

Mosiah 1:2-7 Mosiah Speaks to his Sons about Records

This fairly short segment is a brief summary of what must have been a very valuable discourse from Mosiah to his sons. It covers one of the principally-stated purposes of the Book of Mormon – how the Lord deals with his people. But it also touches on a sub-theme which is frequently mentioned – the importance of keeping records.

Verse 2 is a rather interesting comment, as Mosiah teaches his sons of the language of his fathers, “that they might know concerning the prophecies which had been spoken by the mouths of their fathers.” Of course this refers back to the fact that the records were written in a language which was not a reflection of the spoken language of the people. I say this is interesting because there is not much other mention made in the Book of Mormon about this fact. It is an awe-inspiring thought to consider generations of record-keepers learning this arcane language so that they can contribute to the plates. It is also a testimonial to the importance which the Nephites put on record-keeping.

Verse 3 displays a curious pattern which crops up from time to time in the Book of Mormon. Mosiah seems to draw a distinction between the plates and the records they contain. I am not sure why this distinction is made, but it is¹. One possibility, as the phrasing appears to apply mainly to the Plates of Brass, is the recognition that those plates were simply one copy of a sacred record, where the Plates of Nephi were *the record*.

The importance of the records, though, is that they allow Mosiah and his people to know the commandments of God and to understand his mysteries. Mosiah compares their blessed state to the ignorance of the Lamanites, caused by the absence of records.

The last two verses of this passage then draw the final conclusion – his sons must study the scriptures diligently if they are to profit thereby. Their happiness is dependent on obeying the commandments of God, especially in this promised land.

Mosiah thought this instruction on records, their importance and their use, was sufficiently important to be given to his sons as he prepared to die. Besides reminding us to read the scriptures, could this have any comment on how we ought to keep our own records?

¹ See 1 Nephi 3:12, 24; 4:24; 5:10