

Moroni 10 - Moroni's Final Farewell

As I approach the end of the Book of Mormon, I feel I have been on an epic journey. From the prophecies in Jerusalem, across the oceans with Lehi and Nephi, and on through the vast sweep of Nephite history, I have loved these people, I have rejoiced in their righteousness, and I have mourned their iniquity. Just prior to the end I have had a similar experience with the Jaredites. The collapse of these two peoples leaves me feeling sad, and a bit drained. Yet, at the end of the record, is a final crescendo of testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ. I am not left hopeless, rather I am treated to a profound witness of the power and the love of God, and the knowledge that he blesses all who will have him to be their God. This is Moroni Chapter 10.

In my mind, I envision Moroni struggling to survive day by day as the last of the people of God. He learns to make plates, and starts adding to the sacred record which has been entrusted to his care. He finds that he is finally permitted to add the story of the Jaredites, along with the important lessons we learn from them. As he travels in protection of his own life, he adds letters and teachings from his father, and probably reflects on the events of his own life. I then envision him being compelled by the Spirit to embark on a long journey to hide up the plates. He knows not the purposes, but goes on in the faith of the Lord. I see him then camping on (or in the immediate neighborhood of) a hill in upstate New York. Perhaps he still does not know why he has had to travel so far, to a place which certainly must seem foreign to him. But he has arrived, and feels that this is the culmination of his earthly service. So he sits at his camp, and decides to add his final witness to the records. In my imaginings it has been a while since he wrote, so he probably spends some time going back through the record, remembering those teachings which have been most dear to him. What should he add? After deep meditation, he starts:

Now I, Moroni, write somewhat as seemeth me good.

Moroni's testimony is addressed to the Lamanites, whom he calls his brethren, after all that has passed. The Book of Mormon, although a unique witness, is not to be considered in isolation. It is a part of God's mercy shown to the children of men, even from the time of Adam down to the present. To them Moroni makes the solemn promise which has become the strength of God's church:

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.

That promise is not limited to the Book of Mormon. It is for all of the Lord's works, and we would do well to use it often.

There is something interesting about this promise, which once caused difficulty for a co-worker. This person, whom I will call Fred, was a very self-confident atheist. There is no objective evidence of God, hence he does not exist. I begged to differ with him. I told him that there is objective evidence of God, and that he could find it. Fred was an intellectually honest person, so he wanted to know where he could find this evidence. I quoted to him Moroni's promise. To Fred, the problem was immediate and severe. He wanted evidence of God, but this promise requires Fred to change himself in order to receive the evidence. He hadn't counted on that. If he wishes to prove most physical principles, he can do so with no particular danger to himself. But this test can only be applied upon the conditions of sincerity and real intent, having faith in Christ. In other words, he had to live first as if it were true in order to receive the knowledge he sought. That cost was too high, and he never made the experiment.

I have since reflected often on that experience. Faith is the key, of course. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the fundamental, but we really don't have to start there. Fred had known me for years. He could have used the evidence of my life (as well as others with whom he worked) as evidence that this experiment was worth doing. He was unable to exercise that faith.

Each of us must make that choice. Are we willing to start with the germ of faith – even a desire to believe¹? If so, we can receive the witness, and know that Moroni's grand effort was worth it. But we cannot do it without risking ourselves. We must offer ourselves upon the altar, trusting that the Lord will know what to make of us. Then we can truly begin to grow.

Moroni then goes on with his testimony of God and Christ. He is providing the knowledge that he has gained through living the gospel, which is the same knowledge he asks the Lamanites to use in considering the Book of Mormon. He amplifies it by citing the gifts that come from God to those who believe. In Verses 20-23 he explicitly

1 See Alma 32:27

reviews faith, hope, and charity, which is a reference to the epistle of Mormon found in Chapter 7. This is the promise.

Then in Verses 24-29 is the warning. If these gifts are not found then we are in dire straits. The lack is because we have denied the gifts, and turned from God. Especially now, when we have the Book of Mormon, we will have done so in disregard of the witnesses of many ancient prophets. We do so at the peril of our own souls.

In Verses 30-34 comes the incredible benediction which forms the last words of this book, and the end of Moroni's testimony.

And again I would exhort you that ye would come unto Christ, and lay hold upon every good gift, and touch not the evil gift, nor the unclean thing. And awake, and arise from the dust, O Jerusalem; yea, and put on thy beautiful garments, O daughter of Zion, and strengthen thy stakes and enlarge thy borders forever, that thou mayest no more be confounded, that the covenants of the Eternal Father which he hath made unto thee, O house of Israel, may be fulfilled.

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; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God. And again, if ye by the grace of God are perfect in Christ, and deny not his power, then are ye sanctified in Christ by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot.

And now I bid unto all, farewell. I soon go to rest in the paradise of God, until my spirit and body shall again reunite, and I am brought forth triumphant through the air, to meet you before the pleasing bar of the great Jehovah, the Eternal Judge of both quick and dead. Amen.

The Lord forgets not his covenants. His covenant with ancient Israel, which is now administered through baptism and the Holy Ghost, will still save all those who come unto it. If we come unto Christ he will give us the perfection we cannot achieve alone. He has the power, and he has promised it to us. Through that power we can be sanctified, or prepared to live with God, and we will be the pure creatures we were meant to be. Having undergone this process we, too, will find the

judgment bar to be a pleasing bar, for we will know that Christ is our advocate, and eternal life our destiny.

Moroni gave his life to the mission of getting us the Book of Mormon. He could have yielded to despair, but he never did. He persevered, and as a consequence the records were ready to be found by the Prophet Joseph Smith. He left us this sublime testimony, that we may similarly endure in faith, and receive the promised blessings.