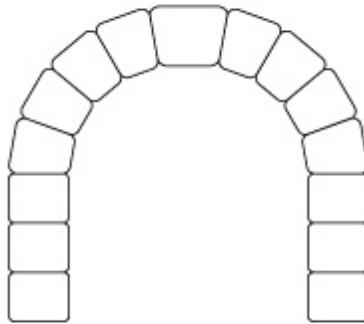


January 4, 2004

Web site "[nathanolsen.com](http://nathanolsen.com)"

Next Weeks Lesson: Lesson 2 "All Things According to His Will" ([1 Nephi 1-7](#))

Today's Lesson: Lesson 1 "The Keystone of Our Religion"



When an arch such as this one is constructed correctly, it can remain standing even without any mortar between the stones.

- What holds the arch together?

The keystone of an arch holds the other stones in place. This lesson discusses the keystone of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

## 1. The Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion.

Let's turn to the introduction to the Book of Mormon, and read the sixth paragraph.

- A. Why do you think Joseph Smith called the Book of Mormon the keystone of our religion?



President Ezra Taft Benson explained, "Just as the arch crumbles if the keystone is removed, so does all the Church stand or fall with the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 5; or [Ensign, Nov. 1986, 6](#)).

- B. Why does the Church "stand or fall with the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon"?

President Benson: "There are three ways in which the Book of Mormon is the keystone of our religion. It is the keystone in our witness of Christ. It is the keystone of our doctrine. It is the keystone of testimony" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 4; or [Ensign, Nov. 1986, 5](#)).

## ***Witness of Christ***

- C. Turn to the title page of the Book of Mormon, this page was written by the prophet Moroni. According to the second paragraph, what are three purposes of the Book of Mormon? (To show the remnant of the house of Israel the great things the Lord has done for their fathers; to teach the covenants required by the Lord; and to convince all people that Jesus is the Christ, manifesting Himself to all nations.)
- D. In 1982 the subtitle *Another Testament of Jesus Christ* was added to the title of the Book of Mormon. Why is it important to have this additional testament of the Savior? (See [1 Nephi 13:38-41](#); [2 Nephi 29:6-9](#).) Why is it important to declare to the world that the Book of Mormon testifies of Christ?
- E. What have you learned from the Book of Mormon about Jesus Christ? How has the Book of Mormon strengthened your testimony of Jesus Christ?

## ***Doctrine***

- F. In what ways is the Book of Mormon the “keystone of our doctrine”? (See [D&C 10:45-46](#); [D&C 20:8-12](#).)



President Benson stated: “The Lord Himself has stated that the Book of Mormon contains the ‘fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ’ ([D&C 20:9](#)). That does not mean it contains every teaching, every doctrine ever revealed. Rather, it means that in the Book of Mormon we will find the fulness of those doctrines required for our salvation. And they are taught plainly and simply so that even children can learn the ways of salvation and exaltation” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 4; or [Ensign, Nov. 1986, 6](#)).

- G. How has the Book of Mormon increased your understanding of important gospel doctrines?

## ***Testimony***

- H. Why is the Book of Mormon fundamental to a testimony of the restored gospel?
- I. What blessings come to those who receive a testimony of the Book of Mormon and follow its teachings? What must we do to gain a testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon? (See [Moroni 10:3-5](#).)

How have you come to know that the Book of Mormon is true?

## 2. Many witnesses have testified of the Book of Mormon.

- A. Why was it important to have witnesses of the gold plates? (See [Ether 5:2-4](#).) How do you think having additional witnesses helped the Prophet Joseph Smith?
- B. What other witnesses do we have that the Book of Mormon is true?

## 3. The Book of Mormon was written for our day.

Although the Book of Mormon is an ancient document, it was written and preserved for our day ([2 Nephi 25:21-22](#); [2 Nephi 27:22](#); [Mormon 8:34-35](#); [Moroni 1:4](#)).

- A. Let's read [Mormon 8:26-41](#). These verses contain a prophecy about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. What conditions did Moroni foresee would exist in the world when the Book of Mormon was again brought forth? How are these conditions evident in the world today?

- (1) "The power of God shall be denied" ([verse 28](#)).
- (2) "There shall be great pollutions upon the face of the earth" ([verse 31](#)).
- (3) People will "lift themselves up in the pride of their hearts" ([verse 36](#)).
- (4) People will "love money ... more than [they] love the poor and the needy" ([verse 37](#)).
- (5) People will be "ashamed to take upon [themselves] the name of Christ" ([verse 38](#)).

- B. In what ways can the teachings of ancient prophets be a source of help to us? How might knowing that the Book of Mormon was written for our day influence the way we study it? (See [1 Nephi 19:23](#).)



President Benson taught: "The Book of Mormon ... was written for our day. The Nephites never had the book; neither did the Lamanites of ancient times. It was meant for us. ... Each of the major writers of the Book of Mormon testified that he wrote for future generations. ... If they saw our day and chose those things which would be of greatest worth to us, is not that how we should study the Book of Mormon? We should constantly ask ourselves, 'Why did the Lord inspire Mormon (or Moroni or Alma) to include that in his record? What lesson can I learn from that to help me live in this day and age?' " (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 5; or [Ensign, Nov. 1986, 6](#)).

## 4. The Book of Mormon can bring us nearer to God.

Let's read again the sixth paragraph of the introduction to the Book of Mormon.

- A. What are precepts? (Commandments or principles.) How can the precepts of the Book of Mormon bring us nearer to God?
- B. If we do not study the Book of Mormon, what will be the consequences to us, individually and as a church? (See [D&C 84:54-58](#).)



- C. What changes and blessings have come into your life when you have studied and pondered the Book of Mormon regularly?

President Ezra Taft Benson:

“The moment you begin a serious study of [the Book of Mormon, you] will find greater power to resist temptation. You will find the power to avoid deception. You will find the power to stay on the strait and narrow path. ... When you begin to hunger and thirst after those words, you will find life in greater and greater abundance” (in Conference Report, Oct.

1986, 6; or [Ensign, Nov. 1986, 7](#)).

We can experience the fulfillment of these promises for ourselves as we study the Book of Mormon this year.

## 5. The importance of the Book of Mormon in the Restoration of the gospel

Temple work for the dead begins.
The Melchizedek Priesthood is restored.
Apostles are called.
Joseph Smith receives the First Vision.
The Church is organized.
The Book of Mormon comes forth.

Identify the order in which these events occurred. Then, let's read the following comment by President Ezra Taft Benson:



“A ... powerful testimony to the importance of the Book of Mormon is to note where the Lord placed its coming forth in the timetable of the unfolding Restoration. The only thing that preceded it was the First Vision. ...

“Think of that in terms of what it implies. The coming forth of the Book of Mormon preceded the restoration of the

priesthood. It was published just a few days before the Church was organized. The Saints were given the Book of Mormon to read before they were given the revelations outlining such great doctrines as the three degrees of glory, celestial marriage, or work for the dead. It came before priesthood quorums and Church organization. Doesn't this tell us something about how the Lord views this sacred work?" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 3; or [Ensign, Nov. 1986, 4](#)).

## **6. Sharing the Book of Mormon**

Our class goal this year should be to share the Book of Mormon with nonmember friends and acquaintances. Lets each give a copy to at least one friend or acquaintance during the year.

As you all have the opportunity to share the Book of Mormon with nonmember friends and acquaintances, I would like if we could all briefly describe the experience, that each of you has.