

MORMON 7–9

John W. Welch Notes



Mormon 7

How did Mormon deal personally with this military and human cataclysm? It must have been awful. As you read this final chapter, mourn with him as you relive his anguished lament in Mormon 7. He had spent his whole life working and striving to prevent this from happening. Notice that as he lamented, Mormon still clung faithfully to his goal and mission. If he was angry, he doesn't let that show. Perhaps he was beyond the point of anger, and knew that he now simply had to turn everything over to the Lord. He had labored long and hard to leave a written legacy for any survivors and for whatever use the Lord might make of the record that he so meticulously assembled and composed. He could only trust that God would, someday, have it see the light of day again. Looking back over the entire Book of Mormon, readers today can see his determination, dedication, and deepest desires coming through his selection of source materials and also in his personal comments and asides that he pauses to interject knowingly into this powerfully orchestrated sacred record.

Each person today can learn many lessons from Mormon's life and personality. One might wish to emulate Mormon's devotion to duty. One might strive to remain positive and faithful in facing difficulties and disappointments. One might mourn and lament as he has here, openly recognizing sorrows and tragedy. One might likewise think what one can do today to help descendants and future generations to learn lessons of truthfulness and testimony, looking forward to the ultimate victory in the eternal battle in which we are led by Jesus Christ in obedience and charity.

Mormon 7:1 — Mormon’s Final Plea to the Descendants of His People

After his formal lament in Mormon 6, Mormon offered his final words of farewell. Remember that there was originally no chapter break or italicized section following his lament. The words in Mormon 6–7 were a single connected chapter in the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon. Mormon’s primary audience here was his own people, and he pleaded with “the remnant of this people who are spared, if it so be that God may give unto them my words, that they may know of the things of their fathers.” He was giving all that he had left to the posterity of his people, and he was most likely trying to strengthen his only son Moroni as well in these last words of his final book within the Book of Mormon.

It is not known how many people were killed on the occasion of that final battle. Not all were killed, of course. Some would have fled. Their enemies continued to hunt them down and kill them, but only if they refused to “deny the Christ” (Moroni 1:2).

Mormon listed among the dead twenty-three of his generals, each with their ten thousand. That would seem to be a total of 230,000 men, but we do not know how the Nephites actually configured the units in their armies. In the Roman military, as a comparison, a unit of a hundred soldiers was called a *century*. A centurion was one of those hundred and would lead that unit. However, a *century* was still a *century* even if it had only fifty-two or seventy-five soldiers in it. We use a similar system for priesthood quorums. A quorum of deacons has 12, teachers 24, and priests 48, and an elder’s quorum has 96. There can be less, but not more in a quorum. The Nephite *Ten Thousand* may have been like these examples. Therefore, there may not have been a full company of 230,000 men who died at the final battle, to say nothing of the auxiliaries and civilians who would have been moving with this army. But the result, stated one way or the other, was still the complete elimination of all the soldiers that Mormon had led.

Further Reading

Book of Mormon Central, “[How Could So Many People Have Died at the Battle of Cumorah?](#) (Mormon 6:14),” *KnoWhy* 231 (November 15, 2016).

A. Brent Merrill, “Nephite Captains and Armies,” in *Warfare in the Book of Mormon*, ed. Stephen D. Ricks and William J. Hamblin (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1990), 285–286.

Mormon 7:2–5 — What Mormon Wanted the Remnants of His People to Know

Mormon had four specific statements of what he wanted his remote audience to know, and he expressed those points tersely and clearly, each preceded by the phrase “Know ye that”:

1. Know ye that ye are of the house of Israel.

2. Know ye that ye must come unto repentance, or ye cannot be saved.
3. Know ye that ye must lay down your weapons of war, and delight no more in the shedding of blood, and take them not again, save it be that God shall command you.
4. Know ye that ye must come to the knowledge of your fathers, and repent of all your sins and iniquities.

Mormon 7: 5–8 — Mormon’s Testimony of the Mission of Jesus Christ

Mormon expanded upon his fourth desire from verses 2–5, which was itself, a lucid summary of the mission of Jesus:

- Believe in Jesus Christ, that he is the Son of God, and
- Believe that he was slain by certain of the Jews, and
- Believe that by the power of the Father he hath risen again, and
- Believe that not just Jesus is risen but that from the Father he hath gained the victory over the grave, and that in him is the sting of death swallowed up.

Mormon echoes here the words of Abinadi (which he would have been aware of), quoting Isaiah, regarding “the sting of death” being swallowed up in Christ (Mosiah 16:8; Alma 22:14). His listing of these elements of belief also track in style and content King Benjamin’s words (Mosiah 4:9–10), as well as the consistently repeated elements in the [standard Nephite declarations of faith](#) (compare especially 2 Nephi 9:4–15; Alma 33:22).

Mormon’s summary statement here and its expansion illustrates his sincere love for his people and his powerful testimony of the details of Christ’s Atonement. He wanted his people to know:

- that Jesus will bring to pass the resurrection of all the dead,
- that all mankind will be resurrected to stand before the divine judgment seat,
- that Jesus will provide redemption for all who will repent and accept his atonement, and
- that those who accept it and are thus found guiltless will dwell in the presence of God.

In verse 7, his description of dwelling in the presence of God is vivid and beautifully touching. It is added eloquently here to the terse statements that have preceded it:

“to dwell in the presence of God in his kingdom, to sing ceaseless praises with the choirs above, unto the Father, and unto the Son, and unto the Holy Ghost, which are one God, in a state of happiness which hath no end.”

Then in verse 8, Mormon added literally the “therefore.” Because he knew, and (presumably by the nature of his description) had seen what lay ahead, he returned to his very forthright listing of what the people needed to do to attain this beautiful goal. They

needed to “repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus, and lay hold upon [and cling to] the gospel of Christ, which shall be set before you” (7:8).

Further Reading

John W. Welch and Greg Welch, “Consistent Elements in Nephite Declarations of Faith,” in *Charting the Book of Mormon*, chart 43.

Mormon 7:8–9 — The Record That Shall Come Forth from the Jews Unto the Gentiles

In referring to the gospel of Jesus Christ, Mormon then prophesied of the coming of the Bible through the Jews to the Gentiles, and thence to the descendants of the Nephites and Lamanites. He stated that if his audience believed his records, they “will believe that [namely, the Bible].” He knew that this would be one of the great missions of the Book of Mormon—to help establish the truth of the Bible. Doctrine and Covenants 20:11 similarly says that one of the main missions of the Book of Mormon is “proving to the world that the holy scriptures [including the Bible] are true.”

Latter-day Saints, however, often reverse this logic, using the Bible to prove that Joseph Smith was a prophet and to bolster other parts of the restored gospel, which it indeed does. But, if the Book of Mormon is intended, according to Mormon, to prove that the Bible is true, the logic should run primarily in that direction. By knowing that the Book of Mormon is good and true, one can then know even better and more surely that the Bible is true. And in a day such as ours, when many people have lost faith in the credibility of the Bible, the strength of the Book of Mormon should only be welcomed as an enhancing ally. Increasingly today, the Book of Mormon may be the first introduction that many people coming from a non-Judeo-Christian background will have to the Bible in general and the Gospel of Jesus Christ in particular.

Reciprocally, as Mormon also expects, belief in the Bible can also enhance belief in the Book of Mormon. How can we help fulfill this two-way interactivity? It takes conscious attention and effort to realize and show how extensively and how meaningfully these two “sticks” of scripture do and should, indeed, become one in our hands, as Ezekiel 37 prophesies that they are intended to become.

Mormon 7:9–10 — The Intent for Which the Book of Mormon Was Written

Lastly, Mormon gives yet another statement of “the intent” for which the Book of Mormon was written. Through these plates, the remnant of his people will eventually “know concerning their fathers, and also the marvelous works which were wrought by the power of God.”

Recall the other two earlier statements of intent mentioned by Mormon in this book of Mormon: First, when Mormon was getting started with the records project, during the

ten-year time of peace, he said the reason he was writing the Book of Mormon was so that people would know that they will stand in the *future* before the judgment bar of God (Mormon 3:17–22).

Second, he said that his purpose was to persuade them now, in the *present*, to believe in Christ more fully, and believe now that the covenant will be restored (Mormon 5:14–15).

Then here in his final statement in Mormon 7:9–10, he states his “purpose” in writing the Book of Mormon so that the Nephites will remember their *past* and their heritage, that they might

- Know concerning their fathers, and the marvelous works which were wrought by the power of God among them, and
- Know that they are a remnant of the seed of Jacob, numbered among the people of the first Covenant.

Indeed, knowing all three—the past, present, and future—was important to Mormon and Moroni. In the Title Page of the Book of Mormon, Moroni includes again this triad: that the remnant may know “what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers [past]; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord [now], that they are not cast off forever [future].”

Remembering who we are and what the Lord has done for us is indeed of crucial importance. In most reconversion efforts in the Book of Mormon, the missionaries often began by reminding the prospective learner to remember “the marvelous works which were wrought by the power of God.” People were exhorted to remember such things as the rescue of the Hebrews from Egypt, and the ultimately safe journey of Lehi and his family. President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) taught that the most important word in our religious dictionary is *remember*. “Because we have made covenants with God,” he said, “our greatest need is to remember” them.

Further Reading

Spencer W. Kimball, “Circles of Exaltation” (address to Church Educational System religious educators, June 28, 1968), 5.

Mormon 8

Mormon 8–9

In these two chapters, as Moroni finishes the record of his slain father, his emotions are intense and palpable. You may want to read these as if you were Moroni writing his final words of prophecy, declaration, questioning, judging, challenging, commanding,

attesting, and petitioning in this, his “first farewell.” He will bid farewell and sign off again at the end of the book of Ether, and finally at the end of his book of Moroni.

In finishing the record of his father, Moroni did not stay around the location of the final battle. If he had, he would have been killed, so he left. The final battle took place in AD 385, and Moroni finally buried these records in AD 421, thirty-six years later. He apparently spent those thirty-six years in exile, probably, for the most part, alone. Think of being alone for that long. Loneliness is terrible, especially when you are being pursued, but look at what he left for us in spite of his solitary circumstances. Moroni’s integrity and personality shine through in these words he has written. They are not just casual words. They are words that were deeply important to Moroni, and I am very grateful to him for writing and preserving them.

Moroni, a Master Scribe

As a master scribe, Moroni paid attention to his audiences. Four times, he declares specifically to whom he is speaking: “I speak unto you as if you were present” (8:35); “I speak concerning those who do not believe in Christ” (9:1); “I speak unto you who deny the revelations of God” (9:7); and “I speak unto you as thou I spake from the dead” (9:30).

He adapted to these audiences. For example, in chapter 8, he was speaking to those who believed in Christ. To them he spoke in certain modes, for example, a questioning mode. In chapter 9, he switched to another one of his audiences—the non-believers. He spoke to them in other modes, such as by challenging them. The Gentiles are part of his audiences, but they are not his only audience. He also spoke, as did his father Mormon, to the Lamanites, and to his own people, who were already all dead.

Clearly, he had several audiences and many things to say to them. But it seems that he was hard-pressed to find more sources of metal, as he mentions running out of plates. If only he had found more, we may have been blessed with much more that he could have said.

Moroni’s Many Rhetorical Techniques

Moroni would never have had an opportunity to speak face-to-face to the people to whom he so yearned to deliver this message, but he used exceptionally effective rhetorical techniques to make his message clear to a broad audience that was widely spread in distance and over time. The several modes of writing, or *rhetorical registers*, that Moroni used in Moroni 8 and 9 are very impressive. They are noticeable to us because they involve several sequences of repetitive form. Moroni was a prophet trying to communicate across a span of 2,000 years. He enumerated and gave specificity to details to provide relevance. Not many authors would need to say, “I am writing to you,” but Moroni’s audience was

not immediate. He felt an urgency to reach them, and he reiterated his phrases, wondering if we are hearing him.

When we read these chapters, we must pull out the different rhetorical modes and series which Moroni uses. They sometimes overlap, but they are usually distinct. I find ten modes in Mormon 8–9. At first, Moroni will use (1) a blessing and cursing mode, then (2) a warning mode, (3) a forecasting mode, (4) a declaring mode, (5) a questioning mode, (6) a judging mode, (7) a challenging mode, (8) a commanding mode (9) an attesting mode, and finally (10) a petitioning mode. The reader must focus to notice these patterns, and one may have to read this chapter many times before observing how these rhetorical modes work in individual blocks of text as well as together and as a whole.

As will be seen below, Moroni uses these forms masterfully. Books have been written describing the techniques used by the greatest rhetoricians, artists, and musicians, helping us appreciate what made them so masterful. A great master is able to use forms so perfectly that the form does not draw attention to itself. When you listen to a Beethoven symphony, you are not conscious of how it is organized thematically, progressively, even mathematically. When you listen to a Bach fugue, it is structured with repetitions and patterns, yet overall, it simply sounds clear, interesting, perfect and beautiful because everything flows through the form and meshes so well. That is what Moroni has done as he deliberately employs these various rhetorical registers through engraving his words onto plates.

Moroni's Three Endings

Moroni produced three conclusions to the Book of Mormon. One is here in Mormon 8–9, another is found in the Ether 12, and his final farewell can be found at the conclusion of his writings in Moroni 10. These three conclusions were written at different times, and they are very different from each other. There are many lessons to be learned from each of them, not the least of which is that it is hard to know how to conclude a major work like the Book of Mormon.

I think what Moroni was doing here in chapters 8 and 9 can be best described as “dutiful.” He was doing his duty. He was warning us. He was commanding us. He was closing the record as his father had charged him to do. He issued challenges and asked questions. This was his duty, and he was doing things dutifully for his father who had told him to do so.

Then, when Moroni was abridging the book of Ether, he inserted his second farewell as an extended commentary on the fact that the people of Ether would “not believe” the great and marvelous things which he prophesied “because they saw them not” (Ether 12:5). He

then discourses, teaches, worries about the Gentiles mocking, prays that the Gentiles will have charity, and bids farewell for the next thirty-six verses (12:6–41), and in the end he lets Ether have the last word in the book of Ether (15:34).

But when he wrote in Moroni 10, he was not doing it because he had been told to do it, and he was not worried about what his readers might think of his work. In the end, Moroni simply pours out his heart to us. That is where we will eventually find his series of seven pleading exhortations to us, as we will later see.

Further Reading

Book of Mormon Central, [“Why Did Moroni Write So Many Farewells? \(Mormon 8:1\), KnoWhy 233](#) (November 17, 2016). “When readers recognize that Moroni’s three farewells were written at different stages of his life and in the context of different record-keeping projects, they can better understand the purpose and meaning of each one. In the first, he spoke with the voice of justice. In the second, he found himself moved by sympathy. . . . In the third, Moroni turned the matter over to the will and grace of God.”

Mormon 8:1–3 — Moroni’s Colophon

In ancient writing, many manuscripts contained what scholars call a *colophon*. They did not have a copyright or a title page on their scrolls, but formal scribes would typically leave a declaration either at the beginning or the end of what they had written. A colophon required the scribe to leave a date of when the document was written, and state the identity of the author, their titles, and their genealogy. Moroni began by saying who his father was, and giving us the genealogy and the sad, though glorious and honorable, way in which Mormon died.

Further Reading

Thomas W. Mackay, [“Mormon as Editor: A Study of Colophons, Headers, and Source Indicators,”](#) *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 2, no. 2 (1993): 90–109.

John A. Tvedtnes, [“Colophons in the Book of Mormon,”](#) in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon: A Decade of New Research*, ed. John W. Welch (Salt Lake City and Provo, UT: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 13–16.

Mormon 8:6 — Moroni Provides the Time of His Authorship

Ancient authors were often expected to provide a period or date for their writing. Moroni gave a date in Moroni 8:6, “Behold, four hundred years have passed away since the coming of our Lord and Savior.” There were twenty-one more years before he finally buried the plates, and it had been fifteen years since the final battle before Moroni was able to put this first conclusion on the record.

Four hundred is twenty squared, that is twenty times twenty. The Mesoamerican calendar system was based on the number twenty. One cycle of twenty years was called a *tun* and so it had been a *tun* of *tuns*. Moroni probably saw this as significant; otherwise, why would he have made particular mention of it? A good recordkeeper demarcates when and where the record was produced.

Further Reading

Mark Alan Wright, “Nephite Daykeepers: Ritual Specialists in Mesoamerica and the Book of Mormon,” in *Ancient Temple Worship: Proceedings of the Expound Symposium, 14 May 2011*, ed. Matthew B. Brown, Jeffrey M. Bradshaw, Stephen D. Ricks, and John S. Thompson (Salt Lake City and Orem, UT: Eborn Books and Interpreter Foundation, 2014), 252–253.

Evidence Central, “Book of Mormon Evidence: Calendrical Pattern,” September 19, 2020, online at evidencecentral.org.

Mormon 8:14–22 — Moroni Offers Blessings, Warnings, and Curses

Moroni wisely begins in Mormon 8:14 with blessings and accompanying curses, part of a typical colophon. A good scribe would typically place curses upon anyone who would tamper with or misuse the record. In verses 14 to 22, he warned people not to condemn the record because of potential mistakes or faults of men in it (8:17). A good scribe would realize that they were unlikely to produce a perfect record, and there is a very candid admission that there may be errors. Moroni, as a competent scribe, editor, and author followed appropriate conventions by providing a colophon and its required information according to ancient convention.

He also warned people that that no one shall have these records to get gain (8:14), and he blesses those who will do this with an eye single to God’s glory (8:15; invoking 3 Nephi 13:22). He warns people not to try to destroy the work of the Lord or to claim that God has forgotten his covenant (8:21), for the eternal purposes of the Lord shall roll on (8:22), and the words and prayers of the righteous dead shall cry from the dust (8:23–25).

In Mormon 9:31, Moroni likewise ends his first farewell by pointing out again how fortunate the readers are that, through this record, God has made manifest their—Moroni’s contemporaries’—imperfections, “That ye may learn to be more wise than we have been.” He may have been concerned that people would condemn the book as unrighteous because the people who produced it had been destroyed, and reject it as the work of a sinful people. Moroni asked readers not to condemn the record because of who the people were, because of their weakness in writing, or their weakness in many ways. It is a modest statement, and the curse is not the usual type of self-promoting, harsh curse.

One curse has particular meaning to modern authors or publishers. The records were written on precious metal, and if someone were to find them and could not read the writing, they would be likely to melt them down. Therefore, he provided a warning that no one shall have the plates to get gain. This warning, however, refers not only to the metal content, but also to the book itself. The publication of the Book of Mormon should not be something to be sold at a great profit. The Lord would not be very happy for people to be profiting from it. The record is of great worth, but it was not designed to be of financial worth. Moroni wanted to be sure that whoever obtained this record dealt with it appropriately. In verse 15, he wrote, "God wills that it shall be done with an eye single to his glory, or the welfare of the ancient, long-dispersed covenant people of the Lord." They shall be brought to light only for these purposes.

He also wrote a blessing to the person who brought forth the book, "Blessed be he that shall bring this thing to light" (8:16). So, Joseph Smith was given a blessing, and that will come up again in Moroni 10:24–25: "Wo be unto the children of men because of unbelief" which will exist at the time when the Book of Mormon comes forth, for "there shall be none that doeth good among you, no, not one," which words will be fulfilled as the Savior spoke to Joseph Smith in the First Vision. Then Moroni continued and clarified, "For if there be one among you that doeth good, he shall work by the power and gifts of God" (10:25) which is another reference to Joseph Smith and the only way in which the Book of Mormon could possibly come forth.

Mormon 8:26–32 — Forecasting

In chapter 8, verses 26 to 32, Moroni began to talk about the time when the Book of Mormon would come forth. Six times, he wrote, "*It shall come in a day when...*" He forecasts clearly:

- *it shall come in a day when* it shall be said that miracles are done away ...
- *and it shall come in a day when* the blood of the saints shall cry unto the Lord ...
- *Yea, it shall come in a day when* the power of God shall be denied ...
- *Yea, it shall come in a day when* there shall be heard of fires, and tempests ...
- *Yea, it shall come in a day when* there shall be great pollutions ...
- *Yea, it shall come in a day when* there shall be churches built up ... for your money...

The number six is often thought of as a number of incompleteness or defectiveness (being one short of the number 7, which symbolically bespeaks completeness). Here, Moroni gives us no good news about the many things that would be in place when the Book of Mormon would come forth. After all, he has just experienced the destruction of his own people. These six things had been problems for centuries within the Nephite world, with people like Nehor and Korihor, with the blood of martyrs like Abinadi and the women and children in Ammonihah, with the destructions at the time of the Crucifixion, and with

priestcrafts. Moroni recognized these problems and hoped that the Book of Mormon would help to prevent those problems from repeating themselves at some future time.

Mormon 8:33, 38–40 — Questioning

A section of questioning begins in verse 33. Seven times he asked, *O why? Why? Why? Why* have you done this? Why are you this way? Why do you continue to do this?

- *Why have ye* built up churches unto yourselves to get gain ...? (v. 33)
- *Why have ye* transfigured the holy word of God ...? (v. 33)
- *Why have ye* polluted the holy church of God ...? (v. 38)
- *Why are ye* ashamed to take upon you the name of Christ ...? (v. 38)
- *Why do ye* not think that greater is the value of endless happiness ...? (v. 38)
- *Why do ye* adorn yourselves with that which hath no life ...? (v. 39)
- *Why do ye* build up secret combinations to get gain ...? (v. 40)

Moroni certainly knows how to ask the “why” questions! Elder M. Russell Ballard has assured us all that asking the “why questions” is the best way to open the windows and doors of revelation. Asking why is still today a great step in the direction of learning why and knowing why.

Further Reading

M. Russell Ballard, “[The Opportunities and Responsibilities of CES Teachers in the 21st Century](#),” Address to CES Religious Educators, February 26, 2016, online at churchofjesuschrist.org.

Mormon 8:33–37 — Beholding

In verse 35, Moroni wrote, “Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me.” He has seen our day, our problems, our wickedness, and our weakness. That is why he repeats himself in trying to drive his point across to us. That statement about Jesus is in a sequence of the *beholding* section. There are five beholds starting in Moroni 8:33:

- Behold, look ye unto the revelations of God; for behold, the time cometh ... (v. 33)
- Behold, the Lord hath shown unto me great and marvelous things ... (v. 34)
- Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. (v. 35)
- But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing. (v. 35)
- For behold, ye do love money ... more than ye love the poor and the needy... (v. 37)

So, behold! Moroni wanted to get our attention, and wanted us to look at this seriously.

Mormon 8:35 — Declaring

Four times, Moroni used a declarative mode preceded by “*I speak*.”

- *I speak* unto you as if you were present. (Mormon 8:35)
- *I speak* concerning those who do not believe in Christ. (Mormon 9:1)
- *I speak* unto you who deny the revelations of God. (Mormon 9:7)
- *I speak* unto you as though I spoke from the dead. (Mormon 9:30)

What is the effect on readers when they hear Moroni repeating phrases such as these? We will see this style of repetition throughout this writing.

Mormon 9

Mormon 9:2–19 — Challenging

Continuing directly into chapter 9, Moroni switches into a challenging mode for the non-believers. He now provides different questions for a different audience, challenging people who do not believe in Christ. He asks sixteen such questions of those who do not believe.

- Will ye say? (9:2–3)
- Will ye longer deny?
- Do ye suppose?
- Do ye suppose?
- Have these things passed? (9:15–19)
- Has the end come?
- Are not the things marvelous?
- Who can comprehend?
- Who shall say?
- Who shall say?
- Why has God ceased?
- Who can stand? (9:26)
- Who can deny?
- Who will rise up against the almighty?
- Who will despise the works of the Lord?
- Who will despise the children of Christ?

Mormon 9:21 — Exhorting

Why would Moroni have been particularly interested in our need to be believing? In Moroni 10, it says that if you do not believe, you cannot have faith, hope, or charity. Unbelief is the enemy of all those good things. He wanted us to know that we have to believe and “deny not the gifts.” He will emphasize this again in Moroni 10, because he knew that the Book of Mormon would have to come forward by the gift and power of

God. How else could it happen? He knew that his language would be lost. Someone would find these plates, but how would they be able to read them? He knew that it would be only through the channel of faith that this record had a chance of surviving.

Mormon 9:27–31 — Commanding

How many commands does Moroni give to his readers in Mormon 9:27–31? I count 22 of them. Since there are 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet, this number might not be accidental.

What are these commands, and how are we doing these days in keeping them? These statements are all in the imperative mood. Like the Ten Commandments, some are prohibiting commands (in the apodictic style); others are affirmative injunctions or instructions. All are commands or directions, not just suggestions of one kind or another. Each is worth pondering. Each should (or should not) be done:

1. Despise not.
2. Wonder not.
3. Hearken unto the words of the Lord.
4. Ask the Father in the name of Jesus Christ for whatever ye shall stand in need.
5. Doubt not.
6. Be believing.
7. Begin as in times of old.
8. Come unto the Lord with all your heart.
9. Work out salvation your own salvation with fear and trembling before God.
10. Be wise in the days of your probation.
11. Strip yourselves of all uncleanness.
12. Ask not to consume uncleanness on your lusts.
13. Ask with a firmness unshaken that ye will yield to no temptation.
14. Serve the true and living God.
15. See that not baptized unworthily.
16. See that partake not of the sacrament of Christ unworthily.
17. See that ye do all things in worthiness.
18. Do all things in the name of Jesus Christ, the son of the living God.
19. Endure to the end.
20. Condemn me not because of mine imperfections.
21. Condemn not my father or those who have written before him.
22. Give thanks that God has made manifest our imperfections, that ye may be wiser than we have been.

Further Reading

Book of Mormon Central, [“Why Did Moroni Conclude His Father’s Record with 22 Commands? \(Mormon 9:27\), KnoWhy 234](#) (November 18, 2016).

Mormon 9:32–33 – Why Did the Nephites Write in Reformed Egyptian?

At the beginning of the Book of Mormon, in 1 Nephi 1:2, Nephi explains that the language he was using on his plates was “the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians.” In Mosiah 1, King Benjamin required his sons, to learn Egyptian and Hebrew, “all the language of his fathers” (verse 2), so they could read both the prophecies on the plates from Jerusalem (verse 2), and the writings on the plates of Nephi.

Here, Moroni explained that the language used was “reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech.” He also explained that they would have needed larger plates if they had been writing in Hebrew, which also had been altered somewhat.

We do not know for sure, but some researchers believe that Mormon and Moroni probably wrote in the Hebrew language, except they wrote the sounds using Egyptian characters or modified Reformed Egyptian characters which may have been some kind of shorthand at this time.

People might wonder if one alphabetic-based script has ever been used to write the sounds of another language. The answer is yes. In modern times, a person can find on the web the Hebrew or Greek words of the Bible transliterated into English letters, not as translations but so that the reader can pronounce out loud the sounds of those ancient words.

Did this kind of thing ever happen in the ancient world? Yes, it did. The text of a Hebrew psalm was found years ago in Egypt, written out phonetically using Egyptian characters. Another example comes from Gubbio in central Italy. The people who lived in what is now called Gubbio were Umbrians, and they spoke a dialect of the Umbrian language. They apparently had no written language, as far as we know, but wanted to record their laws, especially their religious laws on conducting public festivals in worshiping their gods. This was probably in the third Century BC. So they went to the Etruscans, who were master metallurgists, knowing how to make metal artifacts and plates of all kinds. The Umbrians apparently stood there and spoke in their language what they wanted this legal posting to say; however, the Etruscan platemaker knew only how to write in Etruscan script. So these Umbrian public city ordinances and texts were recorded, on plates of brass, in Umbrian but using Etruscan letters.



Figure 1 Umbrian Iguvine brass plate (c. 200 B.C.), Gubbio City Museum, Italy. Photograph by John W. Welch.

When these Umbrian plates were discovered in the seventeenth century, no one was able to read them. The people who understood Etruscan studied them and gave up, pronouncing them as nonsense. Eventually, however, someone who knew Umbrian was there while another was reading the lines aloud in an attempt to make sense of the sounds. He recognized it as Umbrian, and that solved the puzzle. Similarly, Ugaritic texts in a Northwest Semitic language are written using cuneiform symbols. There were many languages, but not that many writing systems, so this kind of thing happened more often than people might think.



Figure 2 Gubbio City Hall and Museum. Photograph by John W. Welch.

Further Reading

Book of Mormon Central, [“Why Did Mormon and Moroni Write in Reformed Egyptian? \(Mormon 9:32\), KnoWhy 513 \(May 2, 2019\).](#)

John Gee, [“Two Notes on Egyptian Script,”](#) *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5, no. 1 (1996): 162–176.

Stephen D. Ricks, [“Semitic Texts Written in Egyptian Characters,”](#) in *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon: The FARMS Updates of the 1990s*, edited by John W. Welch and Melvin J. Thorne (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1999), 237–243.

On the history and contents of the seven Iguvine tablets, see generally https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iguvine_Tablets

Mormon 9:32, 35–36 — Attesting

Understanding how difficult this writing process would have been, Moroni’s attestations that he has done the best he could makes perfect sense. “We have *written* ... according to our knowledge” (9:32); with larger plates “we should have *written* in Hebrew” (9:33); and if we “could have *written* in Hebrew” there would have been fewer chances for misunderstanding (9:33); but “the Lord knoweth the things which we have *written*” (9:34), and “these things are *written* that we may rid our garments of the blood of our brethren” (9:35). In the best scribal form, Moroni validates his efforts. He closes his writing with a five-fold attestation that he and his father have written the best they possibly could.

Mormon 9:37 — Petitioning

True to his rhetorical form, Moroni ends his first farewell with a three-fold petition. Three times he prays: “*May* the Lord Jesus Christ grant that their prayers may be answered according to their faith.” “*May* God the Father remember the covenant that he hath made with the house of Israel.” “*May* he bless them forever, through faith on the name of Jesus Christ.” His fervent petitions are given for our benefit, and they are given for any and all readers to claim. May it be so. “Amen.”