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THE Converting Power OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

All the truths of the gospel fall into place as we come to know that the keystone of our testimony—the Book of Mormon—is true.

As a young boy, I loved to set up dominoes in long lines with intricate designs and then push the first domino over. The resulting chain reaction would cause each of the successive dominoes to topple over, one after another to the end of the line. I would spend hours carefully setting the dominoes in place in order to have the thrill of seeing them fall.

A testimony of the Book of Mormon is one of the first steps in obtaining a testimony of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Much as the first domino causes the other dominoes to tumble in succession, if we first come to know that the Book of Mormon is true, then we can also come to know that Jesus Christ is our Savior and Redeemer, that Joseph Smith was His prophet through whom the Restoration took place, and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the true Church of Jesus Christ restored with power and authority to the earth today.

The Book of Mormon Is Central to Our Message

Concerning the Book of Mormon, the Prophet Joseph Smith said, “I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book.”¹



Joseph further taught that it is central to our faith, beliefs, and testimony. “Take away the Book of Mormon and the revelations, and where is our religion?” he asked. “We have none.”²

The beauty of the gospel’s message is that each of us can come to know for ourselves that the Book of Mormon is true.

As a mission president in France, Belgium, and the Netherlands some years ago, I had the privilege and blessing of interviewing individuals for worthiness to be baptized. I will never forget the interview I had with one sister.

During our interview I asked her how she came to know that the Church was true. She reached in her handbag and brought out a worn and well-read paperback copy of the Book of Mormon. She opened the book to 3 Nephi 27 and explained that this was the first chapter the missionaries had invited her to read. She said that as she began to read, she was profoundly moved by what she read and the Spirit she felt. She was so overcome with the spirit of the Book of

Mormon that she took a red pencil and began to underline the words that impressed her the most.

Then she showed me her copy of the Book of Mormon, open to 3 Nephi 27. Almost every word in that chapter was underlined in red.

“That is why I believe,” she said. “This book speaks to me in a way that I cannot deny. I know that it is true, and I know that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is true.”

She was baptized and became a faithful member of the Church.

The Introduction to the Book of Mormon

The introduction to the Book of Mormon gives us a pattern by which we can know for ourselves that the gospel message is true. The introduction “was first published in the 1981 edition of the Book of Mormon. It introduces the Book of Mormon to the modern reader by providing background information and a description of the book.”³

When we gain a divine witness from the Holy Spirit that the Book of Mormon is true, we can actually know for ourselves that Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world.

The introduction starts by telling us precisely what the Book of Mormon is: “A volume of holy scripture comparable to the Bible. It is a record of God’s dealings with ancient inhabitants of the Americas and contains the fulness of the everlasting gospel.” We learn that it “was written by many ancient prophets by the spirit of prophecy and revelation” on golden plates and was abridged “by a prophet-historian named Mormon.”

We also learn that “the crowning event recorded in the Book of Mormon is the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ among the Nephites soon after His resurrection. It puts forth the doctrines of the gospel, outlines the plan of salvation, and tells men what they must do to gain peace in this life and eternal salvation in the life to come.”

One of the most important things we can learn from the Book of Mormon is that the Church restored by Jesus Christ through Joseph Smith is true.

The introduction invites us “to read the Book of Mormon, to ponder in [our] hearts the message it contains, and then to ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ if the book is true.” We are promised that “those who pursue this course and ask in faith will gain a testimony of its truth and divinity by the power of the Holy Ghost. (See Moroni 10:3–5.)”

This additional promise follows:

“Those who gain this divine witness from the Holy Spirit will also come to know by the same power that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world, that Joseph Smith is His revelator and prophet in these last days, and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord’s kingdom once again established on the earth, preparatory to the Second Coming of the Messiah.”

Think about it! We can actually know for ourselves that:

- Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world, and the Redeemer of all mankind.
- Joseph Smith is a true prophet. He told the truth. He saw the things he said he saw and heard the words he said he heard.
- The Church that was restored by Jesus Christ through Joseph Smith is “the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth” (D&C 1:30). It is the Church of Jesus Christ. It has truth, power, authority, and ordinances. It is personally directed by the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ through living prophets.

All this we can know as we come to know that the Book of Mormon is true. It has converting and convincing power.

My Testimony of the Book of Mormon

As a young missionary serving in France, I wanted to know for myself that the Book of Mormon was true. I believed it was true. I hoped it was true. I had even gone on a mission with faith that it was true. However, as I worked day after day as a missionary and told people the best I could in my limited French that I had a testimony of the book, I still did not actually *know* for myself.

Our little apartment in southern France was cold and damp throughout that first winter. Every morning and evening, before and after the work of the day, I would huddle with a blanket and an overcoat to read and study my Book of Mormon. I knew of the promise of Moroni, that if I were to read, ponder, and pray, I too could know. For days and weeks I read,



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but nothing happened. No light, no angel, no voice—nothing except a feeling of peace as I read.

I continued to read and underline meaningful passages and pray to know that the Book of Mormon was true. The miracle eventually came. As Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles has described, it was more like the rising of the sun than the sudden turning on of a light switch.⁴ A light began to illuminate my mind and my heart. I began to see the Book of Mormon in a different way. Passages that I had read before began to mean something new. The best way I can describe the experience was that my mind began to be enlightened.

Over a period of weeks and months, I can say that I came to know more surely than anything I had ever known that the Book of Mormon was the word of God. I came to know that it was written and preserved for our day and was brought forth as a powerful

witness of Jesus Christ and His Church. The impression that came to me again and again through the voice of the Spirit was, “It’s true, it’s true, it’s all true.”

Forty years later, that same witness continues with me. I have now read the Book of Mormon many times, and each time—every time—I again hear the words “It’s true.” This has given me the assurance that Jesus Christ is my Savior and that this is His great work of salvation.

Just as the dominoes I loved to play with as a boy all fell down when I pushed over the first one, so do all the truths of the gospel fall into place as we come to know that the keystone of our testimony—the Book of Mormon—is true. ■

NOTES

1. Joseph Smith, in introduction to the Book of Mormon; see also *History of the Church*, 4:461.
2. *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Joseph Smith* (2007), 196.
3. *Book of Mormon Teacher Resource Manual* (2004), 19.
4. See David A. Bednar, “The Spirit of Revelation,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2011, 87–90.



THE CENTERPIECE OF THE RESTORATION

“The Book of Mormon is the centerpiece of the Restoration. It was written, preserved, and transmitted under the Lord’s direction. It was translated ‘by the gift and power of God.’”

President Russell M. Nelson, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “Catch the Wave,” *Ensign or Liahona*, May 2013, 47.