

Title Page of the Book of Mormon

Probably the best place to start a discussion of the title page is with Joseph Smith's own comment on it, from Times and Seasons 15 October 1842:

...the title page of the Book of Mormon is a literal translation, taken from the very last leaf, on the left hand side of the collection or book of plates, which contained the record which has been translated; the language of the whole running the same as all Hebrew writing in general; and that, said title page is not by any means a modern composition either of mine or of any other man's who has lived or does live in this generation.

The first paragraph of the title page probably was written mostly by Mormon as a general explanation of the book's origin and purpose. His intent was to explain that the book originated with other writings, and that it was done at the direction of the Lord. He also tells the Lamanites that they are of the house of Israel.

The last two phrases of the first paragraph were added by Moroni. They were probably written after Moroni had received the plates, but before he had the direction to add the books of Ether and Moroni to the compilation. Moroni originally viewed himself as custodian of the records only (see Mormon 8:1-3).

Once Moroni added the remainder of his writings he then probably wrote the second paragraph. Now Moroni expands beyond a simple description of the work to a statement of its purpose. He identifies two primary purposes: First, how carefully the Lord has watched over his people at all times, and the work he has done toward their salvation. Second: to testify to all men that Jesus Christ is the savior of the world. Keeping these two purposes in mind during the study of the Book of Mormon will help to understand the purpose of each section of the book.

Moroni ends with the discussion of faults in the record which we see in Mormon 9:32,33. Moroni is very concerned that we, the readers, understand that the work is of God, and is not to be confused with the medium of human writing, which may not be perfect.

I am grateful for these words of Mormon and Moroni. They wrote this book during very trying times, but these paragraphs help us to see how much this work meant to them.