printer for typesetting. The first part of Mormon's abridgment of Mosiah's record...was evidently on the 116 pages lost by Martin Harris.

John A. Tvedtnes, *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon*, ed. By John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne [Salt Lake City: 1991], 33

2 Note that the main story in the book of Mosiah is told in the third person rather than in the first person as was the custom in the earlier books of the Book of Mormon. The reason for this is that someone else is now telling the story and that "someone else" is Mormon. With the beginning of the book of Mosiah we start our study of Mormon's abridgment of various books that had been written on the large plates of Nephi (3 Nephi 5:8-12). The book of Mosiah and the five books that follow—Alma, Helaman, 3 Nephi, 4 Nephi, and Mormon—were all abridged or condensed by Mormon from the large plates of Nephi, and these abridged versions were written by Mormon on the plates that bear his name, the plates of Mormon. These are the same plates that were given to Joseph Smith by the angel Moroni on September 22, 1827.

Daniel H. Ludlow, *Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976], 173

3 Nowhere in all scripture are the absolutely indispensable ministrations of the Holy Spirit so clearly dramatized as in the Book of Mormon. The mission of the Holy Spirit in achieving salvation is second only to that of Jesus Christ. Indeed, their labors are so intertwined that the one cannot be separated from the other. The first of the four most impressive examples of this fact occurred at the close of King Benjamin's reign. His farewell address concerning the "Lord God Omnipotent" was accompanied by an outpouring of the Holy Spirit that produced the spiritual conversion of virtually his entire people. In order to put this remarkable incident in historical perspective, it will be necessary to briefly review the major events leading up to it.

Rodney Turner, "The Great Conversion," *Studies in Scripture*, Vol 7, p. 205

Mosiah 1:1

4 "*Spoken by the mouths of their fathers*"

Knowing the prophecies of the Lord "spoken by the mouths of their fathers" had reference to the Nephite prophets from Lehi to King Mosiah. In over four hundred years, the language must have changed somewhat, and their merging with the people of Zarahemla (see Omni 1:14-19) would also have had its effect. This objective further confirms that the Nephites had kept records of the prophecies of their fathers and these were in king Benjamin's possession (see Omni 1:25). Knowing the future would prepare the sons to live righteously and also to teach others to do likewise.

Monte S. Nyman, *These Records are True*, p. 190

Mosiah 1:1-8

5 The best of memory is no match for the written word. Scripture is the memory of a nation. It is a perpetual flame—a constant source of light and warmth. King Benjamin suggested that even their faithful fathers, the likes of Lehi, Nephi, and Jacob, "would have dwindled in unbelief" had they not had scriptural records to keep the commandments of God constantly before their eyes. One experienced gospel teacher has observed that he had never seen anyone who was consistent in scriptural study and at the same time remiss in keeping the covenants he had made with God.

Literacy is the helm of the ship of civilization, scripture the rudder. Those to whom God speaks most often are those who are most attentive to that which he has already spoken. Scripture is the seedbed of continual revelation.

Joseph Smith, for instance, received more revelations while he was studying the revelations than while engaged in any other activity. Every member of the Church ought to be literate. Ignorance brings no honor to God.

Robert Millet, Joseph Fielding McConkie, *Doctrinal Commentary on the BOM*, Vol 2, p. 129

- 6 Husband and wife have a solemn responsibility to love and care for each other and for their children....Parents have a sacred duty to rear their children in love and righteousness, to provide for their physical and spiritual needs, to teach them to love and serve one another, [and] to observe the commandments of God.  
The Family: A Proclamation to the World, *Ensign*, November 1995, p. 102

- 7 Homes are made permanent through love. Oh, then, let love abound. If you feel that you have not the love of those little boys and girls, study to get it. Though you neglect some of the cattle, though you fail to produce good crops, even, study to hold your children's love. Loyalty is another element of the permanent home. The loyalty you afterwards want them to show to the Priesthood of God should be manifest in the home—love, loyalty, virtue. Cherish these principles, as you cherish and treasure your life. Set children the proper example. It is folly to tell a boy not to smoke, when you take your pipe out of your own mouth to tell him. Latter-day Saints, let us keep the commandments of God. Let us try to teach the children those commandments....The Church in all its organizations is putting forth an effort to make ideal men in ideal communities; but after all, the responsibility of making those ideal men, those ideal boys and girls, rests with the parents, and next with the older brothers and sisters. The responsibility is with the family, God's unit in the social fabric of humanity. We shall never get away from it.  
David O. McKay, *CR*, Oct. 1917, 56-58

- 8 When I ask for more missionaries, I am not asking for more testimony-barren or unworthy missionaries. I am asking that we start earlier and train our missionaries better in every branch and every ward in the world. That is another challenge—that the young people will understand that it is a great privilege to go on a mission and that they must be physically well, mentally well, spiritually well, and that "the Lord cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance." [D&C 1:31]

I am asking for missionaries who have been carefully indoctrinated and trained through the family and the organizations of the Church, and who come to the mission with a great desire. I am asking for better interviews, more searching interviews, more sympathetic and understanding interviews, but especially that we train prospective missionaries much better, much earlier, much longer, so that each anticipates his mission with great joy.

*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, [1982], 561-62

- 9 To our young men I would like to say, prepare yourselves, not only financially as you have been urged to do, but also intellectually and morally and spiritually. Study languages. This gospel is not for the American people only. This gospel is for the people of the earth, and we have incumbent upon us the obligation to learn to speak their tongues. If you be called to a foreign language mission, you will be better equipped if you have studied the language. If you be called to an English-speaking mission, you will understand your own language better.

*Teachings of Gordon B. Hinckley*, [1997], 344

## 10 *The Precious Student*

The final writing of this current chapter of the book coincided with a blessed event—the birth of a little granddaughter. What a precious and beautiful soul she was, and how pleased and honored were her parents. I selected a verse of scripture to share with them on the occasion of the doting grandparents' initial visit to the hospital to celebrate this new arrival. Quite by coincidence, I was pondering at the time one of my favorite passages from the Doctrine and Covenants, concerning the transition of God's children from the first estate to the mortal world: "Even before they were born, they, with many others, received their first lessons in the world of spirits and were prepared to come forth in the due time of the Lord to labor in his vineyard for the salvation of the souls of men" (D&C 138:56).

Looking down upon the newborn babe, only a few hours old, I wondered at the wisdom already invested in her heart and mind by virtue of the preparation and instruction she had received in the premortal realm. What she would later find arrayed in the scriptures, and what her parents would soon be teaching her about the gospel of Jesus Christ, would be a harmonizing echo of distant lessons already learned, a comforting reminder of former doctrines already mastered, and a wondrous review of divine instruction gleaned firsthand from the Creator Himself.

It is the nature of scripture study to be an adventure in remembrance. Those who read and ponder the word of God through the Spirit will experience that remarkable sensation of seeming to recover, line upon line, what was known long ago before the veil of forgetfulness was placed upon our understanding at birth. Thus the messengers of the holy scriptures will speak to us, "and their voice shall be as one that hath a familiar spirit" (2 Ne. 26:15; cf Isaiah 29:4). According to this perspective, our learning is essentially an "unforgetting," as the ancient Greeks expressed it, not knowing how close upon the heels of the truth they really were. A wonderful and stimulating experience awaits this newest grandchild to be able to relearn in life, by a process of unforgetting through the blessings of the Spirit, what the Father and the Son have already taught her in her previous home on high.

Richard J. Allen and Richard J. Allen, *Teachings and Commentaries of the BOM*, p. 181-182

### Mosiah 1:3-10

#### 11 *Mysteries*

The term *mysteries of God* as used in the Book of Mormon (see vs. 3) denotes the saving principles of the gospel of Jesus Christ. They are termed mysteries because they are unavailable to the natural man, not because they are mysterious or difficult to understand. They must be revealed from God through faith and obedience. They are designed to lead God's children to eternal life.

A mystery is a truth that cannot be known except through divine revelation—a sacred secret. In the days of Paul the important truth that Gentiles were to be admitted to the Kingdom of God without observing the Law of Moses was a "mystery" (Eph. 1:9-11; Col. 1:25-27). In our day such great truths as those pertaining to the restoration of the Priesthood, the work for the dead, and the re-establishment of the Church are "mysteries," because they could not have been discovered except by revelation.

Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl, *The Doctrine and Covenants Commentary*, p. 141

### Mosiah 1:3-7

#### 12 *How would people have suffered had they not had the scriptures?*

Consider these blessings that come from searching the scriptures (see also insights for Omni 1:17):

Avoid ignorance (v. 3)

Remember all that the Lord wants us to know (v. 4)

Fulfill the commandments (v. 4)

Understand the mysteries of God (v. 5)

Keep the commandments always before us (v. 5)

Avoid unbelief and strengthen faith (v. 5)

Identify incorrect traditions (v. 5)

Know the truth (v. 6)

Brian D. Garner, *Seek Ye Diligently*, p. 130

### Mosiah 1:4

#### 13 *Brass Plates, Egyptians*

The statement that "Lehi...having been taught in the language of the Egyptians therefore he could read" the engravings on the brass plates of Laban quite clearly indicates these plates were written in the Egyptian language. Thus they were almost certainly not started until after the flood and the tower of Babel, as there was no Egyptian

language before those events. The brass plates were probably not started until after the Israelites went down into Egypt in the days of Joseph, although the writers on these plates may have had access to records that had been written earlier.

Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976], 173

- 14 Perhaps the phrase “language of the Egyptians” in [this] verse means the same thing that Nephi meant when he spoke of the language of his father (and thus the language of the Book of Mormon) as consisting of “the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians” (1 Nephi 1:2). That is to say, the Nephite record reflected the Hebrew culture and background of the Jews, but was written in Egyptian characters. In the present context, then, the brass plates may have been records of Hebrew prophets and their prophecies, all recorded in an Egyptian script.

Robert L. Millet, “The Brass Plates: An Inspired and Expanded Version of the Old Testament,” in *The Old Testament and the Latter-day Saints*, 421-22; as quoted in Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988], 2:130

### Mosiah 1:6

- 15 “Plates of Nephi”

It appears the large plates of Nephi were kept and expanded by the kings, but the small plates of Nephi were kept by the prophets, and were not expanded... The first important change that took place at the time of King Benjamin was that the small plates of Nephi became full, and this separate spiritual record was given to King Benjamin for safe keeping (Omni 1:25)... A second important change during the time of King Benjamin was that the large plates of Nephi were now used to record both secular and spiritual events. There was no longer a separate spiritual record being kept; therefore preachings, visions, and prophecies, etc., were included in the large plates.

Rex C. Reeve, Jr., *First Nephi, The Doctrinal Foundation*, BYU Religious Studies Center, 106

### Mosiah 1:6-7

- 16 One would not forgo partaking of the sacrament because he is trying to lose weight, yet some neglect the scriptures because they are too busy minding the pressing cares of the world.

Neal A. Maxwell, *Things As They Really Are*, p. 97

- 17 No father, no son, no mother, no daughter should get so busy that he or she does not have time to study the scriptures and the words of modern prophets.

Spencer W. Kimball, “Boys Need Heroes Close By,” *Ensign*, May 1976, p. 47

- 18 As members of the Church in this day and age, we too have been blessed with a great treasury of scriptures. Like the sons of Benjamin, we are continually being encouraged by our leaders to study the scriptures that we may profit from them and receive inspiration to keep the commandments of God. The Lord has repeatedly counseled us to “search the scriptures.” Notwithstanding this, many of us do not take time to read and ponder them. Some have thought that the scriptures hold no meaning in modern times, but in fact the people whose lives are written in the sacred records were in many ways like us. Their lives were crowded with decisions to be made, with temptations and problems and opportunities and uncertainties. Their responses and their experiences can be very helpful to us in our time. But someone has said that a person who *will* not read is not better off than one who *cannot*.

A study of the scriptures can be a fascinating adventure. Often we hear of young people in their teen years who read the Book of Mormon and join the Church with a personal testimony that it is true and of God. Nothing in this world could be more precious than to have such an assurance and know for ourselves that the Church is of God and has been re-established upon the earth in our time by divine revelation, and the witness is available to all who really desire it.

Marion D. Hanks, *The Instructor*, March 1959, 93

19 The things of God are of deep import; and time, and experience, and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out.

Joseph Smith, *TPJS*, p. 137

### Mosiah 1:11-12

20 “Name”

The Saints of the Lord have been and will ever be called by the same name—the name of Jesus Christ. We are clearly taught that there is no other name through which men can be saved. (See D&C 18:23; Acts 4:10-12.) When we are baptized we covenant to take upon ourselves the name of Jesus Christ (see D&C 20:37), and when we partake of the sacrament we renew that covenant (see D&C 20:77). Over and over we are told that everything we do is to be done in his name. (See Mormon 9:29; D&C 88:120.)

BOM BYU Student Manual, p. 154

21 “These are they who are not valiant in the testimony of Jesus; wherefore, they obtain not the crown over the kingdom of our God” (D&C 76:79). These enter into the terrestrial glory.

Who are they? All who refuse to receive the fullness of the truth, or abide by the principles and ordinances of the everlasting gospel. They may have received a testimony; they may be able to testify that they know that Jesus is the Christ; but in their lives they have refused to accept ordinances which are essential to entrance into the celestial kingdom. They have refused to live the gospel, when they knew it to be true; or have been blinded by tradition; or for other cause have not been willing to walk in the light.

In this class we could properly place those who refuse to take upon them the name of Christ, (D&C 20:37; Mosiah 5:7-14; Alma 5:38-39) even though they belong to the Church....

They may live clean lives; they may be honest, industrious, good citizens, and all that; but they are not willing to assume any portion of the labor which devolves upon members of the Church, in carrying on the great work of redemption of mankind.

Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. by Bruce R. McConkie [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1955], 11:28-29

22 As his followers, we cannot do a mean or shoddy or ungracious thing without tarnishing his image. Nor can we do a good and gracious and generous act without burnishing more brightly the symbol of him whose name we have taken upon ourselves.

Gordon B. Hinckley, *Be Thou an Example* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1981], 90

23 One of the greatest messages that I ever received was from President Harold B. Lee. I was a young man visiting Salt Lake City, and he asked me to come by his office. He knew something I didn't know—that someone would be asking me to represent their organization. He put both of his hands on my shoulders, looked me directly in the eye, and said, “Be careful who you give your name to.”

I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is very careful whom He gives His name to. When we go into the waters of baptism, we take upon us His name and promise that we will always be obedient. Every time we take the sacrament, we remind ourselves that we will always remember Him, that we will take His name upon us, and that we will always keep His commandments.

Robert D. Hales, in *Conference Report*, Oct. 1985 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985], 27

24 Please remember this one thing. If our lives and our faith are centered upon Jesus Christ and his restored gospel, nothing can ever go permanently wrong. On the other hand, if our lives are not centered on the Savior and his teachings, no other success can ever be permanently right.

Howard W. Hunter, “Fear Not, Little Flock,” *1988-89 Devotional and Fireside Speeches*, p. 112

**Mosiah 1:16**

25 The brass plates and the sword of Laban [and Liahona] were...things that reminded King Benjamin's people of the faithfulness of their ancestors and of the many blessings that God had given them.

Thomas R. Valletta, ed., *Book of Mormon for Latter-day Saint Families*, 188