

Prelude Mormon 1

Mormon Scriptures	Similarities	Joseph Scriptures
Mormon 1:1-3 10 years old	A prophet who buried the gold plates in a hill near their home, came to them when they were young and told them that at a future time they were to go to the hill and obtain the plates.	JS-H 1:33-35, 42 17 years old
Mormon 1:2	They both started their official work at the age of 24.	D&C 20:1
Mormon 1:15 15 years old	They had a glorious vision of the Lord when they were very young.	JS-H 1:17 14 years old
Mormon 1:16	After the vision they tried to share part of what they had learned but were rejected by the people.	JS-H 1:21-22
Mormon 2:1	Both were physically large and powerful men for their day.	Andrus, <i>Joseph Smith, the Man and the Seer</i> , 14-15
Mormon 1:5	Both had the same name as their father	JS-H 1:4
Mormon 1:13	Both were born into a state of general apostasy.	JS-H 1:18-19
Mormon 2:1	Both led their people as a military leader, prophet, dispensational head, and record keeper (one the abridger, the other the translator of the gold plates).	D&C 43:1-5
Mormon 2:4-6; 4:19-20; 5:6-7	Their enemy's persecution became so intense that several times they were forced to leave their homes and move with their people from city to city.	New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Missouri, Illinois
Mormon 8:3	Their enemy's persecution continued until they succeeded in murdering them	D&C 135:4
Mormon 2:8, 29	Continued rejection of their message by the general population resulted in a civil war which divided the North from the South in the costliest casualty war of their era.	D&C 87:1-3

Brian D. Gardner, *Search These Things Diligently*, p. 295-296

Mormon 1:1*Meaning of Mormon*

1

In an effort to correct an error in relation to the word *Mormon*, the Prophet Joseph Smith wrote the following letter to the editor of the *Times and Seasons*, an early Church publication:

“SIR:--Through the medium of your paper I wish to correct an error among men that profess to be learned, liberal and wise; and I do it the more cheerfully because I hope sober-thinking and sound-reasoning people will sooner listen to the voice of truth than be led astray by the vain pretensions of the self-wise.

“The error I speak of is the definition of the word ‘Mormon.’ It has been stated that this word was derived from the Greek word *mormo*. This is not the case. There was no Greek or Latin upon the plates from which I, through the grace of the Lord, translated the Book of Mormon....

“The word Mormon, means literally, more good.”

History of the Church, 5:399-400.

Mormon 1:6

2 Mormon does not provide us with very much information concerning his boyhood, but the scanty details he does provide indicate:

1. He was born probably in A.D. 310 or 311. (He was about ten years of age in A.D. 321—see 4 Nephi 48 and Mormon 1:2.)

2. He was a descendant of Nephi. (Mormon 1:5.)

3. His father’s name was Mormon, and he was named after the land of Mormon. (Mormon 1:5 and 3 Nephi 5:12.)

4. He was evidently born in the land northward. (Mormon 1:2, 6.)

5. At the age of fifteen he was “visited of the Lord.” (Mormon 1:15.)

6. Despite his testimony of the divinity of Christ, he was “forbidden” to preach repentance unto the wicked people. (Mormon 1:16.)

7. In his “sixteenth year” he was appointed leader of the Nephite armies, and he and his armies defended the Nephites from the Lamanites. (Mormon 2:2,)

Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon*, p. 298.

Mormon 1:2-6

Quick to Observe

3 Please note that the root word *observe* is used three times in these verses. And Mormon, even in his youth, is described as being “quick to observe.”... Your future success and happiness will in large measure be determined by this spiritual capacity....

As used in the scriptures, the word *observe* has two primary uses. One use denotes “to look” or “to see” or “to notice”—as we learn in Isaiah 42:20” “Seeing many things, but thou *observes* not; opening the ears, but he heareth not” (emphasis added).

The second use of the word *observe* suggests “to obey” or “to keep”—as is evident in the Doctrine and Covenants: “But blessed are they who have kept the covenant and *observed* the commandment, for they shall obtain mercy” (D&C 54:6 emphasis added).

Thus when we are quick to observe, we promptly look or notice and obey....

Being quick to observe is an antecedent to and is linked with the spiritual gift of discernment....

Being quick to observe is a prerequisite to and a preparation for the gift of discernment. We can hope to obtain that supernal gift of discernment only if we are quick to observe—if we both look and obey.

David A. Bednar, *Ensign*, Dec. 2006 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2006], 32, 34

4 May I remind you for a moment of the greatness and of the goodness of this man Mormon. He lived on this American continent in the fourth century after Christ. When Mormon was a boy of ten, the historian of the people, whose name was Ammaron, described him as “a sober child and... quick to observe” (Mormon 1:2). Ammaron gave him a charge that when he reached to age of twenty-four, he was to take custody of the records of the generations who had preceded him.

The years that followed Mormon’s childhood were years of terrible bloodshed for his nation, the result of a long and vicious and terrible war between those who were called Nephites and those who were called Lamanites.

Mormon later became the leader of the armies of the Nephites and witnessed the carnage of his people, making it plain to them that their repeated defeats came because they forsook the Lord and He in turn abandoned them...

He wrote to our generation with words of warning and pleading, proclaiming with eloquence his testimony of the resurrected Christ. He warned of the calamities to come if we should forsake the ways of the Lord as his own people had done.

Knowing that his own life would soon be brought to an end, as his enemies hunted the survivors, he pleaded for our generation to walk with faith, hope and charity, declaring, “Charity is the pure love of Christ, and it endureth forever; and whoso is found possessed of it at the last day, it shall be well with him” (Moroni 7:47).

Such was the goodness, the strength, the power, the faith, the prophetic heart of the prophet-leader Mormon.

Gordon B. Hinckley, Conference Report, Oct. 1990, 69-70; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1990, 52.

Mormon 1: 2-6

Discernment

5 DISCERNING OF SPIRITS. One of the gifts of the Gospel which the Lord has promised to those who enter into covenant with Him is the gift of discerning of spirits—a gift which is not much thought of by many and probably seldom prayed for; yet it is a gift that is of exceeding value and one that should be enjoyed by every Latter-day Saint.... No Latter-day Saint should be without this gift, because there is such a variety of spirits in the world which seek to deceive and lead astray...

Now, the gift of discerning of spirits not only gives men and women who have it the power to discern the spirit with which others may be possessed or influenced, but it gives them the power to discern the spirit which influences themselves. They are able to detect a false spirit and also to know when the Spirit of God reigns within them. In private life this gift is of great importance to the Latter-day Saints. Possessing and exercising this gift they will not allow any evil influence to enter into their hearts or to prompt them in their thoughts, their words or their

acts. They will repel it; and if perchance such a spirit should get possession of them, as soon as they witness its effects they will expel it or, in other words, refuse to be led or prompted by it. George Q. Cannon, *Gospel Truths*, Vol 1, p. 108.

6 The gift of discernment is essential to the leadership of the Church. I never ordain a bishop or set apart a president of a stake without invoking upon him this divine blessing, that he may read the lives and hearts of his people and call forth the best within them. The gift and power of discernment in this world of contention between the forces of good and the power of evil is essential equipment for every son and daughter of God. There could be no such mass dissensions as endanger the security of the world, if its populations possessed this great gift in larger degree.... Every member in the restored Church of Christ could have this gift if he willed to do so. He could not be deceived with the sophistries of the world. He could not be led astray by pseudo-prophets and subversive cults. Even the inexperienced would recognize false teachings, in a measure at least. With this gift they would be able to detect something of the disloyal, rebellious, and sinister influences which not infrequently prompt those who seemingly take pride in the destruction of youthful faith and loyalties. Discerning parents will do well to guard their children against such influences and such personalities and teachings before irreparable damage is done. The true gift of discernment is often premonitory. A sense of danger should be heeded to be of value. We give thanks for a set of providential circumstances which avert an accident. We ought to be grateful every day of our lives for this sense which keeps alive a conscience which constantly alerts us to dangers inherent in wrongdoers and sin. Stephen L. Richards, CR 1950, April, p. 163

Mormon 1:13

Miracles

7 Miracles are everywhere to be found when priesthood callings are magnified. When faith replaces doubt, when selfless service eliminates selfish striving, the power of God brings to pass His purposes.

Thomas S. Monson, *Ensign*, Nov. 2005 [Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2005], 59

Mormon 1: 14-17

Absence of the Spirit

8 The gift of the Holy Ghost adapts itself to all these organs or attributes. It quickens all the intellectual faculties, increases, enlarges, expands and purifies all the natural passions and affections... It develops beauty of person, form and features. It tends to health, vigor, animation and social feelings. It invigorates all the faculties of the physical and intellectual man. It strengthens and gives tone to the nerves. In short, it is, as it were, marrow to the bone, joy to the heart, light to the eyes, music to the ears, and life to the whole being. In the presence of such persons one feels to enjoy the light of their countenances, as the genial rays of a sunbeam. Their very atmosphere diffuses a thrill, a warm glow of pure gladness and sympathy to the heart and nerves of others who have kindred feelings, or sympathy of spirit. No matter if the parties are strangers, entirely unknown to each other in person or character; no matter if they have never

spoken to each other, each will be apt to remark in his own mind, and perhaps exclaim when referring to the interview, “O what an atmosphere encircles that stranger! How my heart thrilled with pure and holy feelings in his presence! What confidence and sympathy he inspired! His countenance and spirit gave me more assurance than a thousand written recommendations or introductory letters.” Such is the gift of the Holy Ghost, and such are its operations when received through the lawful channel, the divine, eternal Priesthood.

Parley P. Pratt, *Key to Theology*, pp. 99-101.

9 I sat in the office of the first Presidency and President Monson took President Benson by the arm to lead him toward my chair to give me a blessing...Following that beautiful blessing as I stood and turned to face President Benson... and spoke with him briefly, I was quite unprepared for the magnificence of his spirit, and I realized that as our bodies age and grow old and wear out, our spirits continue to grow.

Janette C. Hales, *BYU Devotional*, March 16, 1993.

10 If our spirits are inclined to be stiff and refractory, and we desire continually the gratification of our own will to the extent that this feeling prevails us, the Spirit of the Lord is held at a distance from us; or, in other words, the *Father withholds his Spirit from us in proportion as we desire the gratification of our own will.*

Erastus Snow, *Journal of Discourses* 7:352.

11 The healing of the sick among us has become so common that it is apparently but little thought of. We have also seen the lame made to walk, and the blind to receive their sight, the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak. There things we have seen done by the power of God and not by the cunning or wisdom of men; we know that these signs do follow the preaching of the gospel. Yet these testimonies of its truth are but poor and weak when compared with the whisperings of the still small voice of the Spirit of God.

Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1975], 83-84.

12 But during my travels in the southern country last winter I had many interviews with President Young, and with Heber C. Kimball and Geo. A. Smith, and many others who are dead. They attended our conference, they attended our meetings. And on one occasion, I saw Brother Brigham and Brother Heber... when I was on my way to attend conference; and they were dressed in the most priestly robes... I asked Pres. Young if he would preach to us. He said, “No, I have finished my testimony in the flesh I shall not talk to this people any more. But (said he) I have come to see you; I have come to watch over you, and to see what people are doing. The (said he) I want you to teach the people—and I want you to follow this counsel yourself—that they must labor and so live as to obtain the Holy Spirit, for without this you cannot build up the kingdom; without the spirit of God you are in danger of walking in the dark...”

Wilford Woodruff, *Journal of Discourses* [London: Latter-day Saints’ Book Depot, 1881], 21:318.

13 The Lord declared to His servants... that He was ... withdrawing His Spirit from the earth; and we can see that such is the fact, for not only the churches are dwindling away... the

governments of the earth are thrown into confusion and division; and *Destruction*, to the eye of the spiritual beholder, seems to be written by the finger of an invisible hand, in large capitals, upon almost every thing we behold.

Joseph Smith, *History of the Church* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976], 1:314

Mormon 1:15

14 Mormon has an interesting and remarkable history. At age 15, like Samuel at Shiloh, he received a personal visitation from the Lord. And at age 16 he was launched upon what so far as I can find was the greatest military career in history, stretching as it did over a period of 58 years (Mormon 1:15; 2:2).

It is interesting to imagine the kind of qualities that a young man would need to have to attract a personal visit from the Lord at such a young age, and then when only sixteen years old to win for himself the leadership of a great national army.

Mormon possessed in great abundance the qualities that make a leader believed in, loved and followed, only one of these will be mentioned here and that was that Mormon had to be restrained in his desire to preach the gospel. If you would like to develop a good fault, here is one of the best I know of. Most of us have to be coaxed and begged and reminded to do our duty. Mormon had to be held back (Mormon 1:16-17).

Sterling W. Sill, *The Upward Reach*, 1962, 248-49.

15 You young boys need not wait to be great. You can be superior missionaries, strong young men, great companion, and happy trusted Church leaders. You need not wait until tomorrow. Spencer W. Kimball, *Ensign*, May 1976, 47.

16 We have an 11-year-old grandson, Andrew, who is confined to a wheelchair, maybe for the rest of his life. He will be ordained a deacon in the fall and will join the priesthood army of the Lord. His physical handicap will not limit him in this war, because the weapons of choice are not spears and swords wielded on a chaotic field of battle.

Rather, the weapons of eternal worth reflecting the whole armor of God are *truth, righteousness, faith, prayer*, and the *word of God* (see Ephesians 6:13-18). These weapons are wielded in our minds, mouths, and movements. Every righteous thought, word, and deed is a victory for the Lord.

That is why Andrew has no handicap in this battle. His parents have taught him well. He stands ready to join the ranks of the priesthood brethren.

Robert C. Oaks, *Ensign*, May 2005, p. 49.

Mormon 1:16

Willfully rebelled

17 The maturing Mormon, by then fifteen years of age, stood beyond the sinfulness around him and rose above the despair of his time. Consequently, he “was visited of the Lord, and tasted and knew of the goodness of Jesus,” trying valiantly to preach to his people. But as God occasionally does when those with so much light reject it, Mormon literally had his mouth shut.

He was forbidden to preach to a nation that had willfully rebelled against their God. These people had rejected the miracles and messages delivered them by the three translated Nephite disciples, who had now also been silenced in their ministry and been taken from the nation to whom they had been sent.

Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant*, [1997], 318.

18 Historically, the drifting away from the course of life marked out by the Lord has occurred as individuals begin to make compromises with the Lord's standard. This is particularly true when the transgression is willful and no repentance occurs. Remember Mormon's description of those who turned away from the true path in his day. They did not sin in ignorance. They willfully rebelled against God. It did not occur as a universal movement. It began as individual members of the Church knowingly began to make compromises with the Lord's standard. They sought justification for diversions in the knowledge that others were compromising as well. Those who willfully sin soon seek to establish a standard of their own with which they can feel more comfortable and which justifies their misconduct. They also seek the association of those who are willing to drift with them along this path of self-delusion.

As the number of drifting individuals increases, their influence becomes more powerful. It might be described as the "great and spacious building syndrome." The drifting is the more dangerous when its adherents continue to overtly identify with and participate with the group that conforms to the Lord's way. Values and standards that were once clear become clouded and uncertain. The norm of behavior begins to reflect this beclouding to true principles. Conduct that would once have caused revulsions and alarm now becomes somewhat commonplace... While the Lord has made it clear that he will not permit apostate influences to engulf his Church in this dispensation, he may, from time to time, require a purging of those who fail to withstand the tests, in a manner that he has described in unmistakable terms. Such purging, if it is required in our day, will be as painful and devastating as any experienced by God's children at anytime on the earth. The suffering of the disobedient in the time of Alma gives us some idea today of the terrible circumstances that a wayward people can bring upon themselves.

Dean L. Larsen, *The Book of Mormon: Alma, The Testimony of The Word*, ed. by Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. [Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, BYU, 1992], 8, 12.

Mormon 1:18

Slippery Treasures

19 I am wondering if the time has come to realize that we are... suffering from a subsidence of our foundation... No part of the country, rural or urban, is immune. Life and property are relatively more unsafe than in any other civilized country in the world.

Herbert Hoover, 22 Apr 1929; as quoted in Ross W. Warner, *Book of Mormon Prophecies* [Salt Lake City: Hawkes Publishing, 1975], 98.

20 When we consider the condition of the Latter-day Saints, and see how many there are who seem to have their eyes fixed upon the things of the world, things that are not lasting, but that perish in the handling, and how anxious they are to obtain them, how do you think I feel about it? We see many of the Elders or Israel desirous of becoming wealthy and they adopt any course that they think will bring them riches, which to me is as unwise as anything can be—to see men of wisdom, men that seem to have an understanding of the world and of the things of God searching after minerals throughout these mountains...

These treasures that are in the earth are carefully watched, they can be removed from place to place according to the good pleasure of Him who made them and owns them. He has his messengers at his service, and it is just as easy for an angel to remove the minerals from any part of one of these mountains to another, as it is for you and me to walk up and down this hall.

Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* [London: Latter-day Saints' Book Depot], 19:36-37.

Mormon 1:19

Sorceries, Witchcrafts and Magic

21 It is not good practice to become intrigued by Satan and his mysteries. No good can come from getting close to evil. Like playing with fire, it is too easy to get burned... The only safe course is to keep will distanced from him and any of his wicked activities or nefarious practices. The mischief of devil worship, sorcery, casting spells, witchcraft, voodooism, black magic, and all other forms of demonism should be avoided like the plague.

James E. Faust, Conference Report, Oct. 1987, 40; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1987, 33.