

Mormon 5: 1-2*Mormon never ceased to labor*

1 In this crucible of wickedness the true greatness of Mormon shines like a star as he calls his son to action, telling him that no matter how bad things are, we must never stop trying to do what we can to improve matters, “for if we should cease to labor, we should be brought under condemnation; for we have a labor to perform whilst in this tabernacle of clay.” (Mormon 9:6.) In this spirit Mormon took over command of the army even when he knew that all was lost, ... for they looked upon me as though I could deliver them from their afflictions. But behold, I was without hope ... (Mormon 5:1f.) His is the predicament of the true tragic hero... I had led them notwithstanding their wickedness... and had loved them ... with all my heart; and my soul had been poured out in prayer unto my God all the day long for them; nevertheless, it was without faith, because of the hardness of their hearts. (Mormon 3:12.) However it might appeal to our own age of violence, Mormon found little consolation in the fact that his people were wonderfully tough and proud of it—“for so exceedingly do they anger that it seemeth to me that they have no fear of death.” (Mormon 5:2.) They could take care of themselves, thank you—and they did.

Hugh W. Nibley, *Since Cumorah: The Book of Mormon in the Modern World*, pp. 437-38.

2 Mormon 5: 1-8

Hugh Nibley adds an important insight about the Nephite society at this time:

“The Nephites foolishly took the offensive and as a result lost both the land and the city of Desolation. “And the remainder did flee and join the inhabitants of the city of Teancum... (Morm. 4:3) This makes it clear that we are still reading only of Mormon’s band of Nephites, and not a history of the whole nation, for the people of Teancum,, which was “...in the borders by the seashore ... near the city Desolation” (Morm. 4:3) had up to then no part in the fighting. It must always be borne in mind that by this time the Nephite people had become broken up into “tribes,” each living by itself and following its own tribal laws. (Hel. 7:2-4, 11.)

...Here you have a clear picture of Nephite society. Separate “lands” living their own lives, now in this last crisis terribly reluctant to move and join the swelling host in the retreat to the north. Those who refused to pull up stakes were one by one completely wiped out by the Lamanites. This was no planned migration but a forced evacuation, like dozens of such we read about in the grim and terrible times of the “invasion of the Barbarians” that destroyed the classic civilization of the Old World. In this case Mormon’s people were only part of the general and gradual evacuation of the whole land.

An Approach, pp. 361-62.

3 Mormon 5:10*From whence their blessings come*

In the outer office of the council of Twelve hangs a painting by Utah artist Arnold Friberg, depicting George Washington, the father of our country, on his knees at Valley Forge. That painting symbolizes the faith of our forebears. I wish it could be in every American home. In

the 1940's, while serving as the executive officer of the national Council of Farmer Cooperatives in Washington, D.C., I saw in a Hilton Hotel a placard depicting Uncle Sam, representing America, on his knees in humility and prayer. Beneath the placard was the inscription "Not beaten there by the hammer and sickle, but freely, responsibly, confidently... We need fear nothing or no one save God." That picture has stayed in my memory ever since. America on her knees—in recognition that all our blessings come from God! America on her knees—out of a desire to serve the God of this land by keeping His commandments! This is the sovereign remedy to all of our problems and the preservation of our liberties.

Ezra Taft Benson, *This Nation Shall Endure*, pp. 45-46.

Mormon 5:16

Spirit ceased to strive

- 4 President Harold B. Lee commented on this phrase in the April 1956 general conference: "Mormon described some people, his people, from whom the Spirit of the Lord had departed, and when I read that..., it seems clear to me that what he was talking about was not merely the inability to have the companionship of or the gift of the Holy Ghost, but he was talking of that light of truth to which every one born into the world is entitled and which will never cease to strive with the individual unless he loses it through his own sinning."

CR, April 1956, p. 108.

- 5 When a person has sinned to the point that this light of Christ, the Spirit of God, ceases to strive with him, the "spark of divine" that is inherent in every man is gone and the link to divinity is broken—leaving the person without Christ and God in their lives. If the light of Christ, which persuades men to do good, to believe in Christ and to know good from evil (see Moroni 7:16-18), is taken away due to wickedness, that person becomes spiritual chaff, blown in any direction by the tempests of Satan.

Millet & Top, BOM Commentary, Vol 4, p. 233.

- 6 Now the Lord has withdrawn His Spirit from the world. Do not let this thought become confused in your minds. The Spirit He has withdrawn from the world is not the Holy Ghost (for they never had that), but it is the light of truth, spoken of in our scriptures as the Spirit of Christ, which is given to every man that cometh into the world, as you find recorded in Section 84 [vs. 46] of the Doctrine of Covenants.

Now because of the wickedness of the world, that Spirit has been withdrawn, and when the Spirit of the Lord is not striving with men, the spirit of Satan is. Therefore, we may be sure that the time has come spoken of in Section 1 of the Doctrine and Covenants... Peace *has* been taken from the earth. The devil *has* power over his own dominion. The Spirit of the Lord *has* been withdrawn. Not because the Lord desires to withdraw that Spirit, but because of the wickedness of mankind, it becomes necessary that this Spirit of the Lord be withdrawn.

Joseph Fielding Smith, "The Predicted Judgments," *Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year*, 21 Mar. 1967 [Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1967], 5-6.

Mormon 5:17*Once a delightful people*

7 There is the great blessing of wisdom, of knowledge, even hidden treasures of knowledge. We are promised that ours shall be a delightful land if we will walk in obedience to this law. I can interpret the word *land* as people, that those who walk in obedience shall be a delightful people whom others would describe as blessed!

Gordon B. Hinckley, in Conference Report, Apr. 1982, 60; or *Ensign*, May 1982, 40

Mormon 5: 20

8 Both President Spencer W. Kimball and President Ezra Taft Benson taught that this verse has application to the afflictions, deaths, and inequities suffered by the American Indians over the years (see Spencer W. Kimball, *Faith Precedes the Miracle*, 341; Ezra Taft Benson, *This Nation Shall Endure*, 160-61).

Thomas R. Valletta, ed., *Book of Mormon for Latter-Day Saints Families*, 594.

Mormon 5:23*“In the hands of God”*

9 Hands are one of the symbolically expressive parts of the body. In Hebrew, *yad*, the most common word for *hand*, is also used metaphorically to mean power, strength, and might (see William Wilson, *Old Testament word studies* [1978], 205). Thus, hands signify power and strength....

To be in the hands of God would suggest that we are not only under His watchful care but also that we are guarded and protected by His wondrous power.

Throughout the scriptures, reference is made to the hand of the Lord. His divine assistance is evidenced over and over again. His powerful hands created worlds, and yet they were gentle enough to bless the little children....

Every one of us needs to know that we can go on in the strength of the Lord. We can put our hand in His, and we will feel His sustaining presence lift us to heights unattainable alone....

How do we learn to extend our hand and connect to the comfort provided by the Lord?...

Here are four keys:

Learn

Listen

Seek the Spirit

Pray always

The Lord will provide sustenance and support if we are willing to open the door and receive His hand of divine assistance...

Imagine the wounds in His hands. His weathered hands, yes, even His hands of torn flesh and physical sacrifice, give our own hands greater power and direction.

It is the wounded Christ who leads us through our moments of difficulty. It is He who bears us up when we need more air to breathe or direction to follow or even more courage to continue.

If we will keep the commandments of God and walk hand in hand with Him in His paths, we will go forward with faith and never feel alone.

Elder W. Craig Zwick, in Conference Report, Oct. 2003, 36-38; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 34-36.

Mormon 5:24

10 Except for a few who are the humble followers of Christ, the Gentiles will not repent. They will revel in their abominations and sins against the restored gospel, and they will be burned by the brightness of our Lord's coming while the righteous—here called the remnant of Jacob—shall abide the day. And then, in the prophetic imagery, it will be as though the remnant of Israel over-threw their enemies as a young lion among the flocks of sheep.

Bruce R. McConkie, *Millennial Messiah*, p. 248; see also p. 242: *Mortal Messiah* 4:334-35.