

CHAPTER 53

Moroni 1–6

Introduction

After Moroni ended his abridgment of the Jaredite history (see Ether 13:1; 15:34), he presumed that he would not survive to write any additional records (see Moroni 1). However, he lived an additional 36 years after the final battle between the Lamanites and the Nephites (see Mormon 6:5; Moroni 10:1). During this time Moroni recorded additional sacred truths valuable to latter-day readers. These chapters are especially helpful for us because they contain guidelines concerning the proper administration of ordinances—especially the sacrament—and the place of the Holy Ghost in the daily administration of the Church. Moroni also highlighted the need for Church members to watch over and nourish new members who join the Church.

Commentary

Moroni 1:1–3. Moroni

- The Lord “committed the keys of the record of the stick of Ephraim” to Moroni (D&C 27:5). He thus became the principal figure in the transmission of the record to this dispensation as well as the protector of the record itself. Moroni was “the last Nephite prophet in the Book of Mormon (circa A.D. 421). Just before Mormon’s death, he delivered a historical record called the plates of Mormon to his son Moroni (W of M 1:1). Moroni finished compiling the plates of Mormon. He added chapters 8 and 9 to the book of Mormon (Morm. 8:1). He abridged and included the book of Ether (Ether 1:1–2) and added his own book called the book of Moroni (Moro. 1:1–4). Moroni sealed up the plates and hid them in the hill Cumorah (Morm. 8:14; Moro. 10:2). In 1823 Moroni was sent as a resurrected being to reveal the Book of Mormon to Joseph Smith (JS—H 1:30–42, 45; D&C 27:5). He instructed the young prophet each year from 1823 to 1827 (JS—H 1:54) and finally delivered the plates to him in 1827 (JS—H 1:59). After completing the translation Joseph Smith returned the plates to Moroni” (Guide to the Scriptures, “Moroni, Son of Mormon”).

Moroni 1:4. The Book of Mormon to Be of Great Worth

- The Book of Mormon plays an important part in the conversion of many people. Moroni specifically

mentioned the benefit that would come to the Lamanites in the latter days as a result of the Book of Mormon. One of the earliest missionary calls in this dispensation was to Oliver Cowdery and his companions to teach the Lamanites living on the western frontier (Missouri) of early America (see D&C 28:8–10). Today the Church takes the gospel message to everyone, including the descendants of Lehi, who are scattered throughout the world.

Moroni 2:1. The Nephite “Disciples” Were Apostles

- “This book [the Book of Mormon] also tells us that our Savior made His appearance upon this continent after His resurrection; . . . that they had Apostles, Prophets, Pastors, Teachers, and Evangelists; the same order, the same priesthood, the same ordinances, gifts, powers, and blessings, as were enjoyed on the eastern continent” (Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:538).

“While in every instance the Nephite Twelve are spoken of as disciples, the fact remains that they had been endowed with divine authority to be special witnesses for Christ among their own people. Therefore, they were virtually apostles to the Nephite race” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, 3:158; see also Mormon 9:18).

Moroni 2–5. The Importance of Ordinances in the Church of Jesus Christ

- President Boyd K. Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, explained why ordinances are so important: “Ordinances and covenants become our credentials for admission into His presence. To worthily receive them is the quest of a lifetime; to keep them thereafter is the challenge of mortality” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1987, 27; or *Ensign*, May 1987, 24).

President Packer also explained: “Good conduct without the ordinances of the gospel will neither redeem nor exalt mankind; covenants and the ordinances are essential” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1985, 105; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 82).

- Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained the relationship that exists between our Father in Heaven, our families, and the ordinances we participate in: “The ultimate Latter-day Saint

priorities are twofold: First, we seek to understand our relationship to God the Eternal Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and to secure that relationship by obtaining their saving ordinances and by keeping our personal covenants. Second, we seek to understand our relationship to our family members and to secure those relationships by the ordinances . . . and by keeping the covenants we make. . . . These relationships, secured in the way I have explained, provide eternal blessings available in no other way. No combination of science, success, property, pride, prominence, or power can provide these eternal blessings!” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2001, 110; or *Ensign*, May 2001, 84).

MORONI 3

According to Moroni, what are the essential features in the ordination to the offices of priest and teacher?

Moroni 3:3. Ordained “to Be a Priest” or a Teacher

- President Joseph Fielding Smith (1876–1972) explained that the Nephites did not use the Aaronic Priesthood before the Savior’s visit; see commentary for Jacob 1:18 (p. 115).

Moroni 3:4. Ordained “by the Power of the Holy Ghost”

- The Holy Ghost plays an important role in all priesthood ordinances. The Holy Ghost knows our hearts and actions. It is by the power of the Holy Ghost that all ordinations are ratified (see D&C 132:7). The Prophet Joseph Smith (1805–44) spoke of the role of the Holy Ghost in performing ordinations: “We believe in the gift of the Holy Ghost being enjoyed now, as much as it was in the Apostles’ days; we believe that it [the gift of the Holy Ghost] is necessary to make and to organize the Priesthood, that no man can be called to fill any office in the ministry without it; we also believe in prophecy, in tongues, in visions, and in revelations, in gifts, and in healings; and that these things cannot be enjoyed without the gift of the Holy Ghost” (*History of the Church*, 5:27).

Moroni 4–5. The Sacrament

- Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke of the importance of partaking of the sacrament in our effort to remember our covenants:

“Through the ordinance of the sacrament we renew our baptismal covenant and can receive and retain a remission of our sins (see Mosiah 4:12, 26). In



addition, we are reminded

on a weekly basis of the promise *that we may always have His Spirit to be with us*. As we then strive to keep ourselves clean and unspotted from the world, we become worthy vessels in whom the Spirit of the Lord can always dwell” (in Conference Report, Apr. 2006, 32; or *Ensign*, May 2006, 31).

MORONI 4–5

In what ways are the prayers on the bread and water similar? In what ways are they different?

Moroni 4:3. Taking upon Us the Name of Jesus Christ

- Elder Dallin H. Oaks spoke of three significant meanings that should be understood when we take the name of the Savior upon us during the sacrament:

“Our witness that we are willing to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ has several different meanings. Some of these meanings are obvious, and well within the understanding of our children. Others are only evident to those who have searched the scriptures and pondered the wonders of eternal life.

“One of the obvious meanings renews a promise we made when we were baptized. Following the scriptural pattern, persons who are baptized ‘witness before the Church that they have truly repented of . . . their sins, and are willing to take upon them the name of Jesus Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end’ (D&C 20:37; see also 2 Nephi 31:13; Moroni 6:3). When we partake of the sacrament, we renew this covenant and all the other covenants we made in the waters

of baptism. (See Joseph Fielding Smith, *Doctrines of Salvation*, comp. Bruce R. McConkie, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954–56], 2:341, 346.)

“As a second obvious meaning, we take upon us our Savior’s name when we become members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. By his commandment, this church bears his name. (See D&C 115:4; 3 Nephi 27:7–8.) Every member, young and old, is a member of the ‘household of God’ (Ephesians 2:19). As true believers in Christ, as Christians, we have gladly taken his name upon us. (See Alma 46:15.) As King Benjamin taught his people, ‘Because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you’ (Mosiah 5:7; see also Alma 5:14; 36:23–26).

“We also take upon us the name of Jesus Christ whenever we publicly proclaim our belief in him. Each of us has many opportunities to proclaim our belief to friends and neighbors, fellow workers, and casual acquaintances. . . .

“A third meaning appeals to the understanding of those mature enough to know that a follower of Christ is obligated to serve him. . . . By witnessing our willingness to take upon us the name of Jesus Christ, we signify our willingness to do the work of his kingdom.

“In these three relatively obvious meanings, we see that we take upon us the name of Christ when we are baptized in his name, when we belong to his Church and profess our belief in him, and when we do the work of his kingdom” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1985, 101–2; or *Ensign*, May 1985, 80).



Moroni 4:3; 5:2. “Always Remember Him”

• President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency explained how easy it is to be distracted from

remembering the Lord and what we can do to remember Him more frequently:

“Those of you who have served missions may have . . . come upon your missionary journals put away in a closet in your home. You may have read and felt a shock as you remembered how hard you worked, how constantly you thought of the Savior and His sacrifice for you and for those you tried to meet and teach, and how fervently and often you prayed. The shock may have come from realizing how much the cares of life had taken you from where you once were, so close to always remembering and always praying.

“My message is a plea, a warning, and a promise: I plead with you to do with determination the simple things that will move you forward spiritually.

“Start with remembering Him. You will remember what you know and what you love. The Savior gave us the scriptures, paid for by prophets at a price we cannot measure, so that we could know Him. Lose yourself in them. Decide now to read more, and more effectively than you have ever done before” (“Always,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1999, 9–10).

Moroni 6:2. “A Broken Heart and a Contrite Spirit”

• What does it mean to have “a broken heart and a contrite spirit”? President Ezra Taft Benson (1899–1994) explained that it is the same as godly sorrow, which is “a deep realization that our actions have offended our Father and our God. It is the sharp and keen awareness that our behavior caused the Savior, He who knew no sin, even the greatest of all, to endure agony and suffering. Our sins caused Him to bleed at every pore. This very real mental and spiritual anguish is what the scriptures refer to as having ‘a broken heart and a contrite spirit.’ (3 Ne. 9:20; Moro. 6:2; D&C 20:37; 59:8; Ps. 34:18; 51:17; Isa. 57:15.) Such a spirit is the absolute prerequisite for true repentance” (“A Mighty Change of Heart,” *Ensign*, Oct. 1989, 4).

Elder Bruce D. Porter of the Seventy explained further, defining the meaning of “a broken heart and a contrite spirit”:

“When our hearts are broken, we are completely open to the Spirit of God and recognize our dependence on Him for all that we have and all that we are. The

sacrifice so entailed is a sacrifice of pride in all its forms. Like malleable clay in the hands of a skilled potter, the brokenhearted can be molded and shaped in the hands of the Master. . . .

“. . . Those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit are willing to do anything and everything that God asks of them, without resistance or resentment. We cease doing things our way and learn to do them God’s way instead. . . .

“There is yet another dimension of a broken heart—namely, our deep gratitude for Christ’s suffering on our behalf. . . . When we remember the Savior and His suffering, our hearts too will break in gratitude for the Anointed One.

“As we make the sacrifice to Him of all that we have and all that we are, the Lord will fill our hearts with peace. He will ‘bind up the brokenhearted’ (Isaiah 61:1) and grace our lives with the love of God” (in Conference Report, Oct. 2007, 32–33; or *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 32).

Mormon 6:3. “A Determination to Serve”

• President Thomas S. Monson discussed the attitude that all of us must have when we are baptized and called to Church service: “Though exaltation is a personal matter, and while individuals are saved not as a group but indeed as individuals, yet one cannot live in a vacuum. Membership in the Church calls forth a determination to serve. A position of responsibility may not be of recognized importance, nor may the reward be broadly known. Service, to be acceptable to the Savior, must come from willing minds, ready hands, and pledged hearts” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1994, 80; or *Ensign*, May 1994, 62).



Moroni 6:4. “Nourished by the Good Word of God”

• That which is “wrought upon” is impacted or influenced. In Moroni 6:4 the phrase is symbolic and

has reference to what occurs when the Spirit works on and changes a convert. The atoning sacrifice of Christ makes the remission of our sins possible, but it is through the cleansing power of the Holy Ghost—the baptism of fire—that sins are actually purged or removed (see 2 Nephi 31:17; Alma 13:12; 3 Nephi 27:20). It is also through the workings of the Holy Ghost that we gain the enabling power of the Atonement to help us become faithful Latter-day Saints.

• President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) told of a personal experience demonstrating how important it is that we take care of those who are newly converted:

“Every convert must be ‘nourished by the good word of God’ (Moro. 6:4). It is imperative that he or she become affiliated with a priesthood quorum or the Relief Society, the Young Women, the Young Men, the Sunday School, or the Primary. He or she must be encouraged to come to sacrament meeting to partake of the sacrament, to renew the covenants made at the time of baptism.

“Not long ago, I listened to a man and woman who spoke in my home ward. This man had served in many capacities in the Church, including that of bishop. Their most recent assignment was to fellowship a single mother and her children. He stated that it was the most joyful of all his Church experiences.

“This young woman was full of questions. She was filled with fear and anxiety. She did not wish to make a mistake, to say anything that was out of line that might embarrass her or cause others to laugh. Patiently this man and his wife brought the family to church, sat with them, put a shield around them, as it were, against anything that might happen to embarrass them. They spent one evening a week with them at their home, teaching them further concerning the gospel and answering their many questions. They led that little family along as a shepherd leads his sheep. Eventually, circumstances dictated that they move to another city. ‘But,’ he stated, ‘we still correspond with that woman. We feel a great appreciation for her. She is now firmly grounded in the Church, and we have no fear concerning her. What a joy it has been to work with her.’

“I am convinced that we will lose but very, very few of those who come into the Church if we take better care of them” (“Find the Lambs, Feed the Sheep,” *Ensign*, May 1999, 108–9).

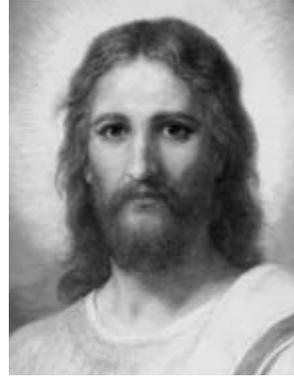
- Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles noted the universal responsibility for keeping our fellow members “in the right way”: “Inspired instruction in the home and in the Church helps provide this crucial element of nourishing by the good word of God. . . . Surely the opportunity to magnify that call exists everywhere. The need for it is everlasting. Fathers, mothers, siblings, friends, missionaries, home and visiting teachers, priesthood and auxiliary leaders, classroom instructors—each is, in his or her own way, ‘come from God’ for our schooling and our salvation. In this Church it is virtually impossible to find anyone who is *not* a guide of one kind or another to his or her fellow members of the flock” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1998, 30–31; or *Ensign*, May 1998, 25).

Moroni 6:4. “The Author and the Finisher of Their Faith”

- The word *author* is defined as “one who produces, creates, or brings into being” (*Noah Webster’s First Edition of an American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828 [1967]). In our fallen state, we must look to the Savior for the acquisition and development of faith. Hence, the fourth article of faith specifies as the first principle of the gospel “Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

The word *finisher* has several meanings that apply to the Savior’s role in our process of developing faith. First, “one who finishes; one who completely performs.” We can trust the Lord to completely perform His role as we continue to strive to become more like Him. Second, “one who completes or perfects” (*Noah Webster’s First Edition*). As we do our best to keep our covenants, it is through His grace that we can finally reach perfection, the ultimate goal in our journey of faith. A definition associated with *finish* is “to polish to the degree of excellence intended” (*Noah Webster’s First Edition*). When we come to the Lord in faith as His sons and daughters, He will help us become our best.

- President Henry B. Eyring discussed the central role of the Savior in our redemption. He added his testimony to Moroni’s that Jesus is “the author and the



finisher of their faith’ [Moroni 6:4]. It is the Savior who made possible our being purified through His Atonement and our obedience to His commandments. And it is the Savior who will nourish those who go down in baptism and receive the

gift of the Holy Ghost. When they always remember Him, and when they continue in childlike obedience, it is He who will assure that they have His Spirit always to be with them” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 116; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 84).

Moroni 6:5. Meet Together Often

- Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin (1917–2008) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles reminded us of the fellowship that exists in the worldwide Church. He noted the sacrifices of members of the Church to fulfill the important mandate to meet together often:

“One of the many benefits of membership in the Church is that of companionship with the Saints. During the time of my assignment in Europe, we held memorable stake conferences for the military servicemen in Germany. Many of our good brothers and sisters drove long distances to attend the meetings. A number of them arrived the night before and slept on the floor of the cultural hall. No matter the sacrifice, they came with glad hearts seeking the companionship of fellow Latter-day Saints and the chance to be instructed and edified by Church leaders. When we come together, we are ‘no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God’ [Ephesians 2:19].

“Ours is the commandment and the blessing to ‘meet together oft, to fast and to pray, and to speak one with another concerning the welfare of [our] souls’ [Moroni 6:5]. In general conferences and in other Church meetings around the world, we come together seeking

companionship—the good company of brothers and sisters in the gospel and the comfort of sweet communion with the Spirit of God. In our worship services, the presence of that Spirit fills our hearts with love for God and for our fellow Saints” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 41–42; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1997, 32).

Moroni 6:7. “There Should Be No Iniquity among Them”

- King Benjamin explained that a person’s name is blotted out only by transgression (see Mosiah 1:12). Alma warned that the names of the wicked “shall not be mingled with the names of my people” (Alma 5:57). There comes a time when each person who commits serious iniquities must repent or that person is not worthy of the Lord’s presence or membership in the kingdom. Unrepentant members can lose their membership through Church disciplinary action. (For more information about the kinds of sins that require Church discipline, see commentary for Mosiah 26:32–36 on p. 164.)

MORONI 6:7–8

In what ways was Church discipline exercised during Book of Mormon times?

Moroni 6:9. “After the Manner of the Workings of the Spirit”

- Elder David B. Haight (1906–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles spoke of the importance of invoking the Spirit in our meetings:

“The singular tragedy of the Nephite decline as recorded by Mormon in the Book of Mormon was the loss of the Holy Ghost and the spiritual gifts. Wisdom and inspiration dictated that Moroni include in his closing record the instructions by his father, Mormon, on the

ordinations, the sacrament, and practices of the Church. Noteworthy is this testimony about their meetings:

“Their meetings were conducted by the church after the manner of the workings of the Spirit, and by the power of the Holy Ghost; for as the power of the Holy Ghost led them whether to preach, or to exhort, or to pray, or to supplicate, or to sing, even so it was done.” (Moro. 6:9.)

“That is the spirit that can and should characterize our worship and our sacrament meetings.

“A sister remarked to me after one such spiritual meeting, ‘I don’t recall all that was said—but I remember how we felt as we sang the closing hymn and bowed our heads in prayer’” (“Remembering the Savior’s Atonement,” *Ensign*, Apr. 1988, 13).

Points to Ponder

- How often do you think of the covenants you have made with God? What covenants do you remember *often*? Why should you remember all of your covenants often?
- Why do you think we are commanded to meet together frequently in the Church? What blessings come to you and others for meeting together often?
- Why is it important that we conduct our meetings after the manner of the workings of the Spirit?

Suggested Assignments

- Read the sacrament prayers on the bread and then on the water (see Moroni 4–5). As you read, make it personal to you by substituting the personal pronouns *I* and *me* for the third person pronouns *we*, *they*, and *them*. Think about how this changes the meaning of the sacrament prayers for you.
- Consider how many times in the scripture block Moroni challenged us to take the name of Jesus Christ upon ourselves and remember Him. Record in your personal journal several ways you might bring your life closer to your Savior.