

Ether 5 – Moroni to Joseph Smith

It is true that Moroni did not know specifically to whom he was writing this chapter. A clear indication of this is verse 6, which amounts to a warning to the translator. Any familiarity with the personality and character of the Prophet Joseph Smith would let Moroni know that no warning was necessary. However, at the time Moroni wrote this the only other human beings around him were completely given to wickedness, so it is no great wonder that Moroni might have had misgivings about who would next handle this book.

All that said, this chapter is specifically for Joseph Smith. The instructions about the sealed portion of the record had already been communicated to Joseph prior to this time, but Moroni didn't know that instruction would be given. The instruction on the witnesses was a different case. The law of witnesses was spelled out elsewhere, but the instruction that there should be witnesses surely helped give Joseph direction on this important point. Joseph was ever concerned about others believing his work, and Moroni points out that these witnesses would help the world believe.

In the midst of giving these pointed directions to Joseph, Moroni still returned to one of the central missions of the Book of Mormon – that all men can be saved by repentance and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Nephi's account of the multiple records, and in the Words of Mormon, we also find that the writers of the Book of Mormon had foreknowledge of how the book would come to light. Nevertheless, finding this personal note in the book must have been a great lift to Joseph Smith, and should be a testimony to us of God's concerns for individuals in all circumstances.