

Why THE BOOK OF

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We must not forget that the Lord Himself provided the Book of Mormon as His chief witness.

When I was a young man I wondered why the Lord needed to have the Prophet Joseph Smith translate the Book of Mormon to begin the Restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I knew that God the Father and Jesus Christ had spoken with him. I knew that Peter, James, and John had restored the Melchizedek Priesthood, that prophets had brought the keys, and that Joseph had been taught by apostles and prophets from earlier dispensations. With all of that, I wondered what the place of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon in all of that was.

It Is a Powerful Missionary Tool

Then I began missionary work. One of my early companions told me the story of his conversion. I remember his words, which were something like this: “The missionaries had taught me. I had read the Book of Mormon. The missionaries challenged me to set a date for baptism, but I could not decide. Finally, I knew I had to make a choice. So, I knelt down and prayed to know if the Book of Mormon was true. I told God that I was desperate, that I knew this was the most important decision I had ever made, and that I needed His help.

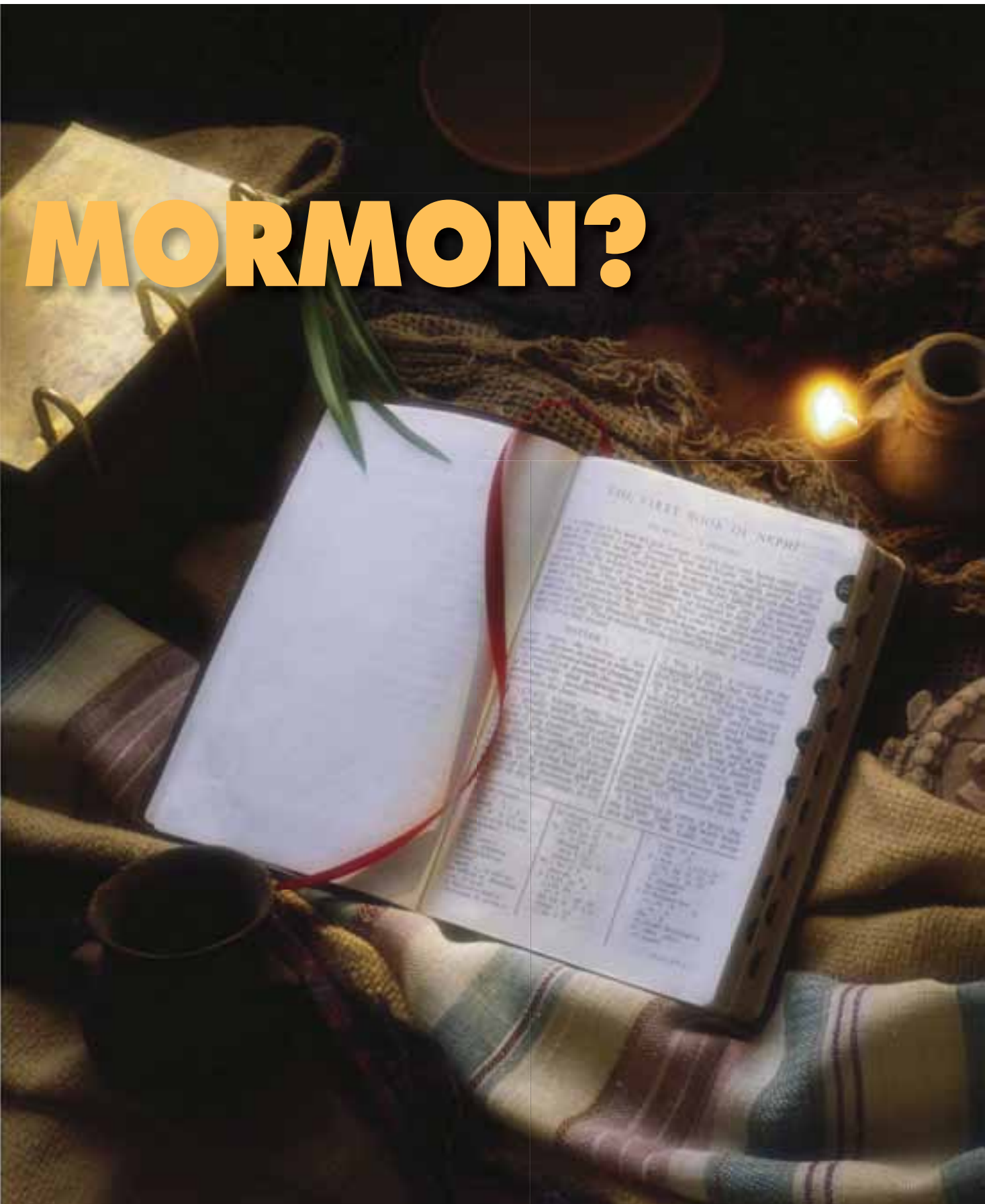
The Spirit testified to me that the Book of Mormon was true, that Joseph Smith was a prophet, that the Church was true, and so I was baptized.”

It took a missionary experience for me to understand the place of the Book of Mormon in the Restoration and in our work. I came to understand why the Prophet Joseph called missionaries and sent them out to teach with the Book of Mormon. I came to know that what President Benson said about the Book of Mormon was true. He said this: “We must not forget that the Lord Himself provided the Book of Mormon as His chief witness. The Book of Mormon is still our most powerful missionary tool. Let us use it” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* [1988], 204).

It Testifies of Christ

The Book of Mormon has been at the center of missionary work since the gospel was restored through the Prophet Joseph. We use it every day in missionary work. One fact about the Book of Mormon being the key to power in each part of missionary work is this: the Book of Mormon is a testament of Jesus Christ. The title page tells us that. It says that the purpose of the book

MORMON?



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is to show what great things the Lord has done for His people, to help them know that the covenants the Lord has made with His people are still in force, and to convince all people that Jesus is the Christ.

There are thousands of references to the Savior in the Book of Mormon. The testimony of Jesus permeates every page. So, whoever reads it is reading words which testify of the Savior.

It Brings the Spirit

The mission of the Holy Ghost is to testify of Jesus Christ. So, since the Book of Mormon is another testament for Jesus Christ, whenever we use it, we invite the Holy Ghost to come. The very nature of the Book of Mormon invites the Spirit.

Here is one passage from the Book of Mormon which conveys that we value this message beyond anything else we have or could have:

“And he will take upon him death, that he may loose the bands of death which bind his people; and he will take upon him their infirmities, that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities” (Alma 7:12).

Each of us feels something a little different as we hear those words because we have different infirmities and different experiences for which the Lord gives us succor. The Book of Mormon is filled with references to the kindness of the Savior and has great power to allow the Holy Ghost to give us assurance that the Lord is reaching out to all of us. Everyone knows they will someday need such comfort. The Book of Mormon gives that assurance over and over again.

It Teaches and Invites

The Book of Mormon is both clear in doctrine and full of invitation to come to the Savior. The best way to answer concerns is always simple declaration of the truth, combined with warm invitation. The Prophet Joseph Smith described the Book of Mormon as being that sort of book. He 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” (*History of the Church*, 4:461; quoted in the Introduction to the Book of Mormon).

When missionaries teach people about the Book of Mormon, they make the promise that Moroni makes:

“And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost.

“And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things” (Moroni 10:4–5).

We can promise them even more. We can promise that the Spirit will not only tell them that the book is true, but it will also tell them what they can do to find greater happiness. This is the promise in 2 Nephi 32:3:

“Angels speak by the power of the Holy Ghost; wherefore, they speak the words of Christ. Wherefore, I said unto you, feast upon the words of Christ; for behold, the words of Christ will tell you all things what ye should do.”



We can also promise that reading the Book of Mormon will bring power to resist temptation or produce feelings of love within our families. President Benson said it this way, and the promise is sure: “There is a power in the book which will begin to flow into your lives the moment you begin a serious study of the book. You will find greater power to resist temptation. You will find the power to avoid deception. You will find the power to stay on the strait and narrow path. The scriptures are called ‘the words of life’ (see D&C 84:85), and nowhere is that more true than it is of the Book of Mormon. When you begin to hunger and thirst after those words, you will find life in greater and greater abundance. These promises—increased love and harmony in the home, greater respect between parent and child, increased spirituality and righteousness—these are not idle promises, but exactly what the Prophet Joseph Smith meant when he said the Book of Mormon will help us draw nearer to God” (*The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson*, 54).

All good people long for those promises. Let us testify to them that the realization of those promises is possible for them. The book is about covenants which will lead them toward the happiness they so much desire.

Conversion depends upon our feeling the Spirit. The words of the Book of Mormon invite the Holy Ghost. There is great converting power in the word of God. Alma taught us that the word of God was “more powerful . . . than the sword, or anything else” in changing people’s hearts (Alma 31:5).

I testify that the Book of Mormon is another testament of Jesus Christ and that it will lead us to come closer to Him. I testify that the Book of Mormon testifies of the Bible and restores precious truths taken from it. I testify that the Book of Mormon leads us to make commitments and feel that love which will lead us toward living better lives. And I testify that by earnest prayer we may know that the Book of Mormon is true, that Joseph Smith was a prophet, that President Thomas S. Monson is the living prophet today, and that God the Father lives and that He loves us. **NE**