



Book of Mormon

*A Second Witness
for Jesus Christ*

BY JAMES S. MENZIES

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What Is

The Book of Mormon?

It is an authoritative history of the spiritual forces that motivated the great pre-Columbian nations of ancient America.

It records the many kindly interventions of God on behalf of those ancient people, including the personal ministry of Jesus Christ to them shortly after his resurrected appearances in Palestine.

It points to God as the universal Father of all mankind, and indicates his concern for his children in all parts of the world, and in all ages of time, including the present.

It was written by the prophets and historians of ancient America, who preserved their records upon metal plates and put them in a place of safety under divine direction for a future purpose.

The location of the plates was revealed to Joseph Smith by divine power in 1823, and, following a period of preparation, they were translated into English by the gift and power of God, and published in 1830.

The Bible's Testimony

THE CENTRAL TESTIMONY of the Bible is of a living God. Almost continuously, through the four thousand years of history covered by this record, God revealed himself in every age. By angelic ministry, by revelations, by dreams, and by visions, a continuous revelation of his love was renewed in each generation. Nor did such experiences cease after the personal ministry of Jesus Christ and his ascension into heaven. In harmony with the promise of Christ, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28: 20), the love and power of heaven continued to be made manifest unto men. In view of such an all-embracing and continuous testimony of the Father in heaven, we might well ask with the late Mr. H. G. Wells, "Why should the Bible cease?"

It is unfortunate, however, that so many people of our generation believe that such experiences belong only to a dim and long distant past. Men have apparently given up the hope of revelation. Multitudes have lost faith in God. For lack of a clear testimony, their faith in immortality also crumbles.

Shorn of these principles which give power and purpose to life, many have hastened to bitter graves. And where today is "the voice from heaven sent" that has power to cause mankind to look upward and rejoice? Why should we not expect the Almighty to intervene on our behalf as formerly? He unalterably declared, "I am the Lord, I change not" (Malachi 3: 6).

A Continuing Testimony

WE PRESENT the following testimony as a possible answer to the problem of our age and as a vindication of the nature of our Father in heaven. We commend to you its straightforward vigor. It is the experience of a young man, Joseph Smith, as he sought God in humble prayer on the evening of September 21, 1823.

While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in the room, which continued to increase until the room was lighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor. . . . Not only was his robe exceedingly white but his whole person was glorious beyond description, and his countenance truly like lightning. . . . When I first looked upon him I was afraid but the fear soon left me. He called me by name, and said unto me that he was a messenger sent from the presence of God . . . that God had a work for me to do, and that my name should be had for good and evil

among all nations, kindreds, and tongues; or that it should be both good and evil spoken of among all people.

He said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang. . . .

As this was being told to Joseph by the heavenly messenger, a vision was also opened to him whereby he was permitted to see the place where the record referred to had been hidden. He visited the spot on the following day and there viewed the plates, though he was not permitted to remove them at that time. Four years later, in growing maturity, he was privileged to obtain and translate these plates. Thus the Book of Mormon was published to the world in 1830.

Prophecies Fulfilled

THE FACT that such an event as this was to take place was clearly known to the prophets of old. Notice how majestically the prophetic insight of Isaiah is vindicated as he foresaw this age of perplexity and confusion:

Stay yourselves and wonder, cry ye out and cry: they are drunken, but not with wine: they stagger but not with strong drink.—Isaiah 29: 9.

The condition of the religious world, with many denying the possibility of

revelation from God, is precisely revealed:

For the Lord hath poured upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath closed your eyes: the prophets and your rulers, the seers hath he covered.—Isaiah 29: 10.

In the midst of such conditions, the Lord has promised that he will restore spiritual power. By means of a "vision," a book is to be brought to the attention "of all."

And the vision of all is become unto you as the words of a book that is sealed which men deliver to him that is learned, saying, Read this I pray thee: and he saith, I cannot for it is sealed:

And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, Read this I pray thee: and he saith, I am not learned.—Isaiah 29: 11, 12.

Neither the learned nor the unlearned are able to translate it of themselves. Divine aid, however, is promised that its testimony shall be heard.

Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near to me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precepts of men:

Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvelous work among this people, even a marvelous work and a wonder, for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid.—Isaiah 29: 13, 14.

With the appearance of the book, the ones previously deaf to the appeals of religion will hear; blindness as to the

nature of the Eternal Father will be past:

And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and darkness.—Isaiah 29: 18.

This book, foreseen by the prophet, adds its testimony to that of our Bible, bringing further joyful news of Christ. Because of it:

The meek also shall increase their joy in the Lord, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel.—Isaiah 29: 19.

The Second Testimony

THE TESTIMONY of this book, which the Almighty through his prophet has assured us should come, is illuminating. Under the direction of God the two great pre-Columbian civilizations were sent to America. The first came about 2200 B.C., being directed here when the Lord confounded the language of the people at the tower of Babel. When this nation had corrupted itself and was finally destroyed in a great internecine war, the Lord directed a second colony to this land from Palestine about 600 B.C. Members of this last colony brought with them copies of the Hebrew scriptures, and were thus aware of the prophecies regarding the coming of Christ. Prophets in their midst minis-

tered to them during the years, and as time rolled on apprised them of his near advent. At the time of his birth great signs were given, and a new star appeared. After his crucifixion, resurrected appearances, and ascension in Palestine, he also descended to a multitude of worshipers here in America. In this way was fulfilled the beautiful promise previously made:

And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice: and there shall be one fold and one shepherd.—John 10: 16.

HERE IN AMERICA, Jesus taught his gospel, instituted its sacred ordinances, and established his church. Through obedience to his laws, peace, righteousness, and marvelous blessings followed until the fourth generation. But as with the former colony, pride and indifference crept in followed by wickedness and depravity. The pleadings of the prophets were rejected and violence filled the land. Grotesque and barbarous practices replaced the mild and beneficent teachings of Christ. In sorrow the last of the prophets concealed the record of his people. Today the deserted corridors, crumbling temples, and echoing halls in the midst of

the encroaching jungle attest the fall of this people. The record of their former greatness remained securely hidden until a great nation was established upon this chosen land, and then by means of a vision was brought to the attention "of all."

America's Destiny

WHAT A FIELD of meditation the Book of Mormon opens to us! Within it is the history of the great pre-Columbian nations—their rise as they responded to direct revelation of God in their midst, their collapse as they rejected and turned from the laws and teachings of the resurrected Christ. Within it is unfolded the watch care of God over the Americas—the hiding of these lands from the knowledge of the Old World until fundamental freedoms had been gained, then, by the unceasing movement of his Spirit upon Columbus, bringing the opportunities and possibilities of these lands to the ones yearning for such in the Old World. Under God's direction, freedom-loving people were brought here; by his power they were freed from domination and oppression from abroad. And God promises continued

freedom to America's inhabitants if they "serve the God of the land":

Whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven, if they will but serve the God of the land, who is Jesus Christ who hath been manifested by the things which we have written.—Ether 1: 35.

But with this reassurance comes a warning to all Americans:

Whoso should possess this land of promise, from that time henceforth and for ever, should serve him, the true and only God, or they should be swept off when the fullness of his wrath should come upon them.—Ether 1: 30.

The desolate ruins of two mighty civilizations who have preceded us grimly forewarn that God's spirit will not always strive with man; and dangers previously warned of, when disregarded, have caused destruction.

Such dangers, hanging over America today, were clearly seen and recognized by its previous prophets—the dangers of the spreading influence of secret organizations of criminal intent who gain power and corrupt the administration of local, state, and national government, who control and dominate various other organizations in our midst. Many of these organizations are tied

to foreign influences which have brought their own countries into bondage and oppression.

And whatsoever nation shall uphold such secret combinations to get power and gain, until they spread over the nation, behold, they shall be destroyed. . . .

Wherefore the Lord commandeth you, when ye shall see these things come among you, that ye shall awake to a sense of your awful situation, because of this secret combination which shall be among you. . . .

For it cometh to pass that whoso buildeth it up, seeketh to overthrow the freedom of all lands, nations and countries:

And it bringeth to pass the destruction of all people, for it is built up by the devil, who is the father of all lies.—Ether 3: 94-100.

But in the midst of such distress of nations—brought on by unbelief and moral collapse—these ancient prophets saw a recommitment of the power of God following the revealing of the records which they had kept. They saw, too, the emergence of a community of righteousness giving demonstration that the problems of man can be solved in the moral, physical, and social spheres by the spirit of Jesus Christ. Their words plead with men today to recognize that wickedness brings total ruin, that only righteousness brings peace and safety. Because of the nature

of the revelation of this book by angelic ministry, because of the clarity of its prophetic utterances, and because of its fulfillment of ancient prophecy we urge you, with the last of its writers:

And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye 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.—Moroni 10: 4, 5.



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