

Moroni's Admonition



The Witness and Warning of a Prophet,
Speaking Directly To Us
of Our Day, Our Nation
and Our Church



All Latter-Day Saints are familiar with the ubiquitous image of the Angel Moroni, which is found on many temples, and whose image adorns church manuals, tie tacks, mission logos, and every kind of product made for LDS people. But few really understand the great symbolism that this image holds, and still fewer remember the words and warnings given by this great prophet. In this booklet we will look not only at what the image of Moroni means symbolically, but also what he said, what he stood for when he was on the earth, and what he still stands for.

The Angel Moroni's Symbolism

The usual image depicts Moroni triumphant, standing atop a globe, representing the admonition to preach the gospel to all corners of the earth. He is often depicted clutching the Golden plates or a scroll representing the Book of Mormon. The trumpet symbolizes Moroni's appearance as a herald of the restoration of the Gospel. The image of Moroni on a temple generally faces east, or west, in accordance with the New Testament prophecy of the Second Coming: "For as the light cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."¹

Moroni is also depicted holding a trumpet because of the day he appeared. Moroni appeared on Rosh Hashanah, a biblical and Jewish holiday² also called the feast of trumpets.³ This day is symbolic of renewal, rebirth, repentance, and the beginning of a new year. Moroni also commanded Joseph Smith to meet with him "at the end of each year" and Joseph Smith said: "I went at the end of each year, and at each time I found the same messenger there, and received instruction and intelligence from him..."⁴ This may

¹ Matt. 24:27

² Lev. 23:24

³ Journal of Book of Mormon Studies: Vol. 2, Issue 2, pp: 110-120, 1993

⁴ JS Hist 1:54

seem puzzling because the day appointed in 1827 was September 22nd. This is not the time when we celebrate new year according to our calendar, but it is the time that Moroni recognized as the new year, or "the end of each year." This is because Rosh Hashanah is the new year in the ancient Hebrew calendar.

Biblical references and interpretation by scholars and Jewish sages through the centuries looked to Rosh Hashanah as the day God would remember his covenants with Israel to bring them back from exile. On this day ritual trumpet blasts signify the issuance of revelation and a call for Israel to gather for God's word of redemption. Set at the time of Israel's final agricultural harvest, the day also symbolizes the Lord's final harvest of souls. Furthermore, it initiates the completion of the Lord's time periods, the Days of Awe, and signifies the last time to prepare for final judgment and the Messianic Age, or millennium. The coming forth of the Book of Mormon, the restoration of the Priesthood, and the literal gathering of Israel, are in fulfillment of these prophecies.



In the book of Revelation, John saw Moroni coming with the book of Mormon to usher in the restoration of the Gospel, saying: "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come!"⁵

⁵ Rev. 14:6-7

Moroni is truly a significant symbol of the latter days, and the final gathering of Israel, but in order to truly understand what Moroni stands for, we must read the words he wrote for us.

Moroni's Admonition

Moroni is an interesting figure because he is not only an ancient prophet, he is a modern prophet and witness as well. Much like John on the isle of Patmos when the book of Revelation was written, Moroni was not able to write for the people of his own day. They were scattered or exterminated, and full of apostasy. Moroni was not a prophet called to preach to the Lamanites or the Nephites, he was called and commissioned to write prophetically to us. Moroni spent much of his life alone and in hiding, and the Book of Mormon was his labor of love to complete, and bury, so that one day we could have it. He wrote specifically to us, and he was granted visions of our day by God so that he could know what we need to know. Thus he was empowered to address our most pressing needs. It is only right therefore that we read his words as though he is writing directly to us, for he is. Let us look at exactly what he said of us and our day. He said we need to repent. This need not be to our condemnation if we will simply repent, and return to God. So let us look carefully at the warnings given so that we can escape this awful condemnation.



"Behold, the Lord hath shown unto me great and marvelous things concerning that which must shortly come, at that day when these things shall come forth among you.

35 Behold, I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not. But behold, Jesus Christ hath shown you unto me, and I know your doing.

36 And I know that ye do walk in the pride of your hearts; and there are none save a few only who do not lift themselves up in the pride of their hearts, unto the wearing of very fine apparel, unto

envying, and strifes, and malice, and persecutions, and all manner of iniquities; and your churches, yea, even every one, have become polluted because of the pride of your hearts.

37 For behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your churches, more than ye love the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted.

38 O ye pollutions, ye hypocrites, ye teachers, who sell yourselves for that which will canker, why have ye polluted the holy church of God? Why are ye ashamed to take upon you the name of Christ? Why do ye not think that greater is the value of an endless happiness than that misery which never dies—because of the praise of the world?

39 Why do ye adorn yourselves with that which hath no life, and yet suffer the hungry, and the needy, and the naked, and the sick and the afflicted to pass by you, and notice them not?

40 Yea, why do ye build up your secret abominations to get gain, and cause that widows should mourn before the Lord, and also orphans to mourn before the Lord, and also the blood of their fathers and their husbands to cry unto the Lord from the ground, for vengeance upon your heads?

41 Behold, the sword of vengeance hangeth over you; and the time soon cometh that he avengeth the blood of the saints upon you, for he will not suffer their cries any longer."⁶

We may not at first be willing to admit these words apply to us. But Moroni stated that all "[our] churches, yea, even every one, have become polluted." Are we part of "everyone"? Moroni says that he is speaking directly to those who would have his words. And who has his words? Only the Latter-Day Saints.⁷ He saw us, and he knew our doings, and he wrote these warnings out of love for us.

⁶ Morm. 8:34-41

⁷ L. Tom Perry confirmed that these words refer directly to the church. See Conf. Report *Ensign*, Nov, 1992.

It is a truth of human nature, or an attribute of the natural man, to revolt at being called to repentance. To admit fault and error is the essence of humility and the reason why one must be humble as a child to enter into the kingdom of heaven.⁸ for all men are wrong, and all men are in error in their lives, and it is only by the great mercy of repentance that we can take upon us the atonement of Christ and be transformed into the Sons of God.

As you read this call to repentance, I pray you will have the humility to read it in the spirit it was given, the spirit of love.

Our time is one of apostasy, and great wickedness. All of the holy Prophets since the world began have spoken of our day as both great and terrible, when the love of many would wax cold, and yet the saints would be gathered for the last time.. A time when the wicked will be thrust down, and Christ will come in his glory to reign personally upon the earth. These prophecies are true, and as the Lord lives will all be brought to pass.

What can we do? You and I each have a role to play, and a responsibility to fulfill, in this time of both great promise and great peril! It is no accident that you and I are on the earth at this time. And we were all sent here with a calling and a mission to perform. These are days that will try and temper the Latter-Day Saints. If we are to be refined as pure silver in this refiner's fire, we must each seek and obtain the spirit to be our constant companion. If we blindly follow our church leaders, and accept lesser ordinances than the original form these we revealed by God, we will receive lesser blessings, diminished understanding, and ultimately be cut off from God.

Isaiah warned us that the new and everlasting covenant would be broken, and our temples defiled by a change in the ordinances in our dispensation: "The earth also is defiled under the

⁸ Matt. 18:3

inhabitants thereof, because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant."⁹ The prophet, Joseph Fielding Smith, made it clear that this prophecy refers to us, and to our dispensation and our temples when he said in reference to this verse: "It is the Latter-Day Saints who have transgressed the Laws, changed the ordinances, and broken the everlasting covenant"¹⁰

Likewise, Joseph Smith, referring to the loss of priesthood by those who changed the ordinances in the great apostasy: "If there is no change of ordinances, there is no change of priesthood."¹¹ Thus if we change the ordinances we also change their effectiveness, legitimacy, and the validity of our priesthood.

So the question is: do these prophecies refer to us? have we changed the ordinances? The answer is yes. Prophets throughout this dispensation have applied these prophecies to the Latter-Day Saints, and anyone who has been to the temple knows, the ordinances are often changed, some even abandoned altogether.

Referring to our day, Moroni also explained that these corruptions would come because of greed and secret combinations. He spoke of a "secret combination which *shall* be among you...."¹² The motivation of this destructive and murderous combination, he said, would be "to get power and gain."¹³ Their aim would be "to overthrow the freedom of all lands, nations, and countries."¹⁴ Apparently, this warning has now become reality. President Ezra Taft Benson declared, "A secret combination that seeks to overthrow the freedom of all lands, nations, and countries is

⁹ Isa 24:5

¹⁰ Deseret News, Oct 17, 1936

¹¹ *Teachings of the prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 158

¹² Ether 8:24

¹³ Ether 8:23

¹⁴ Ether 8:25

increasing in its evil influence and control over America and the entire world."¹⁵

Again we are likely to think that this warning is for those who are not members of the church, but notice that Moroni warns us that this secret combination "Shall be among *you*" He explicitly states that he is speaking to the members of the church in the latter-days when he said "Why have ye polluted the Holy Church of God?" Which church of all the churches is "the Holy Church of God?" If we believe that the Church was divinely restored it can only be us, and Moroni asks us: "Why have ye polluted the holy Church of God?"¹⁶ how can we answer?

Moroni also condemned us for loving our beautiful buildings more than the poor, with this warning in mind , it is truly ironic that a gold plated statue of this man appears atop so many temples. Surely he saw these golden images of himself decorating temples while the sacred ordinances within those temples are changed and corrupted, and the saints remain scattered across the earth, and millions around the world starve and die in needless wars! Today the church is spending less than 1% of its revenue on humanitarian causes, while building a 5 billion dollar shopping mall in downtown Salt Lake City. Is it any wonder that Moroni saw our day, our corruptions, and warned us to repent?

Moroni is warning us to repent and become a Zion people, but all around us members of the church are living no differently than those in Babylon. Do we keep the Sabbath? Do we live the commandments? In many ways the members of the church do not. And look at the church itself, Moroni warned us that even the church itself was polluted. The Church, in order to be on good terms with the world, has repeatedly compromised the truth in order to suit the expectations of the wicked. This has resulted in changes to our sacred temple ceremonies and covenants to avoid

¹⁵ Ezra Taft Benson, Ensign, Nov. 1988, p. 87

¹⁶ Morm. 8:38

lawsuits and satisfy the government and the end of gathering our people to Zion, the end of the united order, which is an essential component of any Zion society, and in a hundred other small concessions we have made to become one with the world. By making our alliance with Babylon, rather than living consecration and keeping our covenants, we have subjected ourselves to this secret combination.

We must repent, individually, and as a people. Our church has been corrupted, our governments have become corrupted, and our leaders are in many instances leading us astray. These warnings from Moroni are clearly given to us so that we can awake to our awful situation and repent, before it is too late.

It is not too late for us to begin again to obey all of Heavenly Father's commandments. As Moroni, Isaiah, and Nephi,¹⁷ prophesied there are secret combinations which have usurped authority over our government and our church, but we need not fear what man can do. We should instead fear God, and obey his commandments.

We can keep the commandments by seeking the charity and humility not to judge our fellowman, but to honor every man in his station. The General Authorities of the Church teach many truths, do according to these teachings, and offer them the honor of their station, but do not do the evils that they do, such as changing God's ordinances, casting out those who disagree with them, and denying the commandments of God, such as consecration, and gathering. Instead be the friend of every man, woman, and child in the whole world. Then seek to live the principles of the fullness of the Gospel by consecrating your life to God. Investigate the truth with diligence, read the scriptures, and seek the spirit to guide you. If you will do these things you will know for yourself what God wants you to do, and will be able to follow him home.

¹⁷ 2 Nephi 26:20-22

It is my prayer that we will all diligently follow Christ rather than man, so that we may all sit down together in the glorious day that never ends, with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and our God. Amen

"Behold I speak unto you as if ye were present, and yet ye are not...

-Moroni (in Morm.

8:35)

Moroni wrote over fifteen hundred years ago, and yet he wrote directly to us and prophesied of our day. All members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints should give careful consideration to his words.

This booklet contains the words of Moroni, and his prophecy about what will befall the church in the latter days, therefore let us all heed his admonition to repentance that when the Savior comes we will be "brought forth triumphant through the air, to meet [him] before the pleasing bar of the great Jehovah, the Eternal Judge of both quick and dead. Amen." (The last words of Moroni, in the last verse of the book of Mormon, Moroni 10:34)

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May God bless you as you search to know Him.

