

BM#47 "To Keep Them in the Right Way" - Moroni 1-6

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I. Introduction

Thomas R. Vallestta states,

"Moroni, after abridging the record of the Jaredites, which is known as the book of Ether, wrote his own book. This last Book of Mormon prophet described some of the Savior's teachings and commandments during His visit to the Nephites, which include the doctrine of receiving the Holy Ghost, priesthood ordinations, sacrament prayers, and baptism. In many ways, the book of Moroni acted as a blueprint for Joseph Smith on how to establish the true Church of Jesus Christ. Many of the doctrines and principles set forth in Moroni's own book were the source for Doctrine and Covenants 20." (*The Book of Mormon Study Guide: Start to Finish*. Thomas R. Valletta, General Editor. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 2015, 798).

Outline of Book of Moroni 1-6:

"1. Moroni 1: Moroni's preliminary remarks, historical and explanatory.

A. Moroni continues to write; he successfully evades the Lamanites. Their fierce wars. Nephites who do not deny Christ slain by them. Moroni will not deny the Christ.

B. Moroni explains his motives in writing; he has in mind future welfare of Lamanites.

"2. Moroni 2: Savior's instructions to Nephite Twelve concerning bestowal of Holy Ghost.

- "3. Moroni 3: How Nephite Twelve ordained priests and teachers.
- "4. Moroni 4: Manner in which sacramental bread was administered.
- "5. Moroni 5: Manner in which sacramental wine was administered.
- "6. Moroni 6: Conditions and mode of baptism among Nephites. Matters of Church discipline. (Sidney B. Sperry. *Book of Mormon Compendium*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1968, 482-483).

II. Moroni 1

Moroni 1:1

1 Now I, Moroni, after having made an end of abridging the account of the people of Jared, I had supposed not to have written more, but I have not as yet perished; and I make not myself known to the Lamanites lest they should destroy me.

2 For behold, their wars are exceedingly fierce among themselves; and because of their hatred they put to death every Nephite that will not deny the Christ.

It is believed that in approximately A.D. 385, the final destruction of the Nephite nation occurred. Between A.D. 385 and 400, Moroni concluded the record of his father, Mormon, and abridged the translation of Mosiah regarding the book of Ether. He wrote his own record to be included with his father's abridgment of the plates as the book of Moroni. It is noteworthy that the Lamanites still continued to be engaged in battle with themselves and they sought to put to death all Nephites who believed in Christ.

Moroni 1:4

4 Wherefore, I write a few more things, contrary to that which I had supposed; for I had supposed not to have written any more; but I write a few more things, that perhaps they may be of worth unto my brethren, the Lamanites, in some future day, according to the will of the Lord.

Considering the fact that he remained in hostile territory over the past fifteen years, he continued to be concerned regarding his life. It is noteworthy that he felt inspired to write "a few more things that...may be of worth unto my brethren, the Lamanties, in some future day" (Moroni 1:4).

Joseph Fielding McConkie, Robert L. Millet, and Brent L. Top state,

"Moroni's impression that his words and this sacred record would be a unique benefit to the latter-day Lamanites is similar to Enos's desire and the Lord's promise to him (see Enos 1:13, 16). Other Book of Mormon prophets also prophesied of the great day when the Lamanites would come unto the Lord in faith on account of this record (see 2 Nephi 3:15; Alma 37:19; Mormon 7:8-10; Ether 12:22). In the title to the Book of Mormon the first group of people that is identified as the target audience of this record is the Lamanites. It is intended to show them "what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers, and that they may know the covenants of the Lord that they are not cast off forever" (Title Page of Book of Mormon)." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 4. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992, 321).

It is noteworthy that Moroni remained concerned in bringing the Lamanites to the truth, even while he is was in personal danger from their ancestors. Like the Savior, he is concerned about all coming to a knowledge of the truth, including the Lamanites.

III. Moroni 2

The summary, added later to the chapter headings, makes reference to the Twelve disciples Christ called, as apostles. We might ask, Were the twelve Nephite disciples Apostles?

Joseph Fielding Smith states,

"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, although their jurisdiction was, as revealed to Nephi, eventually to be subject to the authority and jurisdiction of Peter and the twelve chosen

in Palestine (see Mormon 3:18-19). According to the definition prevailing in the world an apostle is a witness of Christ, or one who evangelizes a certain nation or people...Therefore the Nephite twelve became apostles, as special witnesses, just as did Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times." (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, Vol. 1. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1957, 122).

Moroni 2:1

1 The words of Christ, which he spake unto his disciples, the twelve, whom he had chosen, as he laid his hands upon them--

The first ordinance Moroni addressed was Christ's bestowal of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands to his twelve disciples. Moroni included this ordinance as he had specific knowledge how it had been done at the time of Christ's first appearing, "but the multitude heard it not" (Moroni 2:3).

Moroni 2:2

2 And he called them by name, saying: Ye shall call on the Father in my name, in mighty prayer; and after ye have done this ye shall have power that to him upon whom ye shall lay your hands, ye shall give the Holy Ghost; and in my name shall ye give it, for thus do mine apostles.

Once an individual has exercised faith in Jesus Christ, repented of their sins, and been baptized through immersion by one who has the authority, they may then receive the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. This allows the individual, based upon their continued righteousness, to have the Holy Ghost be their constant companion and bless their lives through his gifts.

Joseph Fielding McConkie, Robert L. Millet, and Brent L. Top state,

"The Holy Ghost and its accompanying gifts are imperative to the operation of the priesthood [authority given by God to man to act in His Name] and the work of the Church. 'We believe in the gift of the Holy Ghost being enjoyed now, as much as it was in the Apostles' days.' The Prophet Joseph

Smith declared, '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 these things cannot be enjoyed [by the Church or an individual] without the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 243)." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 4. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992, 323).

Moroni concluded by stating that once the twelve had received the authority from Christ to bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost, "on as many as they laid their hands, fell the Holy Ghost" (Moroni 2:3).

IV. Moroni 3

Moroni 3:1

1 The manner which the disciples, who were called the elders of the church, ordained priest and teachers--

In order to perform various ordinances in the Church of Jesus Christ it is necessary that an individual hold the requisite priesthood authority. Without necessary authority, the actions which were performed would not be recognized by God. Moroni addressed specifically the office of priest and teachers within the church.

Bryan Richards states,

"In Doctrine and Covenants, Section 20, the Lord describes the various offices in the priesthood and their individual functions. However, the Book of Mormon does not contain a passage which explicitly describes the different offices and their functions. Therefore, we are left to piece together the structures of the priesthood hierarchy. The four offices within the Melchizedek Priesthood [as they did not have the Aaronic Priesthood among them as none of the Nephites or Mulekites were of Levitical descent], as practiced among the Nephites, are discussed in hierarchical order:

"High Priest: This calling is spoken of from the days of Adam to the coming of Christ. It is the same office held by the ancient Patriarchs (see

Alma 13:1-14, D&C 107:10). First mentioned in connection with Alma, the elder (Mosiah 23:16), the office was held by the supreme leader of the church. His calling was analogous to that of the President of the Church. While initially, there was only one High Priest, eventually, others were given the same office in conjunction with their ecclesiastical jurisdictions (see Alma 30:20; 46:6). Finally, the office had become corrupted by wickedness (3 Ne. 6:20-21) and was not mentioned after Christ's visit. [In the Church today, in order to serve in an administrative position, one must be ordained to the office of High Priest].

"Elder: Elders were subordinate to the high priest, as they were ordained by him (Alma 4:7; 6:1). Although mentioned infrequently prior to Christ's visit, they were responsible for presiding and watching over the church (Alma 6:1), ordaining Priests and Teachers (Moroni 3:1), administering the sacrament (Moroni 4:1), and overseeing church discipline (Moroni 6:7).

"Priest: Priests were ordained by the Elders or the High Priest (Mosiah 18:18; Moroni 3:1). They were most frequently mentioned in connection with Teachers. The Book of Mormon seems to use the terms *ordain*, *consecrate*, and *appoint* in a synonymous fashion when speaking of the calling of Priests and Teachers (2 Ne 5:26; Jarom 1:11; Mosiah 23:17; 25:19; Alma 4:7; 15:3; 23:4; 45:23; Moroni 3:1). The frequent mention of this office signifies both Priests and Teachers were commonly ordained and were the 'workhorses' of the priesthood. Alma ordained a Priest for every 50 members of the church (Mosiah 18:18). Their duties were to preside and watch over the church, preach repentance, teach the gospel, assist in matters of church discipline, and administer the sacrament (Alma 6:1; Moroni 3:3; Mosiah 18:18; 26:7; Moroni 4:1). Their calling was greater than that of a teacher because teachers brought sinners to the priests for

judgment (Mosiah 26:7).

"Teacher: Teachers were ordained by the Elders or the High Priest (Alma 15:13; Moroni 3:1). They are most frequently mentioned in connection with Priests (2 Ne 5:26; Jarom 1:11; Mosiah 23:17; 25:19; Alma 4:7; 15:13; 23:4; 45:23; Moroni 3:1). The frequent mention of this office signifies that both Priests and Teachers were commonly ordained and the 'workhorses' of the priesthood. Their duties, other than to teach and preach, are not mentioned. They were subordinate to teachers (Mosiah 26:7), and, interestingly, were not mentioned as officiators in the administration of the sacrament (Moroni 4:1)."

(www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Moroni-3).

Moroni 3:2-3

**2 After they had prayed unto the Father in the name of Christ, they laid their hands upon them, and said:
3 In the name of Jesus Christ I ordain you to be a priest, (or, if he be a teacher I ordain you to be a teacher), to preach repentance and remission of sins through Jesus Christ, by the endurance of faith on his name to the end. Amen.**

Joseph Fielding McConkie, Robert L. Millet, and Brent L. Top state,

"Priesthood power is governed by principles of faith and righteousness (see D&C 121:36). In order to properly represent the Lord in any priesthood capacity, the priesthood holder must be a pure and worthy receptacle of the Spirit of the Lord. It is only through personal preparation by worthy living and seeking the guidance of the Spirit in mighty prayer that a priesthood holder will be empowered with divine utterance in speaking for and in behalf of the Lord in all priesthood blessings and ordinances." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 4. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992, 323).

Bryan Richards states,

"We can't help but compare the Nephite methods of ordination to our own. Although from a doctrinal standpoint, we tend to focus on the similarities, the differences are just as interesting and informative. The fact that there are differences between the Nephite practice and today's practice reminds us that the particulars are not as important as the essentials. The essentials are that the particulars are not as important as the essentials. The essentials are that the ordination occurs in the name of Jesus Christ, by the laying on of hands, and by one who has authority. The particulars can differ without offending God or nullifying the ordinances." (www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Moroni-3).

Moroni 3:4

4 And after this manner did they ordain priests and teachers, according to the gifts and callings of God unto men; and they ordained them by the power of the Holy Ghost, which was in them.

Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet state,

"Without the Holy Ghost there can be no revelation, and without revelation there can be no priesthood, for the priesthood is the authority to speak for God. Having discussed the various orders of the priesthood, the Prophet [Joseph Smith] said: 'The Holy Ghost is God's messenger to administer in all those priesthoods' (Teaching of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 323)." (*Joseph Smith: The Choice Seer*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1996, 42-43).

In order to perform any ordinance by the power and authority of the priesthood, it is necessary that the power of the Holy Ghost be present in order to provide the conduit necessary to act in God's name. Without the Holy Ghost, no revelations can be received by an individual.

Bryan Richards states,

"How is the Holy Ghost involved in Ordinations? A man may properly wire his house for electricity, observing the code most carefully. Still, if the power company refuses to connect him to the power source, no lights or heat will come on in his house. He could turn switches to no avail."

www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Moroni-3).

V. Moroni 4

Moroni 4:3 and Moroni 5:2 contain the wording of the covenant of the bread and water known as the sacrament prayers. The elements of bread and wine/water symbolize the tokens of the Atonement made by Jesus Christ. Every Sunday, in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, each member has the opportunity to partake of these emblems in remembrance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and to renew their own baptismal covenants.

Jeffery R. Holland states,

"...every ordinance of the gospel focuses in one way or another on the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, and surely that is why this particular ordinance with all its symbolism and imagery comes to us more readily and more repeatedly than any other in our life. It comes in what has been called 'the *most sacred, the most holy, of all the meetings of the Church.*' (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:340)...With so very much at stake, this ordinance commemorating our escape from the angel of darkness should be...a powerful, reverent, reflective moment. It should encourage spiritual feelings and impressions...This is the real purpose of [Sacrament] meeting." ("This Do in Remembrance of Me," in *Ensign*, November 1995, 67-68).

Moroni 4:1-2

1 The manner of their elders and priests administering the flesh and blood of Christ unto the church; and they administered it according to the commandments of Christ; wherefore we know the manner to be true; and the elder or priest did minister it--

2 And they did kneel down with the church, and pray to the Father in the name of Christ, saying:

In this manner, Moroni is clarifying the procedure by which the sacrament is to be administered. One must hold the higher priesthood or the office of priest in the Aaronic priesthood. They are voice for the members of the congregation as they reverently kneel at the sacrament table and offer the prescribed sacramental prayers. First, the prayer on the bread is offered.

Moroni 4:3

3 O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this bread to the souls of all those who partake of it; that they may eat in remembrance of the body of thy Son, and witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him, and keep his commandments which he hath given them, that they may always have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.

The prayer is offered to God, Our Eternal Father. He is the Father of our spirits. We are his children. Because Jesus Christ is our mediator with the Father, we offer our prayer in His name. We ask our Father to accept the humble element of the bread we are about to partake of and to sanctify, purify, and make it holy. As we eat the bread, we do so remembering the body of Christ as He suffered in the garden and on the cross under the weight of our sins on our behalf. As we do so, we stand as witnesses of his divinity and willingly take upon ourselves His name as one of his disciples. We further promise to always remember Him, and to keep his commandments throughout our lives. As we do so, we seek to have the Spirit of the Holy Ghost to be with us.

Joseph Fielding McConkie, Robert L. Millet, and Brent L. Top state,

"It is clear from the Book of Mormon usage of the verb "to witness" as it related to baptism (see Mosiah 18:10) and the sacrament (see 3 Nephi 18:11) that it means to enter into a solemn covenant. Another way this phrase could read is 'and covenant with thee.' Only when we understand that as we 'witness' we are covenanting with the Father to do certain things; does the ordinance of the sacrament truly become a renewal of our previous covenants taken at baptism." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 4. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992, 325).

Stephen E. Robinson states,

"Why are the three words 'are willing to' necessary here? Are they important? Would it make a difference if the prayer left these out...Yes, it would make a difference. It would make a difference because I cannot do this latter thing. I can't witness, affirm, or swear that I do always

remember him and keep his commandments. I would be lying, and I know it--I want to do the right thing, but sometimes I don't. This is precisely the problem that makes the atonement of Christ and the gospel covenant necessary for me in the first place--I can't keep all the commandments all the time no matter how hard I try. It follows that I can't honestly witness to God that I *will* keep all the commandments when I know that, in some degree at least, I probably won't.

"However, I can with absolute honesty witness that I *am willing to*. I can swear that this is the desire of my heart. I can affirm that I hunger and thirst after these things, that I will do all I can to be obedient. Thus even by the technical terms of the covenant renewal prayer, God lets me know that the honest commitment of my heart and my best efforts are sufficient for the covenant to be renewed, and that the covenant of faith is sufficient, through the grace of Christ, to justify me before God." (*Believing Christ*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1992, 53-54).

VI. Moroni 5

In order to renew our covenants with our Eternal Father, it is necessary that we partake worthily not only of the bread, but also the wine/water. Each element of the sacrament is necessary if our renewal is to be complete.

Moroni 5:1

1 The manner of administering the wine--Behold, they took the cup, and said:

When Christ initiated the sacrament at the time of his last supper with his apostles, he initially blessed the bread and said, "This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19). Then, following, "he took the cup, and said, "This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you" (Luke 22:20).

The Joseph Smith Translation, Matthew 26:22-25, states,

22 And as they were eating, Jesus took bread and brake it, and blessed it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, Take eat; this is in remembrance of my body which I give a ransom for you.

23 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it.

24 For this is in remembrance of my blood of the new testament, which is shed for as many as shall believe on my name, for the remission of their sins.

25 And I give unto you a commandment, that ye shall observe to do the things which ye have seen me do, and bear record of me even unto the end.

In the Church of Jesus Christ, it was the practice of drinking from a communal cup during sacrament services. This practice continued with the restoration of the Church in April, 1830.

Katie Lambert states,

"But by the early 1900s, many Church members were beginning to question whether a common sacrament cup was sanitary. In March, 1916, after finding evidence of six contagious diseases on their sacrament cup, the Murray First Ward [expressed their concern to Church Headquarters].

"...mass change in the Church didn't come until the Spanish influenza pandemic hit Utah in 1918, causing 717 deaths in just four weeks. Under the direction of new Church President Heber J. Grant (former vice president of the Utah Public Health Association), the transition to individual cups was quickly made. Today we accept individual water cups as normal." ("Before Plastic Sacrament Cups," in *LDS Living Magazine*. September/October 2016, 13).

Another change in the sacrament had previously occurred in August 1830, just four months after the organization of the Church of Jesus Christ, Joseph Smith was directed "not [to] purchase wine neither strong drink of your enemies" (D&C 27:3). While it took some time before the change was complete, "by the end of President Brigham Young's administration, the use of water for the sacrament was generally the practice" (David B. Haight. "Remembering the Savior's Atonement," in *Ensign*, April 1988, 11).

Regarding the elements to used, the Lord stated,

Doctrine and Covenants 27:2

2 For, behold, I say unto you, that it mattereth not what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink when ye

partake of the sacrament, if it so be that ye do it with an eye single to my glory--remembering unto the Father my body which was laid down for you, and my blood which was shed for the remission of your sins.

Moroni 5:2

2 O God, the Eternal Father, we ask thee, in the name of thy Son, Jesus Christ, to bless and sanctify this wine/water to the souls of all those who drink of it, that they may do it in remembrance of the blood of thy Son, which was shed for them; that they may witness unto thee, O God, the Eternal Father, that they do always remember him, that they may have his Spirit to be with them. Amen.

The prayer on the wine/water focused the attention of the individual on the blood of Christ which he shed for us. No living soul could have borne the intense pain that Jesus experienced in the garden and on the cross. Jesus later revealed to Joseph Smith in March, 1830, the intensity of his suffering:

Doctrine and Covenants 19:18

18 Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit--and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink--

The phrase, "to bleed at every pore," gives us a better understanding of the intense pain to which his body was subjected. In the Hymn, "There Is a Green Hill Far Away," with words by Cecil Frances Alexander, in the second stanza we sing, "We may not know, we can-not tell, What pain he had to bear, But we believe it was for us He hung and suffered there" ("There Is a Green Hill Far Away #194," in *Hymns of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*. Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985, 194). These words help us understand the sacrifice he will willing to make in order to bring us, if we are willing, back to His Father. Without His sacrifice, we would have become servants of the devil. (see 2 Nephi 9:9.)

Bryan Richards states,

"The symmetry and the symbolism of the sacrament is impressive, for the entire plan of salvation finds its fulfillment in the symbolism of this ordinance. The Fall brought into the world two kinds of death, physical and spiritual. The atonement overcame two kinds of death, physical and spiritual, and each of these elements is beautifully represented in the ordinance [of the sacrament]." (www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Moroni-4-5).

Chart 1: Sacrament symbolizes Physical and Spiritual death

Physical Death	Spiritual Death
Separation from the physical body.	Separation from God.
Overcome by the Resurrection of Christ.	Overcome by the Redemption of Christ.
Death overcome for all (1 Cor. 15:22).	Remission of sins for many (Matt. 26:28).
Represented by the Body of Christ	Represented by the Blood of Christ.
Symbolized by the bread.	Symbolized by the wine/water.
Christ is the bread of life (John 6:35).	Christ is the fountain of living water (John 4:10).
Bread is broken as was Christ's body.	Water is poured out as spilt blood, he hath poured out his soul unto death (Isa. 53:12).
Offering consummated on the cross.	Offering consummated in Gethemane.

Reference: (www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Moroni-4-5).

VII. Moroni 6

In this chapter, Moroni addressed the qualifications necessary in order to receive baptism, the purpose for holding church meetings, and the manner whereby members may gain forgiveness. We will address each of these areas.

Qualifications necessary to receive baptism

Joseph Fielding McConkie, Robert L. Millet, and Brent L. Top state,

'Moroni's description of the qualifications for baptism into the Nephite Church of Christ shows virtually the same

conditions as those listed by the Lord through revelation in this dispensation (compare D&C 20:37). Worthiness to be admitted into the kingdom of God on earth is not open to negotiation. These conditions are prescribed by the Lord and are the same from one dispensation to another."

(*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 4. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992, 328).

Chart 2: The Qualifications for Baptism

Moroni 6:1-3	Doctrine and Covenants 20:37
	1. Humble themselves.
	2. Desire to be baptized.
3. Come forth with a broken heart and a contrite spirit.	3. Come forth with a broken heart and contrite spirit.
4. Witnessed unto the church that they truly repented.	4. Witness before the church that they have truly repented.
5. Took upon them the name of Christ.	5. Willing to take upon them the name of Christ.
6. Determined to serve God to the end.	6. Determined to serve God to the end.
7. Brought forth fruit meet that they were worthy of it.	7. Manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto the remission of their sins.

Reference: Bryan Richards.
www.gospeldoctrine.com/contents/Moroni-6.

Moroni 6:1

1 And now I speak concerning baptism. Behold, elders, priests, and teachers were baptized; and they were not baptized save they brought forth fruit meet that they were worthy of it.

Baptism in the Church of Jesus Christ requires more than our words. It also requires our actions. These include weekly attendance at the church meetings; reading the scriptures, a willingness to make the necessary changes in our lives as required with the new insights we are gaining, and service to others. Through our actions, we demonstrate

our complete willingness to live our lives in accordance with the teaching of Jesus Christ. Being in the world, but no longer part of the world, involves change.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"...no price is too great to pay for the privilege of receiving this holy ordinance. We must prepare ourselves for baptism; we must be worthy to make a covenant with the Holy One; we must have a fixed and unalterable determination to conform to his will. Otherwise baptism profiteth nothing. No ordinance is binding on earth and in heaven unless it is ratified and sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, and this Spirit is given only to those who are just and true. Just as those who partake unworthily of the sacrament eat and drink damnation to their souls, so those who are baptized unworthily receive cursings instead of blessings." (*A New Witness for the Articles of Faith*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985, 248).

Moroni 6:2

2 Neither did they receive any unto baptism save they came forth with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, and witnessed unto the church that they truly repented of all their sins.

Bruce R. McConkie states,

"To have a broken heart and contrite spirit is to be broken down with deep sorrow for sin, to be humbly and thoroughly penitent, to have attained sincere and purposeful repentance." (*Mormon Doctrine*. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966, [Second Edition, 1966], 161).

Joseph Fielding McConkie, Robert L. Millet, and Brent L. Top add,

"This kind of humility is not just sorrow for sin but is also an attitude of gratitude for the Savior's sacrifice and a recognition of one's total and complete dependence upon his merits and mercy." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 4. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992, 329).

Moroni 6:3

3 And none were received unto baptism save they took upon them the name of Christ, having a determination to serve him to the end.

Joseph Fielding McConkie, Robert L. Millet, and Brent L. Top state,

"The name of Christ comes upon us not merely for the asking but only as we exercise faith in him, keep his commandments, and partake of the ordinances of salvation. When we covenant to take the name of Christ [upon ourselves], we are in fact covenanting with the Lord that we will so live our lives that we can be spiritually 'born of him' and 'become his sons and his daughters.' (see Mosiah 5:7-12; 15:11-12; 27:25; D&C 34:2-3; 39:4).

(Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon, Vol. 4. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992, 326).

Purpose for Holding Church Meetings

Baptism is the gate through which we all must pass in order to get on the path that leads to eternal life. As Jesus taught, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:5). Once an individual has been baptized, more follows.

Moroni 6:4-6, 9

4 And after they had been received unto baptism, and were wrought upon and cleansed by the power of the Holy Ghost, they were numbered among the people of the church of Christ; and their names were taken, that they might be remembered and nourished by the good word of God, to keep them in the right way, to keep them continually watchful unto prayer, relying alone upon the merits of Christ, who was the author and finisher of their faith.

5 And the church did meet together oft, to fast and to pray, and to speak one with another concerning the welfare of their souls.

6 And they did meet together oft to partake of the bread and wine, in remembrance of the Lord Jesus.

9 And 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.

Since the days following Christ departure, those who were received into the Church of Jesus Christ, through baptism, were also given the gift of the Holy Ghost. (see Act 8:14-17.) The gift of the Holy Ghost is given by the laying on of hands by one who holds the authority of God. This entitles the individual, who is living a life of worthiness, to have the Holy Ghost be their constant companion and give them guidance and protection as necessary. They are also accepted as members of the Church of Jesus Christ.

Joseph Fielding McConkie, Robert L. Millet, and Brent L. Top state,

"From these verses we see the practice of the Church *after* men and women are baptized. They meet together often to 'teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom (see D&C 88:77) and to fellowship and strengthen one another through 'all [their] conversation, in all [their] prayer, in all [their] exhortations, and in all [their] doings' (see D&C 108:7). This spiritual fellowshiping and nurturing of one another is an essential part of the 'perfection of the Saints' (Eph 4:12). All meetings and activities and practices of the Church should be designed to spiritually nourish the Saints and keep them in the 'right way.'" (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 4. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992, 329).

Gordon B. Hinckley states,

"...our interest and concern must always be with the individual. Every member of this church is an individual man or woman, boy or girl. Our great responsibility is to see that each is 'remembered and nourished by the good word of God' (Moroni 6:4), that each has opportunity for growth and expression and training in the work and ways of the Lord, that none lacks the necessities of life, that the needs of the poor are met, that each member shall have encouragement, training, and opportunity to move forward on the road of immortality and eternal life. This, I submit, is the inspired genius of this the Lord's work...But with all of this there must continue to be an intimate pastoral

relationship of every member with a wise and caring bishop or branch president. These are the shepherds of the flock whose responsibility it is to look after the people in relatively small numbers so that none is forgotten, overlooked, or neglected." ("This Work Is Concerned with People," in *Ensign*, May 1995, 52).

What does it mean that "Christ is the author and finisher of our faith?"

Joseph Fielding McConkie, Robert L. Millet, and Brent L. Top state,

"God the Father is the author of the plan of salvation. Jesus, by divine investiture of authority and as the chief proponent of the Father's plan, is also referred to as the author of our faith.

"Christ is the finisher of our faith in that, through our faith in him, he perfects our faith and perfects us. Through his grace we are saved or, in other words, spiritually finished as to immortality and eternal life. It is upon Christ and his infinite atonement that we should focus our hearts, minds, and strength. He is indeed the Light at the 'end of the tunnel'--it is he that the scriptures command us to consider as 'the end of your salvation' (D&C 46:7)." (*Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, Vol. 4. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992, 330).

We must remember the words of Nephi, son of Helaman, "remember that there is no other way nor means whereby man can be saved, only through the atoning blood of Jesus Christ, who shall come; yea, remember that he cometh to redeem the world" (Helaman 5:9).

Manner by which members may gain forgiveness

Moroni 6:7-8

7 And they [spiritual leaders] were strict to observe that there should be no iniquity among them [members of the church]; and whoso was found to commit iniquity, and three witnesses of the church did condemn them before the elders, and if they repented not, and confessed not, their names were blotted out, and they were not numbered among the people of Christ.

**8 But as oft as they repented and sought forgiveness,
with real intent, they were forgiven.**

Paul taught the Romans, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;" (Romans 3:23). Therefore, we are all striving for improvement in our lives as we strive to become like our Savior. Transgressions committed that concern only minor offences involving the individual or with another that are quickly resolved may only require confession to our Heavenly Father in order to gain forgiveness. Offences that are more serious in nature or affect our standing in the church can only be forgiven through the process of confession to the presiding authority. In those instances where the transgression is known to others in the church, and yet the individual has taken no action regarding repentance, in order to protect the name of the church, this must be reported to the local Church authority. Once the sin and transgression are confirmed, and yet the individual refuses to take any action toward repentance, he/she may be required to forfeit their membership in the Church. Because of the serious consequences to the individual, before any final action is taken, every effort is made by the Lord's servant to confidentially resolve the serious matter.

In those circumstances, where the individual is sorrowful and penitent regarding their sin and transgression, and sincerely seeks repentance from the Lord and their leaders in his church, complete forgiveness can be obtained. The promise of the Lord and his servants regarding those transgressions and sins where full confession and the steps of repentance by the individual are fulfilled, the Lord states, "And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 10:17).

In many respects Moroni Chapters 1 through 6, may be likened to a mini priesthood handbook of instructions. If he had contact with branches of the church in other locations, his input would surely be appreciated.

Eric D. Hunstsman states,

"Why did Moroni, after years of wandering alone, choose to put this kind of material into the record, especially when the Nephite church that he described no longer existed? [One reason may be that] he saw the latter-days in vision, including the disparity of religions and religious

practices..." ("Practices of the Ancient Church," in Rel 122: *Introduction to the Book of Mormon* (Alma 30–Moroni 10). Brigham Young University, April 11, 2007), Slide 5.

Boyd K. Packer states,

"Good conduct without the ordinance of the gospel will neither redeem nor exalt mankind; covenants and the ordinances are essential." (Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991, [6th Printing, 1995], 86).

These basic ordinances of the gospel, according to Moroni, include: (1) Bestowal of the Gift of the Holy Ghost (2:1-3); Priesthood ordinations (3:1-4); Administration of the Sacrament (4:1-5:2); Baptism and membership (6:1-4); Church meetings (6:5-6,9) and Church discipline (6:7-8).

VIII. Conclusions

In Part I, of the book of Moroni, we have been enlightened and our understanding been increased regarding the ordinances of the church and their importance to our individual salvation. While Moroni addressed his remarks specifically "to the Lamanites in some future day" (Moroni 1:4), we have also benefited from his writings.

In Moroni, Chapter 1, despite Moroni fearing for his life, as a result of the actions of the Lamanites of his day, his thoughts are directed to the Lamanites of the future.

In Moroni, Chapter 2, he provides insight regarding the bestowal of the gift of Holy Ghost upon the twelve disciples by Christ himself. This is the pattern to be followed as the gift of the Holy Ghost is bestowed following the individual's baptism. While the Holy Ghost serves as a witness of truth to an individual during their investigation of the Gospel, it does not remain unless they accept the ordinance of baptism.

In Moroni, Chapter 3, we learned further details regarding the priesthood offices of High Priest, Elder, Priest, and Teacher. To exercise the power of the priesthood, it requires faith and righteousness on the part of the individual. They must also have been ordained and set apart by one who holds the authority to act in God's name.

In Moroni, Chapters 4 and 5, Moroni provides the sacramental prayers on the bread and wine/water. As the individual partakes of these elements, they do in remembrance of Christ's atonement and the individual's baptismal covenant. We do so weekly that we may not forget the suffering of our Savior on behalf of our sins and renew our commitment to follow his example and become like him in word and deed. In Chart 1, we note that the sacrament symbolizes the overcoming of physical and spiritual death that resulted due to Adam and Eve's transgression.

Moroni, Chapter 6, addressed three important areas: (1) Qualifications necessary to receive baptism; (2) Purpose for holding church meetings, and, (3) The manner by which members may receive forgiveness. These basic ordinances are essential as Boyd K. Packer states, "Good conduct without the ordinances of the gospel will neither redeem nor exalt mankind; covenants and ordinances are essential." (Let Not Your Heart Be Troubled, 86).

In our final lesson [BM#48], we will continue with Part 2 of the the writings of Moroni. These also include a talk and a letter from his father, Mormon. A prior letter from Mormon to his son was previously included in BM#43.