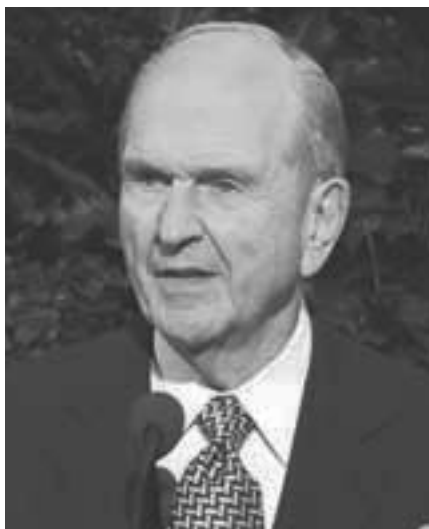


# Scriptural Witnesses

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*Scriptures of the Restoration do not compete with the Bible; they complement the Bible.*



**W**e express love and admiration for President Henry B. Eyring, Elder Quentin L. Cook, and Elder Walter F. González and pray for the Lord's blessings to attend them in their new callings.

We extend heartfelt feelings of gratitude to each of you, brothers and sisters. Throughout the world, your examples of service and compassion are receiving a great deal of attention. At the same time, many people are wondering about this Church's history and doctrines. Among those questioners are some who choose to cast aspersions at the Book of Mormon.<sup>1</sup>

Disregard for the Book of Mormon or for any other sacred scripture

concerns me deeply. In addressing that concern, I have titled my remarks "Scriptural Witnesses."

## Definitions

I will define the term *scriptural* as pertaining to the Bible and the scriptures of the Restoration.<sup>2</sup> Members of the Church "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."<sup>3</sup> Scriptures of the Restoration also include the Doctrine and Covenants as well as the Pearl of Great Price.

A dictionary defines the noun *witness* as an "attestation of a fact or event: [a] testimony."<sup>4</sup> The term *witness* bears special significance when applied to the word of God. In the Bible we read this important declaration: "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established."<sup>5</sup> This assures God's children that divine doctrines are confirmed by more than one scriptural witness.

## Scriptures Testify of Jesus Christ

The Bible and the Book of Mormon are both witnesses of Jesus Christ. They teach that He is the Son of God, that He lived an exemplary life, that He atoned for all mankind, that He died upon the cross and rose again as the resurrected Lord. They teach that

He is the Savior of the world.

Scriptural witnesses authenticate each other. This concept was explained long ago when a prophet wrote that the Book of Mormon was "written for the intent that ye may believe [the Bible]; and if ye believe [the Bible] ye will believe [the Book of Mormon] also."<sup>6</sup> Each book refers to the other. Each book stands as evidence that God lives and speaks to His children by revelation to His prophets.<sup>7</sup>

Love for the Book of Mormon expands one's love for the Bible and vice versa. Scriptures of the Restoration do not compete with the Bible; they complement the Bible. We are indebted to martyrs who gave their lives so that we could have the Bible. It establishes the everlasting nature of the gospel and of the plan of happiness. The Book of Mormon restores and underscores biblical doctrines such as tithing,<sup>8</sup> the temple,<sup>9</sup> the Sabbath day,<sup>10</sup> and the priesthood.<sup>11</sup>

An angel proclaimed that the Book of Mormon<sup>12</sup> shall establish the truth of the Bible.<sup>13</sup> He also revealed that writings in the Bible available in our day are not as complete as they were when originally written by prophets and apostles.<sup>14</sup> He declared that the Book of Mormon shall restore plain and precious things taken away from the Bible.<sup>15</sup>

A prophecy in the Book of Mormon warned that some people would object to the notion of additional scriptures. To those who think they "need no more Bible,"<sup>16</sup> consider this God-given counsel:

"Know ye not that there are more nations than one? Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, . . . created all men, . . . and that I rule in the heavens above and in the earth beneath; and I bring forth my word unto the children of men, yea, even upon all the nations of the earth?"

". . . Know ye not that the testimony of two nations is a witness unto

you that I am God, that I remember one nation like unto another? Wherefore, I speak the same words unto one nation like unto another. And . . . the testimony of the two nations shall run together also.”<sup>17</sup>

The scriptural story of Jesus Christ is indeed a two-hemisphere story.<sup>18</sup> While Mary and Joseph in the East were making preparations for the holy child’s birth in Bethlehem,<sup>19</sup> Nephi in the West was being taught by the premortal Messiah. To Nephi the Lord said, “Be of good cheer; . . . on the morrow come I into the world, to show unto the world that I will fulfil all that which I have caused to be spoken by the mouth of my holy prophets.”<sup>20</sup>

To doubters of that second witness—the Book of Mormon—the Lord issued a warning: “Because you have treated lightly the things you have received . . . [you] shall remain under . . . condemnation until [you] repent and remember . . . the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given . . . , [the Bible, and] . . . do according to that which I have written.”<sup>21</sup>

The Lord provided other scriptures of the Restoration<sup>22</sup> and declared that those words will also be fulfilled.<sup>23</sup> With these scriptural witnesses, false doctrines will be confounded.<sup>24</sup> With these scriptural witnesses, doctrines of the Bible are not only reaffirmed but clarified.

### **Restoration Scriptures Clarify the Bible**

How do scriptures of the Restoration clarify the Bible? Many examples exist. I will cite but a few, beginning with the Old Testament.

Isaiah wrote, “Thou shalt . . . speak out of the ground, and thy speech shall be low out of the dust, and thy voice shall be, as of one that hath a familiar spirit, out of the ground, and thy speech shall whisper out of the dust.”<sup>25</sup> Could any words be more



descriptive of the Book of Mormon, coming as it did “out of the ground” to “whisper out of the dust” to people of our day?<sup>26</sup>

But Isaiah was not the only Old Testament prophet who foretold the Book of Mormon. Ezekiel wrote:

“Take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel . . . : then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel . . . :

“And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.”<sup>27</sup>

Today, Saints living in many nations of the earth gratefully hold the Bible (the stick of Judah) and the Book of Mormon (the stick of Ephraim) bound as one in their hands.

What about the New Testament? The Book of Mormon also stands as a scriptural witness to its teachings. Examples include the miraculous birth of the babe in Bethlehem,<sup>28</sup> His Sermon on the Mount,<sup>29</sup> and the intense suffering of the Savior.<sup>30</sup> The doctrine of the Resurrection is mentioned more frequently in the Book of Mormon than in the Bible.<sup>31</sup>

The need for the Holy Ghost was mentioned by Paul. He asked, “Have ye received the Holy Ghost . . . ? And they said unto him, We have not so

much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.”<sup>32</sup> That doctrine is clarified by another scriptural witness, conveyed through the Lord’s prophet of the Restoration. He taught us to “believe in the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands.”<sup>33</sup> That precious and powerful gift is again available to children of God.

Paul referred to the three degrees of postmortal glory when he taught that “there is one glory of the sun, . . . another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars.”<sup>34</sup> That glimpse into postmortal glory has been clarified by another scriptural witness. The Lord revealed that “the glory of the celestial is one, even as the glory of the sun is one.

“And the glory of the terrestrial is one, even as the glory of the moon is one.

“And the glory of the telestial is one, even as the glory of the stars is one.”<sup>35</sup>

The highest of these kingdoms, the celestial, is reserved for those who obey the law of that kingdom:

“They who are not sanctified through the law . . . of Christ, must inherit another kingdom, even that of a terrestrial kingdom, or that of a telestial kingdom.

“For he who is not able to abide the law of a celestial kingdom cannot abide a celestial glory.”<sup>36</sup>

These three degrees of glory relate to postmortal life. They relate to the immortality of the human soul. That gift of immortality became a reality because of the Atonement of Jesus Christ.<sup>37</sup> This important word—*atonement*—in any of its forms, is mentioned only *once* in the King James Version of the New Testament!<sup>38</sup> In the Book of Mormon, it appears 39 times!<sup>39</sup>

John, writing in the New Testament’s book of Revelation, foresaw “another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the



**All 16 French-speaking missionaries serving on the island of Guadeloupe in the West Indies Mission gather to listen to counsel from Church leaders.**

earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.”<sup>40</sup> One specific angel held keys of responsibility for the Book of Mormon.<sup>41</sup> That was the angel Moroni! These examples are but a few of many biblical doctrines that are clarified by scriptures of the Restoration.<sup>42</sup>

### **The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ**

Willingly we share scriptures of the Restoration with people across the world. The Book of Mormon records the personal ministry of the resurrected Lord to people of ancient America. Ponder these everlasting truths that He proclaimed:

“Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. I created the heavens and the earth, and all things that in them are. I was with the Father from the beginning. . . .

“ . . . The scriptures concerning my coming are fulfilled. . . .

“I am the light and the life of the world.”

The Savior continued:

“Whoso cometh unto me with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, him will I baptize with fire and with the Holy Ghost. . . .

“ . . . I have come unto the world to bring redemption unto the world, to save the world from sin.

“Therefore, whoso repenteth and cometh unto me as a little child, him will I receive, for of such is the kingdom of God. . . . I have laid down my life, and have taken it up again; therefore repent, and come unto me . . . and be saved.”<sup>43</sup>

Those declarations of the Lord summarize who He really is and who He really wants us to be. He wants us to come unto Him and, in due course, be embraced gloriously in His loving arms.

I express my profound gratitude for scriptural witnesses. I have seen the mighty change that comes to people who apply the Lord’s teachings in their lives. Such transformation leads to the blessing of eternal life.<sup>44</sup>

I know that God lives. Jesus is the Christ. His gospel has been restored in these latter days. President Gordon B. Hinckley is His prophet at this time. I so testify in the name of Jesus Christ, amen. ■

### **NOTES**

1. The full title is the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ.
2. The Restoration was foreseen by Peter (see Acts 3:19–21), John (see Revelation

14:6–8), and Paul (see Ephesians 1:10). The Prophet Joseph Smith was instructed that, in this last dispensation, there is to be a “restoration of all things spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began” (D&C 27:6).

3. Articles of Faith 1:8.
4. *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. (2003), “witness,” 1439.
5. 2 Corinthians 13:1. Similar statements appear in Matthew 18:16 and Ether 5:4.
6. Mormon 7:9.
7. To the prophet of this present dispensation, the Lord declared, “This generation shall have my word through you” (D&C 5:10).
8. See Alma 13:15; 3 Nephi 24:8–10.
9. See 2 Nephi 5:16; Jacob 1:17; 2:2, 11; Mosiah 2:5–7.
10. See Mosiah 13:16–19; 18:23.
11. See 2 Nephi 6:2; Mosiah 18:18; Alma 6:1; 13:1–3, 6–11; 3 Nephi 18:5; Moroni 3:1–4.
12. The Book of Mormon is to “make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people, that the Lamb of God is the Son of the Eternal Father, and the Savior of the world; and that all men must come unto him, or they cannot be saved” (1 Nephi 13:40).
13. See 1 Nephi 13:40.
14. See 1 Nephi 13:28–29.
15. See 1 Nephi 13:40.
16. 2 Nephi 29:6.
17. 2 Nephi 29:7–8.
18. Because He is Creator of “worlds without number” (Moses 1:33), additional scriptures from other locations are a distinct possibility.
19. See Luke 2:4–6.
20. 3 Nephi 1:13.
21. D&C 84:54, 57.
22. See D&C 135:3.
23. See Joseph Smith—Matthew 1:31–35.
24. See 2 Nephi 3:12; Ezra Taft Benson, “A New Witness for Christ,” *Ensign*, Nov. 1984, 8.

25. Isaiah 29:4.
26. Isaiah foresaw that God would do “a marvellous work and a wonder” in the latter days (Isaiah 29:14). Those words of Isaiah echoed in the ears of inhabitants of ancient America: “The Lord will set his hand again the second time to restore his people from their lost and fallen state. Wherefore, he will proceed to do a marvellous work and a wonder among the children of men” (2 Nephi 25:17). That marvelous work would include the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and the Restoration of the gospel. Isaiah was quoted frequently in the Book of Mormon. A study of those quotations may be tedious, but it is *not* repetitious. Of 433 verses of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon, 234 differ from their biblical counterparts.
27. Ezekiel 37:16–17.
28. See 1 Nephi 11:13–20; Alma 7:10.
29. See 3 Nephi 12–14.
30. See Mosiah 3:7. A firsthand account of His suffering was given to His latter-day prophet (see D&C 19:16–19).
31. The word *resurrection* appears in 40 verses of the King James Version of the Bible; it appears in 56 verses in the Book of Mormon. See also Jeffrey R. Holland, *Christ and the New Covenant: The Messianic Message of the Book of Mormon* (1997), 238–41.
32. Acts 19:2. See Acts 2:38 for the teaching of Peter regarding the need for the gift of the Holy Ghost.
33. *History of the Church*, 5:499.
34. 1 Corinthians 15:41.
35. D&C 76:96–98; see also 131:1.
36. D&C 88:21–22.
37. See Mosiah 16:10; Alma 42:23; Mormon 6:21.
38. See Romans 5:11.
39. *Atonement*: 28 times; *atone* or *atoning*: 8 times; *atoneth*: 3 times. In several verses, the word *atonement* appears more than once (see 2 Nephi 9:7; Alma 34:9; 42:23).
40. Revelation 14:6.
41. See D&C 27:5; 128:20.
42. The New Testament refers to “other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd” (John 10:16). That doctrine is clarified in the Book of Mormon. It bears record of the resurrected Lord speaking to people of ancient America. There the Lord said, “Ye are they of whom I said: Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd” (3 Nephi 15:21).
- A limited account of Paul’s knowledge of baptism for the dead appears in the New Testament (see 1 Corinthians 15:29). Only in scriptures of the Restoration is that divine doctrine clarified (see D&C 124:29–30, 41; 128:1, 11–12, 16–18; 138:47–48).
43. 3 Nephi 9:15–16, 18, 20–22.
44. See 3 Nephi 9:14; D&C 30:8.