

WHY DO WE NEED THE BOOK OF MORMON?

There is no basic **difference** in the teachings of the Holy Bible and the Book of Mormon. Yet we are able to see many differences between the teachings of Christ and the doctrines, practices and structure of the many **churches** that exist in the world today. The true Church of Christ shall always be founded upon the teachings of our Master, Jesus Christ.

“Verily, verily I say unto you, things that ye must do in my church; do, that shall ye also do; For that shall ye do; therefore if ye do these lifted up at the last day.” (III



This is my gospel; and ye know the for the works which ye have seen me which ye have seen me do, even that things, blessed are ye, for ye shall be Nephi 12: 34, 35)

Critics of the Book of Mormon are left with this pertinent question: If the Bible and the Book of Mormon both contain identical teachings, why do we need the Book of Mormon? We shall consider seven important answers to this good question:

1. In the book of Acts we read, **“Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:”** (10:34). Indeed, God is no **respecter** of persons, nations or tongues. He did not send the saving message of the Gospel in the person of His Son only to those of the Old World. Across the oceans in the **New** World were many isolated peoples who were also to hear of His saving grace.

Nevertheless, the Scriptures tell us that the **personal** ministry of Christ was directed toward a distinct people. Jesus told His disciples, **“I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”** When Christ walked in Palestine, only the tribes of Judah, Simeon, and Benjamin lived in Israel. The other peoples of Israel were scattered among the **nations** and upon the **islands** of the sea. For this reason we read the following words of Jesus in John 10:16: **“not of this fold: them also I must voice; and there shall be one**



For this reason we read the following **“And other sheep I have, which are bring, and they shall hear my fold, and one shepherd.”**

This passage does not refer to a personal ministry of Christ to the **Gentiles**, as many suppose. His personal ministry, and that of His twelve disciples was specifically defined: **“These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”** (Matthew 10:5, 6) That ministry would not begin until **after** His resurrection when He sent Peter to the home of Cornelius (Acts 10) and **Paul** was called and made apostle to the Gentiles: **“And he said unto me, Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.”** (Acts 22:21)

For this reason we can understand that **after** His resurrection Christ visited others of the lost sheep of the house of Israel. The Book of Mormon is a witness of the love of God for the house of **Joseph** that had been led by Him to America. While in America Jesus told His followers, **“And verily, verily, I say unto you, that I have other sheep, which are not of this land; neither of the land of Jerusalem; neither in any parts of that land round about, whither I have been to minister. For they of whom I speak, are they who have not as yet heard my voice; neither have I at any time manifested myself unto them. But I have received a commandment of the Father, that I shall go unto them, and that they shall hear my voice, and shall be**

numbered among my sheep, that there may be one fold, and one shepherd; therefore I go to shew myself unto them.” (III Nephi 7:24-26)

2. A second reason for the necessity of the Book of Mormon relates to one of the great purposes of Jesus Christ in the latter day. The Gospel of Jesus Christ went **first** to the house of Israel, then to the Gentiles. In the latter day it is to go from the Gentiles back to the house of **Israel**. The Apostle Paul clarified this when he wrote, ***“For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob:”*** (Romans 11:25, 26)

The children of Israel have always required more than one **witness** before accepting a thing as valid. In John 8:13 we read, ***“The Pharisees therefore said unto him, Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.”*** This is the very reason that the apostle wrote, ***“In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established.”*** (II Corinthians 13:1) The Book of Mormon is another witness to the divinity of Christ and His **mission** to Israel.

This is not to infer that only people of the House of Israel would benefit from a second witness of the Gospel. A common question today is: ***“How do we know the empty tomb was not a hoax on the part of certain Jews? If not, why is it that no one but these Jews ever saw the risen Christ? It is just too bad there is not a testament beside the Jewish Bible, for the testimony of another nation would very favorably support the story of the resurrection.”***

3. The need for another witness to the divinity of Jesus is apparent in Christian nations today. There are powerful groups of professors, teachers and **ministers** of religion that are studying the Bible and ancient manuscripts in order to understand just “Who Was Jesus?”. After years of study and discussion one such group, The Jesus **Seminar**, has published the results of their findings and thoughts. These wise leaders of religious thought have come to the following conclusions:

- a. Only 20% of the words found in the four Gospels are the true words of Jesus.
- b. The Lord’s Prayer was not given by the Master.
- c. Jesus never taught that He would return again to the world.
- d. Jesus was not a celibate person.
- e. Jesus was not resurrected from the dead.
- f. The New Testament, like the Old Testament, is full of myths.

Today the beliefs and teachings of many, including the ministry of today’s churches, are **changing**, and new revisions of the Bible appear each year. In such an atmosphere we need another faithful witness to the divinity of Christ, His resurrection and doctrine. In short, we need another witness to the **truth** of the Holy Bible. The Book of Mormon is just such a witness. This was one of its purposes as seen by **Nephi** in a vision: ***“And after it had come forth unto them, I beheld other books which came forth by the power of the Lamb, from the Gentiles unto them, unto the convincing of the Gentiles, and the remnant of the seed of my brethren, and also the Jews, who were scattered upon all the face of the earth, that the records of the prophets and of the twelve apostles of the Lamb are true.”*** (1 Nephi 3:191)

4. While the Book of Mormon came forth and was translated by the **power** of God, the Bible has passed through the hands of a great, **human** institution, identified in the Bible as “... a woman (sitting) upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” (Revelation 17:3, 5). In the prophetic language of the New Testament, the term “woman” is symbolic of a **church**. In the Book of Mormon it is spoken of as the “... **great and abominable church**...” (1 Nephi 3:219).

Through centuries the biblical manuscripts were **copied** and recopied by innumerable scribes. Many **changes** were accidentally made while others were deliberately made to the text. Many plain and precious **teachings** were removed or altered. Since many would find it difficult to believe that the precious lines of the Bible could have been changed, let us read the words of several biblical authorities.

a. Professor I. M. Price wrote in his text, *The Ancestry of Our English Bible*, “Still we fail to understand our Bible of today if we do not take full account of the many passages where, in spite of all the care of the scribes - rather, should we say, occasionally because of such care? - **changes** did find their way into the text. For the astonishing fact is that in some cases deliberately and with full knowledge they altered the **text** they had received.” - p. 21

b. Philip Comfort in his book, *The Origin of the Bible*, wrote the following: “In the late first and early **second** century, the oral traditions and the written word existed side by side with equal status - especially with respect to the material of the Gospels. Often, the text was changed by **scribes** attempting to conform the written message to the oral tradition Other scribes, however, felt **free** to make ‘improvements’ in the text - either in the interest of doctrine ... or due to the influence of a competitive oral tradition.” - pp. 184,185

In the Book of Mormon we have a history of the house of Joseph, one of the tribes of Israel. This book contains the word of God as revealed through His prophets and the doctrine of Jesus Christ, taught by a resurrected Savior. This book did not pass through the hands of an “abominable **church**” nor through those of thousands of **scribes** as did the Bible. It was translated by the power of God and is a faithful witness of His Holy Word, of the divinity of Christ and the truth of the Holy Bible.

5. Perhaps the most important reason for accepting the Book of Mormon is the simple fact that it contains the Word of God; however, most people have been taught that the canon of scripture is **full** and there can be no more Word of God. They use as evidence of this the writing of John as he closed his book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ. John wrote, “**For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:**” (Revelation 22:18). The assumption is made that he referred to the Holy Bible, but this is **incorrect**, for the apostle was speaking only of his book now called Revelation. At that point in time there was no Bible in existence. Dr. Phillip Comfort, in his book, *The Origin of the Bible*, writes, “The **earliest** ... copy of an entire New Testament is the one preserved in Codex Sinaiticus (written about A.D. 350). Prior to the fourth century, the New Testament was circulated in its various parts: as a single book or a group of books (such as the four Gospels or the Pauline Epistles).” (pp. 183, 184)

All Christian denominations profess a **belief** in the Holy Bible and its teachings as being the Word of God. However, we find a great difference in their practices and teachings. Consider the “essential” ordinance of baptism. Some denominations believe in immersion, some in sprinkling, some in the baptism of **infants**, while others believe that baptism in water to be a **choice** of the believer, and “just an outward sign of an inward grace.” Only the Book of Mormon gives a clear, concise description of the ancient Christian practice of baptism and its absolute necessity.

There is also a wide range of beliefs about how the **gift** of the Holy Ghost is received. Most churches today give **little** importance to the Biblical teachings about this ordinance, yet the Book of Mormon clearly reinforces what the apostles of Christ taught and practiced as it is found in the Holy Bible.

A very popular belief today in many fundamental churches is that of the “rapture”, a relatively **new** doctrine, not found in the scriptures and unheard of by the **founders** of the Protestant churches. The Book of Mormon makes clear what Jesus taught, and what has been introduced later by the ideas of men.

6. Certainly another important reason for accepting the Book of Mormon as the Word of God is the fact that the Prophet Ezekiel spoke of it by way of promise: ***“Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand.”*** (Ezekiel 37:16, 17, 19)



In the same way that Jesus, as the Messiah, became a **test** of faith” to the Jews, so has acceptance of the Book of Mormon become a test of faith in the hands of God for the **Gentile** people. Jesus prophesied to the Gentile people, ***“And thus commandeth the Father that I should say unto you, At that day when the Gentiles shall sin against my gospel, and shall reject the fullness of my gospel, and shall be lifted up in the pride of their hearts above all nations, and above all the people of the whole earth, and shall be filled with all manner of lyings, and of deceits, and of mischiefs, and all manner of hypocrisy, and murders, and priestcrafts, and whoredoms, and of secret abominations; And if they shall do all these things, and shall reject the fullness of my gospel, behold, saith the Father, I will bring the fullness of my gospel from among them; And then will I remember my covenant which I have made unto my people, O house of Israel, and I will bring my gospel unto them;”*** (III Nephi 7:34-36).

Just as unbelieving Israel was brought to destruction, so have unbelieving America and Europe fallen into a **moral** decline of pride, iniquity and hypocrisy. I believe a primary reason for this spiritual decline is because the Christian churches no longer feed their congregations the basic principles and doctrine of Jesus Christ. Countless numbers of Christians are leaving their churches and entering **Islam**, Buddhism, Eastern religious thought and humanism. The most rapidly growing religion today is Islam.

7. Let's consider one last, but very important reason for the Book of Mormon. The world today is being flooded with **new** versions of the Bible. Many of these versions are changing the face of Christian belief to coincide with beliefs of their editors. The selling point is that these manuscripts are older than those used for the King James Version of the Bible and "older is better". Perhaps the most popular edition today is the **NIV**, so let's compare some of the wording in these editions, the King James and the NIV and NASB:

A COMPARISON OF KJV TEXTS WITH THE NEW VERSIONS

"Satan cometh immediately and taketh away the word..." (Mark 4:15)

KJV	SCRIPTURE	NIV, NASB, ETC.
1. worship God	Phil. 3:3	worship
2. Jesus	Luke 24:36	he
3. the kingdom of God	Matthew 6:33	his kingdom
4. How thou art fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning. <i>(Revelation 22:16 identifies Jesus Christ as the bright and morning star.)</i>	Isaiah 14:12	How you have fallen from heaven, O Morning Star, son of the dawn.
5. but by prayer and fasting	Mark 9:29	only by prayer
6. this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world	John 4:42	this One indeed is the Savior of the world
7. the only begotten Son	John 1: 18	the One and Only
8. the Lord God <i>(All kinds of pagan and eastern religions give reference to the "Mighty one")</i>	Joshua 22:22	the Mighty One
9. I bow my knees before the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ <i>(Almost all pagan and Eastern religions have in their panoply of gods one who is a Father.)</i>	Ephesians 3:14	I bow my knees before the Father
10. an idol is nothing	1 Corinthians 8:4	there is no such thing as an idol
11. when he is come	John 4: 25	when that One comes

How can we determine which edition is **superior**? The Book of Mormon came to us years before this problem arose. It contains the "fullness of the gospel" and easily identifies what is the **true** Word of God. Many are the reasons to believe in the Book of Mormon, an ancient book written to the peoples, both past and present, filled with the inspiring Word of God and containing marvelous prophecies that relate to the future.