

# Book of Mormon Study – Mormon 7-9

Online zoom Sunday School, 8 Nov 2020

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*Morm 7:4*

*Know ye that ye must lay down your weapons of war?*

Is this hypocritical for Mormon to be telling them this? He repented of his oath not to command armies anymore and returned to fight in war.

If this remnant does not take up weapons, then how are gentiles to become trodden under foot by them? (as a lion among sheep. See last lesson chapter)

Remember the Hopi who have this in their tradition (from lesson notes on Alma 23-29):

"The 'Old Hopi' will tell you that before the 'Great Star' appeared in the sky, their people were converted to the 'Great Spirit.' After they were converted, they took all their weapons of war that they had and buried them deep in the earth. They refused to take them up again lest they sin against the Great Spirit." (Zula Brinkerhoff, God's Chosen People of America, pg 250)

Also refer back to lesson on Alma 43-52 where we discussed religious violence.

*Morm 7:5*

*... also in him is the sting of death swallowed up.*

Last week we took note of Morm 6:7-8:

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

and compared it to:

*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)*

*Morm 7:7*

*...he that is found guiltless before him at the judgment day hath it given unto him to dwell in the presence of God in his kingdom, to sing ceaseless praises with the choirs above,*

I've heard from some who believe the sermon on the mount, as taught by Jesus in the original Aramaic, was sung, perhaps like a chant, rather than simply spoken.

I think singing is the purpose behind the voice. It's easier to feel the spirit during singing than it is during someone speaking because our voices were only intended for singing. They don't talk in the Spirit World; they don't need to, and the voices get used there for singing. If you can hear each other without the voice in the spirit world, can we do so here?

#### *Morm 7:10*

Mormon's final parting words are to "the remnant of this people", i.e. seed of Lehi. It devolves upon us as Gentiles to fulfill our role and deliver to them Mormon's parting message to them.

#### *Morm 8:8*

*...no one knoweth the end of the war.*

All Nephites are killed, and yet the land is still "one continual round of murder and bloodshed". Once you rid the world of the "enemy" there is still no peace. The mentality behind what some zealots identify as "jihad", or ridding the world of infidels or heathens, will not resolve anything. What ultimately ends up happening is you create terrorists faster than you can kill them. Like cutting off the head of Hydra and two more appear. One reason I wonder about God's commandments to Joshua to kill every man, woman, and child in certain places. Is this the work of Deuteronomists?

#### *Morm 8:11*

*But behold, my father and I have seen them, and they have ministered unto us.*

Whether we are saved depends on what we do during our mortal probation. Angels do not fix our errors or finish our tests for us. When immortals return, it will be to destroy the wicked and visit with those who are wheat. The best way to understand it is to refer to what we know about the immortals that are still on Earth. We have two examples: the three Nephites and John the Beloved. Once the mortal lives of the three Nephite disciples who tarried on the Earth ended, they (like John) ministered as angels to mortal prophets. They did not minister openly to the world. They acted as angels whose ministry is explained in Moroni:

*Neither have angels ceased to minister unto the children of men. For behold, they are subject unto him, to minister according to the word of his command, showing themselves unto them of strong faith and a firm mind in every form of godliness. And the office of their ministry is to call men unto repentance, and to fulfil and to do the work of the covenants of the Father, which he hath made unto the children of men, to prepare the way among the children of men, by **declaring the word of Christ unto the chosen vessels of the Lord, that they may bear testimony of him. And by so doing, the Lord God prepareth the way that the residue of men may have faith in Christ, that the Holy Ghost may have place in their hearts, according to the power***

*thereof; and after this manner bringeth to pass the Father, the covenants which he hath made unto the children of men. (Moroni 7:29-32, emphasis added)*

Angels minister to “chosen vessels” or mortal messengers, as the three Nephites did with Mormon and Moroni. Then these vessels testify and bear testimony so that the way is prepared “that the residue of men may have faith in Christ.” These three visited with Mormon, but the people to whom Mormon ministered didn’t see them. They ministered to Moroni, and those to whom Moroni ministered didn’t see them. The chosen vessels also become as ministering angels. Many people have received ministering angels. Men, women, and children have, can, and do receive angelic ministers. Angels minister to those with faith, who are supposed to then preach salvation to others. Likewise, John the Beloved became a ministering angel.<sup>145</sup> He has a ministry “for those who shall be heirs of salvation.” Do not expect him to make appearances to the world and do what flesh and blood are required to do. When the world has faith enough to receive angels, then angels will minister to them. But until then, they minister in private to those with faith to receive them. Appearing to the world would be unjust. It would be unfair if any single generation had all the heavy-lifting of salvation performed for them by immortals. If angels suddenly accomplish things that, from the days of Adam, have been the duty of mortals, an apology would be owed to every other generation.

*Morm 8:14-16*

*...plates thereof are of no worth,... but the record thereof is of great worth;*

Joshep Smith’s experience:

*I made an attempt to take them out, but was forbidden by the messenger and was again informed that the time for bringing them forth had not yet arrived, neither would until four years from that time. (JSH 1:53)*

Richard Bushman wrote:

*Thoughts of the money value of the plates troubled Joseph. The angel had cautioned him about the temptation to get rich. He was told he must have "no other object in view in getting the plates but to glorify God, and must not be influenced by any other motive than that of building his kingdom." Despite the warning, the sight of the gold was too much, and Joseph gave way to the very temptation he had been cautioned about. Oliver Cowdery and Lucy Smith said that Joseph felt a severe physical shock when he touched the plates, and that the angel appeared and severely rebuked him. Joseph reported three failed attempts at lifting out the plates, causing him to cry "unto the Lord in the agony of my soul why can I not obtain them." The angel told him that he was "tempted of the advisory [adversary] and sought the Plates to obtain riches and kept not the commandment that I should have an eye single to the glory of God therefore I was chastened and sought diligently to obtain the plates and obtained them not until I was twenty-one years of age." (Richard Lyman Bushman, Joseph Smith, Rough Stone Rolling, 2005, pg 45)*

Take note in verse 15:

*...with an eye single to his glory,*

### Stick of Joseph footnote Morm 8:15

The underlying Hebrew may have been “good eye,” a Hebrew idiom meaning to be generous. In Matt. 6:22, the Jewish New Testament says “good,” where the KJV says “single.” David Stern writes in his “Introduction” to the Jewish New Testament: “ ... much of what is written in the New Testament is incomprehensible apart from its Jewish context. Here (Matt. 6:22–23) is an example, only one of many ... in Hebrew, having an ‘ayin ra’ah, an ‘evil eye,’ means being stingy; while having an ‘ayin tovah, a ‘good eye,’ means being generous” (Stern, D. (1989) Jewish New Testament: A Translation of the New Testament that Expresses its Jewishness. Jerusalem, Israel: Jerusalem New Testament Publications, p. x). Here in M’raman 4:3, the Hebrew idiom is used correctly, according to the “Jewish context” of this idiomatic phrase (compare Prov. 23:6; 28:22; see also 3 Nefi 5:37).

### Morm 8:17

*he that condemneth, let him be aware lest he shall be in danger of hell fire.*

Does this apply to my evangelical friends who reject this book?

There is a similar warning in the Dead Sea Scrolls (and/or in Book of Enoch) that I took note of.

### Morm 8:19

*For behold, the same that judgeth rashly shall be judged rashly again; for according to his works shall his wages be; therefore, he that smiteth shall be smitten again, of the Lord.*

### Compare

*For that which ye do send out shall return unto you again and be restored. Therefore, the word restoration more fully condemneth the sinner and justifieth him not at all.  
(Alma 41:15)*

### Morm 8:23

*Search the prophecies of Isaiah...*

Christ said as much when he taught the Nephites (3 Ne 20:11). Moroni here says it. Nephi also (2 Ne 25:8) and he and Jacob quoted much from Isaiah, as did Abinadi, and others in many places throughout the Book of Mormon.

What is it about Isaiah?

Jacob uses Isaiah as a key to understanding "things which are, and which are to come" (2 Ne 6:4). Isaiah can be a key that helps "unlock" meaning to much of the Book of Mormon's message to us.

A key is something used to open a lock; something that is important or central in importance. A “keystone” is the point in an arch that fits in the center, holding the arch together. Upon it all else rests. Keys are better viewed as a signal or a signpost along a pathway. Instead of “I hold keys and so I hold

something of value,” holding a key is better viewed as being given a strong guide or route to take. If the word is viewed using these meanings, it suggests that holding a key implies using it in action.

Keys are knowledge. A particular key is knowledge or instruction received from the Lord on how to do something. If one has the key, then one has the ability or power to do something. And conversely, if one is powerless to do or accomplish something (bind and loose, request ministering angels, command the elements or spirits, etc.), then they do not possess a key. “Then knowledge through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the grand key that unlocks the glories and mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven...the key that unlocks the Heavens and puts in our possession the glories of the celestial world.” (TPJS 298–299)

“In knowledge there is power. God has more power than all other beings because He has greater knowledge; and hence He knows how to subject all other beings to Him. He has power over all.” (TPJS, 288) Joseph Smith also used the term keys to mean understanding, the greatest key being the ability to ask God and receive an answer.

*Morm 8:24*

*poisonous serpents*

This is mentioned again in chapter 9:24. Why the repetition?

*Morm 8:26*

It shall come in a day when they say miracles have ceased. See comments from last week, Morm 1:13.

*Morm 8:28*

*even in a day when leaders of churches and teachers shall rise in the pride of their hearts, even to the envying of them who belong to their churches.*

We discussed envyings earlier (in lesson 3 Nephi 27-4 Nephi), 4 Ne 1:16:

*And there were no envyings, nor strifes, nor tumults, nor whoredoms, nor lyings, nor murders, nor any manner of lasciviousness; and surely there could not be a happier people among all the people who had been created by the hand of God.*

*Morm 8:31*

The Book of Mormon warns about our time. It describes pollutions of both the environment and the spirits of mankind that we now see:

*Yea, it shall come in a day when there shall be heard of fires, and tempests, and vapors of smoke in foreign lands; and there shall also be heard of wars, and rumors of wars, and earthquakes in divers places. Yea, it shall come in a day when there shall be **great pollutions upon the face of the earth**—*

So, now he's talking about pollutions which he will *illustrate* in the words that are coming up, *pollutions* that you're going to see in the last days. And these are the pollutions about which he was concerned:

*There shall be murders, and robbings, and lyings, and deceivings, and whoredoms, and all manner of abominations — when there shall be many who will say, Do this or do that, it mattereth not, for the Lord will uphold such at the last day. But woe unto such, for they are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity. Yea, it shall come in a day when there shall be churches built up that shall say, Come unto me, and for your money you shall receive forgiveness of your sins. (Mormon 8:29-32, emphasis added)*

Today's greatest pollutions are lies, deceits, and advocating all manner of abominations *as if they were good*. Abusive and wicked practices are now advocated boldly and incorporated into our entertainment media and culture—*fearlessly*. Their advocates have no shame, no fear of judgment, and no concern for godliness.

The needs of the poor are often forgotten—and their direful circumstances *used* by political leaders *only* to advance their power and control. The sick and infirm have become a political opportunity. Governments face increasing perplexities and fail to address them with common sense. The world's leaders welcome perplexities to increase public distress because they hope to ride that increasing public distress to increased political power.

Christ described our socially bleak times but told us not to be discouraged because of it. He told us to look up, for the time of redemption is promised when a generation sees these signs:

*In the generation in which the times of the gentiles shall be fulfilled, there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth, **distress of nations with perplexity, like the sea and the waves roaring**. The earth also shall be troubled, and the waters of the great deep, men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of Heaven shall be shaken;... when these things begin to come to pass, then **look up**, lift up your heads, for the day of your redemption draws near. (Luke 21:25-28, emphasis added)*

#### *Morm 8:32-37*

*Yea, it shall come in a day when there shall be churches built up that shall say: Come unto me, and for your money you shall be forgiven of your sins. O ye wicked and perverse and stiffnecked people, why have ye built up churches unto yourselves to get gain? Why have ye transfigured the holy word of God, that ye might bring damnation upon your souls? Behold, look ye unto the revelations of God; for behold, the time cometh at that day when all these things must be fulfilled. Behold, the Lord hath shown unto me great and marvelous things concerning that which must shortly come, at that day when these things shall come forth among you. Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing. And I know that ye do walk in the pride of your hearts; and there are none save a few only who do not lift themselves up in the pride of their hearts, unto the wearing of very fine apparel, unto envying, and*

*strifes, and malice, and persecutions, and all manner of iniquities; and your churches, yea, even every one, have become polluted because of the pride of your hearts. For behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your churches, more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted.*

In the warning, he makes no exception for some latter-day church. He makes no exception for any latter-day organization of any kind. There may be a few who are the humble followers of Christ that are mentioned in the Book Mormon (see, e.g., 2 Nephi 28:14), but they are not mentioned as part of an organized congregation. They are not identified as part of an institution. When the faithful are gathered at the end, they are gathered as individuals, not as congregations. Christ said through Jeremiah, I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion (Jeremiah 3:14). He has never promised to take those belonging to an institution (see also Matt 24:36-41). There is no such thing as collective security. The Book of Mormon preaches against such an idea. We are just as vulnerable to the misapprehension that we are safe and “saved” because of status as are any other group of people. We are bound together to fellowship, bear one another’s burdens, mourn with those who mourn, testify to one another, and help comfort those in need (see Mosiah 18:9). Fellowship is indispensable to Christianity. But salvation comes one-at-a-time when we render an account of our lives (see Luke 19:12-26).

*Morm 8:35*

*Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing.*

Compare

*Then I wept greatly and my tears ceased not until I could no longer endure it; when I saw, they flowed on account of what I had seen; for everything shall come and be fulfilled, and all the deeds of men in their order were shown to me. (1 En 90:41. See also Ether 3:25 and Moses 1:8)*

*Morm 8:38*

*pollutions...*

Whatever definition we applied to this word earlier (in v 31) can apply here (and vice versa)

*O ye pollutions, ye hypocrites, ye teachers, who sell yourselves for that which will canker, why have ye polluted the holy church of God? Why are ye ashamed to take upon you the name of Christ? Why do ye not think that greater is the value of an endless happiness than that misery which never dies—because of the praise of the world?*

I posed this question to our Stake Book of Mormon Institute class instructor:

*What is "the holy church of God" in this verse? Aren't we God's holy church? Can God's holy church be polluted? Is it actually possible for latter day gentiles to sin*

*against the fullness of the gospel as Christ told the Nephites in 3 Nephi 16:10? (email to Marcus Reed, 14 Apr 2019)*

*Morm 9:2*

*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,*

We brought the *rolling together as a scroll* up last week.

*Mormon 9:3-5*

*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.*

Back in lesson on Alma 39-42 we discussed how man is his own judge. Alma 41:7, "*for behold, they are their own judges, whether to do good or do evil.*"

*"A man is his own tormentor and his own condemner. Hence the saying, 'They shall go into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.' The torment of disappointment in the mind of man is as exquisite as a lake burning with fire and brimstone. I say, so is the torment of man." (TPJS pg 357)*

This verse in Mormon 9 is describing our reaction to being in the presence of a just and holy God.

*Morm 9:13*

This verse is relating to the special connection with Christ that the Book of Mormon message is trying to communicate to us in our day. Could be rendered this way:

*[Now is the day of redemption.] ~~And~~ [B]ecause of the redemption of man, which came by Jesus Christ, they are brought back into the presence of the Lord (in mortality); yea, this is wherein all men are redeemed[. B]ecause the death of Christ bringeth to pass the resurrection, which bringeth to pass a redemption from an endless sleep, from which sleep all men shall be awakened by the power of God when the trump shall sound; and they shall come forth, both small and great, and all shall stand before his bar, being redeemed and loosed from this eternal band of death, which death is a temporal death.*



## Ask

*Morm 9:21,27-25*

What's the difference between the "ask" in this verse in Mormon, and how it is used in 3 Ne 18:17-25 or D&C 50:25-30?

The principle of asking and receiving, on the one hand, and the spirit of prophecy and revelation, on the other, are directly related. Without an inquiry, one is not able to receive, (see Second Comforter pg 92) for those who are willing to receive always ask. Asking is the way those who are ready identify themselves for Heaven. (ibid pg 99) "[In First Nephi 11:1-7 we] have Nephi telling us he desired to know things. He believed God could make them known. And he was pondering the things he was seeking. Then in response to this process, the Lord sent an angel who inquired of Nephi.... What ought to stick out most in this passage is that Nephi is now granted an audience with an angel, and the angel is inquiring of him: What desirest thou? He is in the presence of an angel, but before he can learn anything, the angel first asks him: What do you want? That should tell you something of great significance. Heaven responds to inquiries! This is one of those eternal principles. Heaven is controlled by ordained limits or governing principles. Just as we must abide the conditions for obtaining blessings, Heaven's help comes in response to ordained limitations, principles, laws and ordinances. This is why the angel does not launch into a lecture right away. Instead, the angel asks Nephi what he wants to know so the balance and limits are maintained. If you aren't asking, you are sealing the Heavens. You disqualify yourself from further knowledge. God did not come in response to Joseph Smith's silent desire to know more. The First Vision came as a result of a specific vocal and private prayer in which he asked to know more. When the Father and Son appeared, the first words spoken were: Joseph: This is my beloved Son. Hear Him! Then nothing further happens until Joseph asked the Personages who stood above [him] in the light, which of all the sects was right. God did not force an answer upon Joseph, nor comment further until Joseph had first asked a question. It is not Heaven's responsibility to force upon us answers to questions which we do not ask. Unless we are willing to ask, we will not (in fact cannot) receive. This is why teaching we should not ask to know more of God's mysteries is so pernicious. It is not only false, it limits Heaven's ability to provide light and truth to us. We seal the Heavens when we comply with such instruction. Nephi asks, I desire to behold the things which my father saw (1 Nephi 11:3). Then the angel asks Nephi whether he believed the things his father had been teaching him. Nephi says he did believe. Indeed, Nephi said he believed all the words of my father. Having now secured from Nephi both a question to answer and a confession of faith in the Lord's spokesman (Nephi's prophet-father), the angel reacts with overwhelming joy: And when I had spoken these words, the Spirit cried with a loud voice, saying, Hosanna to the Lord, the Most High God, for he is God over all the earth, yea, even above all! And blessed art thou, Nephi, because thou believest in the Son of the Most High God; wherefore, thou shalt behold the things which thou hast desired (1 Nephi 11:6). An angel shouting for joy! Here we have a clear indication of just how much it pleases God and His holy angels when a person finally shows their willingness to receive further light and truth by conversing with the Lord through the veil. It is a rare thing. Heaven rejoices over someone who comes with a question, and with faith, and with a desire to know these things, believing the Lord can make them known. This particular alignment of things is so rare an event Heaven cannot contain the joy, exultation, and wonder when it occurs.... The Heavens long for communion with mankind. The silence which prevails is due to our wickedness, and not Heaven's unwillingness to open to us. If silence prevails, it is mankind who stopped the dialogue." (ibid pg 111-113) If asking must precede receiving, and if Joseph Smith was also

required to ask before the great revelations of this dispensation were unfolded to him, then all must ask. Failing to ask causes the way to be hedged up and prevents Heaven from answering. (ibid pg 116)