

Book of Mormon Study – Mormon 1-6

Online zoom Sunday School, 1 Nov 2020

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Mormon's Life at a Glance:

Year	Event	Age of Mormon
300 CE	[4 Ne 1:45] Both people of Nephi and the Lamanites had become exceedingly wicked one like unto another.	
305 CE	[4 Ne 1:47] Amos died. Ammaron keeps record.	
310 CE	Mormon born	0
320 CE	[Morm 1:2] Ammaron tells Mormon about records on hill Shim. When Mormon is about 24 he is to go to Antum and take the plates.	10
321 CE	[Morm 1:6] Mormon carried by his father, Mormon (v 5), to Zarahemla, a war begins (Morm 1:8), after which there is peace for about 4 years (v 12).	11
325 CE	[Morm 1:15] Mormon visited of the Lord at 15. Was forbidden to preach (v 16-17). In that same year began another war (Morm 2:1).	15
326 CE	[Morm 2:2] Mormon heads an army at age 16.	16
344 CE	[Morm 2:15] Mormon sorrows for wickedness of Nephites. Their sorrowing was not unto repentance (v 13).	34
345 CE	[Morm 2:16] Lamanites pursue Nephites to land of Jashon, which was near hill Shim (v 17). Mormon takes plates.	35
360 CE	[Morm 3:4] Lamanites send epistle, preparing to come to battle. Just before this Mormon had cried repentance, the Lord had given them chance to repent (v 2-3).	50
361 CE	[Morm 3:8] Nephites beat Lamanites again. They swear to avenge Lamanites (v 9), Mormon refuses to be their commander (v 11-16). At this juncture in the record Mormon admonishes modern Gentiles (v 17) and desires to persuade all ends of the earth to repent (v 22).	51
362 CE	[Morm 4:1] Nephites attack Lamanites out from land Desolation. Had it not been for this Lamanites could have had no power over them (v 4).	52
366 CE	[Morm 4:10] Lamanites came again upon Nephites. Nephites repented not. Impossible to describe horrible scene of blood and carnage (v 11).	56
374 CE	[Morm 4:16] Lamanites come against Nephites (v 17) and from this time forth Nephites gain no power over Lamanites, but begin to be "swept off" (v 18). Mormon takes all the records which Ammaron had hid up unto the Lord (v 23).	64
	[Morm 5:1] Mormon repents of his oath and returns to command armies of Nephites.	
384 CE	[Morm 6:5] Final battle at Cumorah. Mormon began to be old, knowing this to be the last struggle of his people (v 6).	74

Stick of Joseph footnote Morm 1:3

Shim: Likely from the Hebrew root sim שים (Strong's 7760), "to put or place something, to deposit."

Morm 1:13

God took away the disciples and miracles did cease. Compare Moroni 7:35-37. We should apply this to ourselves and ask, do we see miracles in our day?

This agrees with what Joseph Smith said:

"Because faith is wanting, the fruits are. No man since the world was had faith without having something along with it. The ancients quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, women received their dead, etc. By faith the worlds were made. A man who has none of the gifts has no faith; and he deceives himself, if he supposes he has. Faith has been wanting, not only among the heathen, but in professed Christendom also, so that tongues, healings, prophecy, and prophets and apostles, and all the gifts and blessings have been wanting" (Teaching of Prophet Joseph Smith, 270).

Mormon 2:10

Magic art and witchcraft.

Also mentioned earlier in Morm 1:19 (*there were sorceries, and witchcrafts, and magics, and the power of the Evil One was wrought upon all the face of the land*). Is the sacrificing of women and children to idols mentioned later (Morm 4:15,21) also related to magic art and witchcraft?

In a review of my Uncle Lauren's book, *Our War With Satan*, I wrote:

The subject of this chapter (and the book as a whole) brings to my mind several works that I have read on this topic, that may be worth reading, or at least be familiar with.

There Are Save Two Churches Only, Volume I (& vol 2): Be Ye Not Deceived: God Creates, Satan Imitates by D. Christian Markham

<http://www.twochurchesonly.com/>

Conquering Spiritual Evil Spiral-bound – 2011 by Douglas H. Mendenhall

<https://www.amazon.com/Conquering-Spiritual-Evil-Douglas-Mendenhall/dp/B005Z7FXL4>

Derek Prince - The Enemies We Face (Part 1-4)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LZoleQVsCEE>

And also, I think there will be value in reading the Pace memorandum. Glen Pace, a member of the presiding bishopric of the LDS church wrote a memorandum on Satanic Ritual Abuse in Utah.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pace_memorandum

(Book review sent to Lauren 22 May 2019)

Morm 2:13

their sorrowing was not unto repentance, because of the goodness of God; but it was rather the sorrowing of the damned, because the Lord would not always suffer them to take happiness in sin.

Sorrowing of the damned vs sorrowing of the righteous. Definition of repentance is to turn to God. Repentance without turning to face God is simply the sorrowing of the damned.

Morm 2:15

...I saw that the day of grace was passed ["past", 1830] with them,

Compare with Moroni's dialog with Christ in Ether:

And it came to pass that I prayed unto the Lord that he would give unto the Gentiles grace, that they might have charity. (Ether 12:36)

Take note of the Lord's answer:

And it came to pass that the Lord said unto me: If they have not charity it mattereth not unto thee, thou hast been faithful; wherefore, thy garments shall be made clean. And because thou hast seen thy weakness thou shalt be made strong, even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father. (ibid 37)

Do you see what happened in the exchange? Moroni begged the Lord to give unto the Gentiles grace. And the Lord says, "It doesn't matter to you if I do not give the Gentiles grace." Christ did not give Moroni what he asked for! He would not promise that the Gentiles would receive grace! The Lord could not do that, because it would abrogate both the law (grace for grace) and our agency, because we are free to choose. Therefore, the Gentiles inherited the Restoration with no promise from Christ to Moroni that those who would receive this record would receive grace of God. That is dependent upon you.

And now I, Moroni, bid farewell unto the Gentiles, yea, and also unto my brethren whom I love, until we shall meet before the judgment-seat of Christ, where all men shall know that my garments are not spotted with your blood. And then shall ye know that I have seen Jesus, and that he hath talked with me face to face, and that he told me in plain humility, even as a man telleth another in mine own language, concerning these things. (ibid 38-39)

This is that Lord who, when you pass through the thunderings and lightnings, you will speak with. He talks in plain humility. It is not His position to cause fear in your heart, but to bring to you comfort. His purpose is not to leave you comfortless, but to come and comfort you (John 14:18). It's you that imposes the barrier. It's you that brings the fear. That is rightly so, because we ought to fear. But what we should fear is our own weakness and our own sins. Our greatest sin is our ignorance.

And only a few have I written, because of my weakness in writing. And now, I would commend you [this is Moroni commending us, the Gentiles, who are going to receive this book] to seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written, that

the grace of God the Father, and also the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of them, may be and abide in you forever. (Ether 12:40-41)

He first asked for grace to be given. God cannot give it and, therefore, would not promise it. Then he turned to us, and he asks, "You Gentiles, please, seek for His grace; it cannot otherwise be given you." The Book of Mormon's assessment of us is sober indeed. The foolish arrogance with which we read that book blinds us to our predicament. The plea from Moroni to us is to "seek for grace." It is through grace we obtain charity. It is through charity we are able to bless others. Because the fact of the matter is you cannot bless anyone or hold that priesthood primarily designed to minister blessings and not cursings, unless you have charity for others. This is never given unless you are willing to do things you would rather not do, thereby offering a sacrifice to God. You do not get trusted by God to hold this honor unless you are willing to subordinate your will to the will of the Father. It is the purpose of the Father, and the purpose behind His higher priesthood, to bless all of His offspring. Therefore, it is only through grace you can acquire what you need to be of use to God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ.

Morm 3:2-3

The Lord calls Mormon cry repentance. Which he does. But earlier he was forbidden (Morm 1:16). There's a time for things. In this case, the people are given a chance to repent. God is merciful. He gives us every chance possible. With all the signs of our dire circumstances now in our day, are we repenting? On the other hand, are we even being called to repent?

I brought this up back in our lesson on the Book of Enos, but worth repeating here:

Why does it seem that the majority of the preaching in our meetings and classes are sweet words of encouragement? Why does it appear the focus is on the positive side of everything and building up our self-esteem to the exclusion of crying repentance for fear of offending someone in our congregations? How much are talks filled with distracting inspirational stories, with flattering words that do not call us to repent, really helping us?

I'm reminded of the account in 3 Ne 11:32-40 where Christ declared His Doctrine. His Doctrine came from His Father and mentions "baptism" four times. Only the first mention is positive, the three subsequent times it is negative. This is a 3 to 1 ratio of negative warning to positive promise. I do not believe the Lord or His Father are negative. This approach is more a reflection on us than on Them. God is extraordinarily positive. But we need the clarity of being told the downside, and to be warned, because, unfortunately, a positive promise does not adequately motivate us.

Maybe the kind of teaching that stirs us up continually to repentance should be reserved to our personal scripture study. But when there is a lack of serious warnings over our pulpits it makes me wonder why that is so. (email to Marcus Reed, 5 Jan 2020)

Morm 3:18-19

What is the significance that twelve tribes will be judged by the twelve whom Jesus chose in Jerusalem, and the remnant of "this people" will be judged by the twelve Jesus chose in "this land"?

Who judges Gentiles?

Morm 4:5

But, behold, the judgments of God will overtake the wicked; and it is by the wicked that the wicked are punished; for it is the wicked that stir up the hearts of the children of men unto bloodshed.

Back in lesson on Alma 23-29 we had a discussion on the *Wicked Destroy Wicked and Righteous*.

Morm 4:11

And it is impossible for the tongue to describe, or for man to write a perfect description of the horrible scene of the blood and carnage

Turn forward to Mormon 9:2. This is in next week's lesson material. This was written by Mormon late in his life. He has lived what we would rate as an NC-17 life if it were depicted in film. Between the rape, followed by the cannibalism of those captured women, the scenes of murder, mayhem, and torture continually before his eyes, his life was distressing. Remember this is the man who abridged the Book of Mormon. That's the life that he was subjected to. So look at these words:

Behold, will ye believe in the day of your visitation—behold, when the Lord shall come, yea, even that great day when the earth shall be rolled together as a scroll, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, yea, in that great day when ye shall be brought to stand before the Lamb of God—then will ye say that there is no God? Then will ye longer deny the Christ, or can ye behold the Lamb of God? Do ye suppose that ye shall dwell with him under a consciousness of your guilt? Do ye suppose that ye could be happy to dwell with that holy Being, when your souls are racked with a consciousness of guilt that ye have ever abused his laws? Behold, I say unto you that ye would be more miserable to dwell with a holy and just God, under a consciousness of your filthiness before him, than ye would to dwell with the damned souls in hell. For behold, when ye shall be brought to see your nakedness before God, and also the glory of God, and the holiness of Jesus Christ, it will kindle a flame of unquenchable fire upon you.

Morm 4:18

And from this time forth did the Nephites gain no power over the Lamanites, but began to be swept off by them even as a dew before the sun.

Difference between being destroyed and swept away. In the vernacular of the Book of Mormon, to destroy did not mean annihilation. It merely meant to end the organized existence of a people or to terminate their government, deprive them of a land, and end their cultural dominance. In the Book of

Mormon, a people were destroyed when they lost control over their government and land. Their ability to preserve their own values and choose the way they were governed was taken over by others. Most often it was from a different ethnic group, though not always. Once people were destroyed, they were oppressed and suffered. Often they were oppressed with grievous taxes and had religious liberties removed. Then they faced a choice: either repent, in which case they came through the period of oppression with another chance; or if they were angry and rebellious, they would then be “swept away.” Being destroyed is not at all the same as being “swept away.” It is possible for people to have been destroyed and not even realize it. But when they are “swept away,” they face extinction and cannot help but notice it.

Morm 5:1-2

Mormon repents of his oath. Back in 3:16:

And it came to pass that I utterly refused to go up against mine enemies; and I did even as the Lord had commanded me; and I did stand as an idle witness to manifest unto the world the things which I saw and heard, according to the manifestations of the Spirit which had testified of things to come.

Why did he repent of his oath and take command of his armies knowing beforehand that they would be destroyed? Why did Mormon lead his armies into their final battle, knowing it would be their last (Morm 6:6). Why not, like Ether, as a prophet, hide in the cavity of a rock and act as a witness of these events from a safe distance, but instead, go out, take his sword in hand, and battle and kill, and subject himself to possible death himself?

I speculate he was like a commander of a ship that stays at the helm and goes down with his ship. “I’m a war guy. This is what I do.”

The integrity of the warrior spirit. Can't live with himself if he runs and hides for his own safety. Look at Black Hawk. The spirit of the Tribe is to be brave.

But this is the business of killing. Didn't he warn Gentiles not to engage in such?

Mormon doesn't say it, but has God inspired him to repent of his oath and return? Or does God leave it to us to be agents unto ourselves and not be commanded in all things and make our own choices? Like Gandhi saying “Whatever you do will be insignificant, but it is very important that you do it”.

Does it matter that I may choose to make a living and support my family as an engineer over a graphic designer or as a construction worker? Even though money is the domain of this world and heaven does not operate in this realm, whichever occupation I choose, will God still inspire me in that choice?

Morm 5:2

But behold, I was without hope, for I knew the judgments of the Lord which should come upon them; for they repented not of their iniquities, but did struggle for their lives without calling upon that Being who created them.

This generation does not seem to value the truth enough for the Lord to reveal what will save them. God truly does have things that the eyes of man have not seen, nor have the ears heard, nor has yet entered into the hearts of man (D&C 76:10). God sends knowledge into the world for the meek and humble, and He perpetually keeps great things hidden from the strident, vulgar, proud, haughty, and foolish. Whether the Lord completes His work and fulfills His promises in this generation or in a future generation will be decided by us. We must repent and offer a broken heart and a contrite spirit if we hope to please God. There is a great deal more that needs to be restored. There is so much resistance to restoring truths from the worldly that this journey may not be possible until man has been humbled by God's hand. There is a sobering prophecy of a coming moment when the Lord will lament to the living and the dead over the way in which the world has responded to His messages: And again, the Lord shall utter his voice out of heaven, saying: Harken, O ye nations of the earth, and hear the words of that God who made you. O, ye nations of the earth, how often would I have gathered you together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not! How oft have I called upon you by the mouth of my servants, and by the ministering of angels, and by mine own voice, and by the voice of thunderings, and by the voice of lightnings, and by the voice of tempests, and by the voice of earthquakes, and great hailstorms, and by the voice of famines and pestilences of every kind, and by the great sound of a trump, and by the voice of judgment, and by the voice of mercy all the day long, and by the voice of glory and honor and the riches of eternal life, and would have saved you with an everlasting salvation, but ye would not! (D&C 43:23-25.)

Many of those sent by the Lord have labored in their ministries without hope of seeing Zion. As we see in Mormon's words in this verse: "But behold, I was without hope, for I knew the judgments of the Lord which should come upon them; for they repented not of their iniquities". Joseph Smith said, "There has been a great difficulty in getting anything into the heads of this generation. It has been like splitting hemlock knots with a corn-dodger for a wedge, and a pumpkin for a beetle. Even the Saints are slow to understand. I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God; but we frequently see some of them, after suffering all they have for the work of God, will fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions: they cannot stand the fire at all. How many will be able to abide a celestial law, and go through and receive their exaltation, I am unable to say, as many are called, but few are chosen" (DHC 6:184-185). We are very late in history and have greater reason to humble ourselves and obey God than any previous generation. Yet most of us also seem far too disinterested to spare ourselves from the coming tribulations by establishing Zion and dwelling in peace with one another.

Morm 5:6

...they did tread the people of the Nephites under their feet.

How much do we need to stretch our imagination to see in our day the reality of what Mormon is describing in his day, applied to us? How precarious is our own situation in light of what we see going on? Remember that Mormon is being selective on what he chooses to include in this record as a warning to its intended audience.

On Jul 11, 2016, I sent the following in an email to my grandfather in law:

I think the Muslim problem is much greater than this when you take into account prophecy of the last days.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to recover the remnant of his people, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. (Isaiah 11:11)

If you take a few minutes to research the ancient locations of Assyria, Egypt, Pathros, Cush, Elam, Shiner and Hamath, you'll find that these regions cover the Middle East and North Africa. Syria, historically a melting pot of many groups and cultures, is right in the center of it all. (see attached map)

Are we witnessing the beginning of the prophecy spoken by Christ to the Nephites?

Then shall ye, who are a remnant of the house of Jacob, go forth among them; and ye shall be in the midst of them who shall be many; and ye shall be among them as a lion among the beasts of the forest, and as a young lion among the flocks of sheep, who, if he goeth through both treadeth down and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. Thy hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off. (3 Nephi 20:16-17)

Not coincidentally, on September 28, President Barack Obama tweeted the following:

"We're also increasing the number of Syrian and other refugees we admit to the U.S. to 100,000 per year for the next two years.

Obama is unwittingly participating in and performing the Father's work of Gentile destruction by means of the remnant flood. Therefore it's more than just a little ironic that President Obama, in his weekly address the day before Thanksgiving, compared the fleeing refugees to the Mayflower Pilgrims.

The Pilgrims marked a milestone in the growing Gentile invasion that eventually decimated and nearly destroyed the Remnants of Israel on this continent. (1 Nephi 13:14). And now, the refugee flood begins the process of treading down the Gentile nations and restoring the gospel covenant to Israel. (3 Nephi 21:12-13)

This video gives greater perspective to the issue:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6-3X5hIFXYU>

Note that I am not taking any position for or against the refugees. I'm only observing the meaning and potential outcome of these migrations. The vast majority of refugees appear to be truly desperate and fleeing for their lives, with no intent to do harm. As followers of Christ, we all have an obligation to do what we can to help with their needs. There's no point in fighting against them; if the Father wants them brought here, they will come, regardless of Gentile opposition.

Morm 5:22-24

And then, O ye Gentiles, how can ye stand before the power of God, except ye shall repent and turn from your evil ways? Know ye not that ye are in the hands of God? Know ye not that he hath all power, and at his great command the earth shall be rolled together as a scroll? Therefore, repent ye, and humble yourselves before him, lest he shall come out in justice against you—lest a remnant of the seed of Jacob shall go forth among you as a lion, and tear you in pieces, and there is none to deliver.

Recall from last week's lesson 3 Ne 30. It's sobering the dim view the Book of Mormon holds for the Gentiles. And yet we see such pride and arrogance among those of us who possess this record? The Book of Mormon message to us should humble us. Even though Mormon's view of us is pessimistic, his message still extends to us hope if we repent. As we also noted above from Morm 4:11, Mormon (in chapter 9) references again the rolling together as a scroll. We see this wording from Isaiah

Their slain also shall be cast out, and their stink shall come up out of their carcasses, and the mountains shall be melted with their blood. And all the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig tree. (Isa 34:3-4)

Mormon refers to this “rolling” as “*the earth shall be rolled together as a scroll*”, yet Isaiah says “*the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll*”. In D&C 88:95 we read:

And there shall be silence in heaven for the space of half an hour; and immediately after shall the curtain of heaven be unfolded, as a scroll is unfolded after it is rolled up, and the face of the Lord shall be unveiled; (D&C 88:95)

Is this event a “rolling” or an “unfolding”? Is it the earth or the heavens that is rolled or unrolled? Why does Mormon repeat this rolling as a scroll in association with Gentiles twice (here in chapter 5 and again in chapter 9)?

Stick of Joseph footnote Morm 6:2

Kumorah [Cumorah]: Likely from the Hebrew root kum קום (Strong's 6965), “to rise up.” This was the same hill which the Yeredites called “Ramah” (‘Eter 6:14), from the Hebrew root ram רם (Strong's 7410), “to be high.” Kumorah might be a contraction for Kum - Rammah, “to rise up high.”

To me it is interesting how similar "kum" and "ram", or Kum-ram, sounds phonetically similar to Qumran. Both Cumorah and Qumran were places that were high or risen up. Both were a place of terrible destruction. Both contained records which were hid in the earth and later came to light to reveal God's words and warnings to later generations.

Morm 6:7-8

that awful fear of death which fills the breasts of all the wicked,.. every soul was filled with terror

Compare with:

Thou shalt live together in love, insomuch that thou shalt weep for the loss of them that die, and more especially for those that have not hope of a glorious resurrection. And it shall come to pass that those that die in me shall not taste of death, for it shall be sweet unto them; And they that die not in me, wo unto them, for their death is bitter. (D&C 42:45-47)

Stick of Joseph footnote Morm 6:11

ten thousand: The underlying Hebrew may have been *eleph* אלף (Strong's 505). In its strictest sense, this word means "thousand," but is also used poetically for large numbers. This root (אלוף) can also mean "chieftain," indicating one with command of a large group of soldiers, but not necessarily numbering one thousand. The same word is used for the rank of Colonel and above in the modern Israeli Defense Forces. The Nefite practice of appointing "captains, and higher captains, and chief captains, according to their numbers" (Alma 1:10) indicates that a captain over "ten thousand" was likely the "chief captain" commander of a large unit, consisting of smaller divisions and units, but not necessarily numbering anything close to ten thousand. See Wenham, J.W. (1967) Large Numbers in the Old Testament. Tyndale Bulletin, Volume 18, pgs. 19–53. See also 1 Chron. 12:18–20; 13:1.