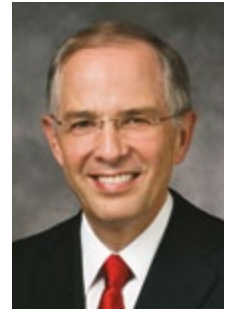




By Elder
Neil L. Andersen
Of the Quorum of the
Twelve Apostles



THE BOOK OF MORMON Strengthening Our Faith in Jesus Christ

The Book of Mormon invites us and our families to embrace faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and it shares the principles that will help our families succeed.

Compiled from the teachings of prophets through several centuries, the Book of Mormon was written for a future time when a restoration of priesthood keys, along with a great gathering of the house of Israel, would prepare the world for the Savior's return to the earth (see 2 Nephi 25; 27; 3 Nephi 21). Nephi described the sacred text as "the voice of one crying from the dust" (2 Nephi 33:13). Moroni declared: "Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me" (Mormon 8:35).

The Book of Mormon was written for our day and for the days ahead. Approximately one million copies of the Book of Mormon were printed in the first 100 years following the Restoration. This included 15 languages, a remarkable undertaking. In the next 50 years (1930–80), more than 25 million copies were

printed in 41 languages. Since that time 30 years ago, 125 million additional copies of the Book of Mormon have been printed in 107 languages, including Selections from the Book of Mormon. The influence and impact of the Book of Mormon will continue to grow as the kingdom of God is carried to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people.

The title page, written by Mormon, reveals the book's main purposes. The first purpose specifically addresses the descendants of the children of Lehi. The final purpose is the "convincing of [all people] that JESUS is the CHRIST, the Eternal God" (title page of the Book of Mormon).

Important for Our Day

Why would another testament of Jesus Christ be so important for our day? Why would the Lord bring forth another witness to strengthen the powerful declarations of the Bible?



In today's world, the arrogant arguments of Korihor, the anti-Christ, find listening ears. But faith in Jesus Christ, when solidly anchored in our souls, brings true conversion.

We live in a time unlike any other. Scientific achievement allows medical care, transportation, comfort, and convenience never imagined by generations who preceded us. The earth is flooded with information and technology, enhancing family history work and the sharing of the gospel but also the proliferation of pornography, virtual violence, and other “evils and designs [that] exist in the hearts of conspiring men” (D&C 89:4). In much of the world, we live in a time of strong attachment to material possessions.

These conditions can, if we are not careful, distract or entice us to move away from principles that are eternal and true for every generation.

When I was a young missionary in Europe in the early 1970s, we began much



A PROPHET TESTIFIES

“All the ingenuity of all the men under heaven could not compose and present to the world a book like the Book of Mormon. Its principles are divine—they are from God. They could never emanate from the mind of an imposter, or from the mind of a person writing a novel. Why? Because the promises and prophecies it contains are being fulfilled in the sight of all the earth.”

President Wilford Woodruff (1807–98), *Teachings of Presidents of the Church: Wilford Woodruff* (2004), 119.

of our teaching with an explanation of the Apostasy, because the divinity of Jesus Christ was widely accepted. When I returned as a mission president 20 years later, we began our conversations differently, because belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, who gave His life for our sins and rose the third day, had faded significantly.

In today's world, the arrogant arguments of Korihor, the anti-Christ, find listening ears:

“Why do ye look for a Christ? For no man can know of anything which is to come.

“Behold, these things which ye call prophecies . . . are foolish traditions of your fathers.

“ . . . Ye cannot know of things which ye do not see. . . .

“ . . . Every man prosper[s] according to his [own] genius, and . . . conquer[s] according to his [own] strength” (Alma 30:13–15, 17).

We need our own secure and settled faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and we need help in strengthening our families so that this faith flows into the hearts of our children and grandchildren. Faith in Jesus Christ, when solidly anchored in our souls, brings true conversion, and in its wake come repentance, honest discipleship, miracles, spiritual gifts, and enduring righteousness. This is an important part of the divine mission of the Book of Mormon.

As a young missionary, I had a most interesting discussion with a clergyman. He told us that he could not accept the Book of Mormon because it openly spoke of Jesus Christ, using His name and events of His life hundreds of years before His birth. He found this transparency uncharacteristic of the pattern of the Old Testament that referenced the Savior more subtly.

To me the bold declaration of Jesus Christ is the very power of the Book of Mormon. Of course, we must receive a spiritual witness that the book is of God. But once that is obtained, the purposes of Christ, the reality of His life and Resurrection, and the clarity of what is necessary to follow Him and obtain eternal life with Him are strikingly tangible before us.

ALL BECAUSE OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

It was six months since I had been baptized, and I did not have a firm testimony of the Book of Mormon. One day when I had no desire to read the scriptures, I recalled my Gospel Principles teacher saying, “When you do not feel the desire to read, it is because Satan does not want you to read the scriptures.” Because of that warning, I opened the Book of Mormon. I read, “Who could have supposed that our God would have been so merciful as to have snatched us from our awful, sinful, and polluted state?” (Alma 26:17). Those words filled my soul with joy because I remembered my state before becoming a member of the true Church of Jesus Christ. The Spirit of the Lord testified in my heart of the truth of the Book of Mormon.

I had not wanted to be a full-time missionary, but after that day everything changed. I felt very strongly that the world needed to know the truth, and I began to prepare myself. I went to my leaders and told them of my desire to serve. I explained to my parents, who lived in another city and were not members of the Church. Then I sold everything I had and bought clothes for my mission. The end result was that I served a mission from 2003 to 2005.

Today, my family—including my wife and our daughter—is sealed eternally. This blessing is also due to my testimony of the Book of Mormon. I know the Book of Mormon is true, for it bears testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, and I draw close to God when I read this sacred record.

Adilson Lucero dos Santos, Paraná, Brazil



Nephi's vision



Lehi's testimony



King Benjamin's sermon



Abinadi's witness

Reading and pondering the great sermons on Jesus Christ in the Book of Mormon bring a certain witness of their truthfulness.

The Testimony of Jesus Christ

Accompanied by the power of the Holy Ghost, reading and pondering the great sermons on Jesus Christ in the Book of Mormon bring a certain witness of their truthfulness. I love to glide through the Book of Mormon feasting upon the powerful doctrines of Christ: Nephi's vision of the tree of life, with the angel asking, "Knowest thou the condescension of God?" (1 Nephi 11:16); Lehi's testimony that "redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah; for he is full of grace and truth" (2 Nephi 2:6); Jacob's addition that He is "the keeper of the gate . . . and he employeth no servant there" (2 Nephi 9:41).

We then follow with King Benjamin teaching us of the qualities of discipleship, with his unwavering declaration that there is "no other name given nor any other way nor means whereby salvation can come unto the children of men, only in and through the name of Christ" (Mosiah 3:17).

We are soon with Abinadi, about to give his life for what he believes:

"But there is a resurrection, therefore the grave hath no victory, and the sting of death, is swallowed up in Christ.

"He is the light and the life of the world; yea, a light that is endless, that can never be darkened" (Mosiah 16:8–9).

Alma brings the beautiful doctrines of the Atonement, justice, and mercy to life: "The

plan of mercy could not be brought about except an atonement should be made; therefore God himself atoneth for the sins of the world, to bring about the plan of mercy, to appease the demands of justice, that God might be a perfect, just God, and a merciful God also" (Alma 42:15).

Then we come to the marvelous visit of the Savior to the children of Lehi. We too feel His love, His compassion, His teachings, His own testimony:

"This is the gospel which I have given unto you—that I came into the world to do the will of my Father. . . .

"And my Father sent me that I might be lifted up upon the cross . . . that I might draw all men unto me, that as I have been lifted up by men even so should men be lifted up by the Father, to stand before me, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil" (3 Nephi 27:13–14).

Finally the closing appeals of Mormon and Moroni: "Know ye that ye must . . . repent of all your sins and iniquities, and believe in Jesus Christ, that he is the Son of God" (Mormon 7:5). "Yea, come unto Christ, and be perfected in him, and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength, then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may be perfect in Christ" (Moroni 10:32).



Jesus Christ's appearance



Mormon's and Moroni's closing appeals

Framed within Families

This spiritually powerful, convincing testimony that Jesus Christ is indeed the promised Messiah—the anointed Son of God, sent to earth to bring about the resurrection of all men and the spiritual cleansing of those who will repent and follow Him—is framed within the history of families.

The Book of Mormon begins with a family, a father and mother, sons and daughters heeding the revelation of their prophet-father to leave their worldly goods behind and follow the counsel of the Lord. The book's accounts are replete with parents seeking to instill in their children the promise and hope of Jesus Christ. On one occasion I pulled from its pages specific counsel from fathers to sons—it totaled 52 typed pages. In the Book of Mormon, we see how parents taught faith in Christ and obedience to God's commandments both to children who were obedient from their childhood and to children who had to find their way—sometimes in the very same family. It is a lesson for our day, for our children, for our families.

The specific roles of women and daughters are to some extent unmentioned, as is common in ancient writing. But looking beyond the obvious, we see their eternal and enduring influence. We treasure the precious morsels that speak of women and mothers, such as when their feelings are described as “tender and chaste and delicate before God” (Jacob 2:7) or when Helaman describes the goodness of his youthful army as influenced by their righteous mothers:

“They did obey and observe to perform every word of command with exactness; yea, and even according to their faith it was done unto them; and I did remember the

TWO BOOKS, ONE ETERNAL FAMILY

My husband was coming home when he found a bag in the street. To his surprise, inside was a copy of the Book of Mormon. He brought it home and showed it to me. He read it for a while, found it interesting, but eventually put it away.

A short time later, he died. I went to one church after another looking for comfort and wanting to know if life would go on after death. I was engulfed in doubt, with many unanswered questions.

Then on my way to work, I saw a book that I recognized on the sidewalk—the Book of Mormon. I took it with me because finding it brought back memories of my dear husband. I mentioned my discovery to someone who suggested that I read it.

The days went by, and one night I visited my sister, who was a Latter-day Saint. The full-time missionaries were there, and they sang the hymn “I Am a Child of God.” I knew right then that the missionaries could answer my questions.

After receiving the discussions and gaining a testimony, I was baptized. Today I can testify with total certainty that Joseph Smith saw the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.

I believe it was no coincidence that my husband and I both found the Book of Mormon. Even though my husband was not able to be baptized during his life, I am happy that, because of temple ordinances, he and I and our two precious children can be together as a family for all eternity. The Book of Mormon brought us together and brought peace to our souls.

María Mash, Guatemala

NEPHI'S VISION, BY CLARK KELLEY PRICE; DETAIL FROM UAHONA, BY ARNOLD FRIBERG © 1951; IRI; KING BENJAMIN'S ADDRESS, BY JEREMY WINBORG, MAY NOT BE COPIED; DETAIL FROM ABRINADI APPEARING BEFORE KING NOAH, BY ARNOLD FRIBERG © 1951; THAT YE DO ALWAYS REMEMBER ME, BY GARY KAPP © 1998, MAY NOT BE COPIED; MORMON BIDS FAREWELL TO A ONCE GREAT NATION, BY ARNOLD FRIBERG © 1951; IRI

The Book of Mormon's accounts are replete with parents seeking to instill in their children the promise and hope of Jesus Christ.



words which they said unto me that their mothers had taught them. . . .

“Now this was the faith of these of whom I have spoken; they are young, and their minds are firm, and they do put their trust in God continually. . . .

“ . . . They had been taught by their mothers, that if they did not doubt, God would deliver them.

“And they rehearsed unto me the words of their mothers, saying: We do not doubt our mothers knew it” (Alma 57:21, 27; 56:47–48).

I would invite you to ponder these questions to help you liken the teachings of the Book of Mormon to your family:

- What passages in the Book of Mormon teach us that children need to see integrity and righteousness in the faith of their parents?
- What counsel have fathers in the Book of Mormon given their sons that we may want to share with our children?
- What do we learn about our efforts with children who are not being obedient?
- How do parents in the Book of Mormon share their deep beliefs with their children?
- What do we learn about faith as it is transferred from one generation to another?

There is nothing more important to share with another than faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It brings understanding to the challenges of this life, happiness amid difficulty, and eternal life in the world to come.

There are many worldly influences that pull us and our families from this most vital faith. The Book of Mormon invites us and our families to embrace faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and it shares the principles that will help our families succeed.

I testify that the Book of Mormon is true and that in very fact it was delivered to the Prophet Joseph Smith by the angel Moroni, under the direction of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is for our day, for our children and grandchildren. As we open it daily with faith, I promise the Lord’s Spirit will be upon us and our families will be blessed forever. ■

ANCIENT EVENTS, MODERN APPLICATIONS

I can always find answers in the Book of Mormon. I’m learning many things from studying it, and I feel I’m changing in good ways.

Recently I was considering what to do now that my six children are raised. I wondered what Heavenly Father desired me to do.

In my regular scripture study, I came across one of the stories of war in the Book of Mormon. I was struck by Moroni’s call to action in defending, among other things, families (see Alma 46:12). The Nephites were determined to protect their families. As I read that story, I decided that no matter what, I wanted to have that same purpose in my life, to fight for family. It was a personal, tender experience.

I know that the Book of Mormon was written for our day. I am grateful that I can go to this book for direction in my life; it truly is an iron rod (see 1 Nephi 8).

Eun Jung, Korea