

Lesson Highlights

- Mormon explains how to judge between good and evil.
- Mormon explains the importance of faith, hope, and charity.
- Mormon teaches that little children are saved through Christ's Atonement.
- The Holy Ghost testifies of all truth. Spiritual gifts follow those who come unto Christ.

A study of this lesson will help us know how to judge between good and evil and how to receive a testimony of the gospel and the Book of Mormon.

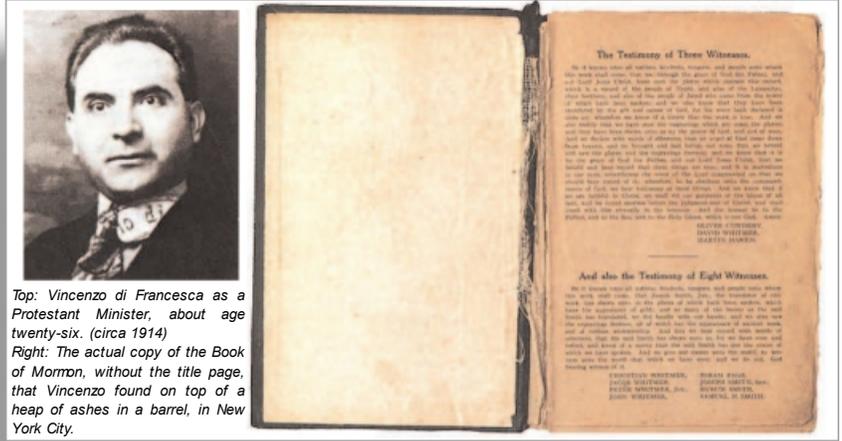
Next Week

2009 Curriculum
 Doctrine & Covenants/
 Church History
 #1 Introduction

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Introduction

One cold day in February 1910, Vincenzo di Francesca, a Protestant minister, came across a weather-beaten copy of a religious book with no title page. Curious, he wrapped the book in newspaper and took it with him. At home he cleaned and read the book. "I read and reread, twice and twice again, and I found it fit to say that the book was a fifth gospel of the Redeemer," he said.



Top: Vincenzo di Francesca as a Protestant Minister, about age twenty-six. (circa 1914)
 Right: The actual copy of the Book of Mormon, without the title page, that Vincenzo found on top of a heap of ashes in a barrel, in New York City.

The book he had found was the Book of Mormon. When he had read it, he followed the admonition in Moroni 10:4. "At the end of the day, I locked the door of my room, knelt with the book in my hands, and read chapter ten of the book of Moroni. I prayed to God, the Eternal Father, in the name of his son, Jesus Christ, to tell me if the book were of God, if it were good and true, and if I should mix its words with the words of the four gospels in my preaching. "I felt my body become cold as the wind from the sea. Then my heart began to palpitate, and a feeling of gladness, as of finding something precious and extraordinary, bore consolation to my soul and left me with a joy that human language cannot find words to describe. I had received the assurance that God had answered my prayer and that the book was of greatest benefit to me and to all who would listen to its words."

The testimony Vincenzo di Francesca received at this time helped him through many difficult experiences. He was stripped of his position as a minister because he taught from the Book of Mormon. It was 1930 before he learned the name of the book and the name of the Church that published it. Because of war and other political problems, another 21 years passed before he was able to be baptized. Throughout these difficulties, he maintained a strong testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. (See Vincenzo di Francesca, "I Will Not Burn the Book!" Ensign, Jan. 1988, 18-21.)

This lesson discusses the final chapters of the Book of Mormon. Included in these writings are Moroni's instructions about how each of us can gain a personal testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon and the standard we should apply to judge between good and evil.

Mormon explained how to judge between good and evil.

Moroni 7 contains the words of Mormon, as recorded by his son Moroni.

Moroni 7:3 Mormon referred to the members of the Church as "peaceable followers of Christ".

Moroni 7:4-5 The basis of Mormon's judgment about the Church members was his observation of how they dealt with others in daily life and the works they performed.

We become "peaceable followers of Christ" by doing what the Savior would do if He were in our place. We know what He would do when we listen for and are guided by the companionship of the Holy Ghost.

Moroni 7:6-9 Mormon taught about the importance of having pure motives for doing good works if we wish to benefit from our works. If we have anything in our hearts other than pure motives (love of God and our fellowmen), our works will not enhance our rewards from Father.

The meaning of giving a gift or praying "with real intent" is to be free of hypocrisy and to realize that nothing is ours--it's all our Father's--and all we should want to do is to use what He gives us wisely and for the benefit of all.

Purifying our motives for doing good isn't easy. We must develop a strong testimony of the Savior and let the Spirit guide us daily to develop pure motives.

Moroni 7:12-19 Mormon teaches us how to discern good from evil.

We must ask ourselves:

- **Does** [this thing or this action] **invite me to love and serve God?**
- **Is** [this action] **inspired of God?**

Use these questions when you are evaluating whether a thing or action is good or evil.

Brother Larry E.

Dahl:

"The Savior said: "I will show unto them that faith, hope and charity bringeth unto me—the fountain of all righteousness" (Ether 12:28). The first principle of the gospel is not just "faith," but "faith in the Lord Jesus Christ" (Article of Faith 4). Similarly, we must obtain not just hope, but a "hope in Christ" (Jacob 2:19), a "hope of his glory" (Jacob 4:4), and "we should hope for our deliverance in him" (Alma 58:11). Likewise, by simple definition, charity is not just "love," but "the pure love of Christ" (Moroni 7:47)."

(“Faith, Hope, Charity,” Book of Mormon: The Keystone Scripture, 1988 Deseret Book Company)

It can be easier to judge whether or not something leads us toward God than it is to judge whether or not something leads us toward the devil. Satan's deceitful practices often encourage us to think that something is "not so bad"---that it is not really evil, even if it is not good. Anything that does not lead us toward God only leads us away from Him.

Moroni 7:14; see also **2 Nephi 15:20** Mormon cautioned the people to *"take heed...that ye do not judge that which is evil to be of God, or that which is good...to be of the devil"*. It doesn't take much thought about the society around us to confirm that we see this confusion of good and evil happening today.

Mormon explained the importance of faith, hope, and charity.

Moroni 7:20 Mormon asked, *"How is it possible that ye can lay hold upon every good thing?"*.

Moroni 7:21-26 He answered this question by teaching that *"All things which are good cometh of Christ,"* and we can *"lay hold"* on them by exercising faith in Him.

Think about blessings that have come to you or to others because of faith.

Moroni 7:28-30, 35-38 The relationship between faith and miracles is that faith must precede the miracle.

Moroni 7:37; see also **Ether 12:12, 18** It is necessary for faith to precede miracles. Why don't miracles alone provide a firm foundation for faith? **President Brigham Young** said, *"Miracles, or these extraordinary manifestations of the power of God, are not for the unbeliever; they are to console the Saints, and to strengthen and confirm the faith of those who love, fear, and serve God"* (Discourses of Brigham Young, sel. John A. Widtsoe [1941], 341).

Moroni 7:40-42 What is hope? What relationship exists between faith and hope?

Those questions were answered by **Elder Bruce R. McConkie** when he taught: *"As used in the revelations, hope is the desire of faithful people to gain eternal salvation in the kingdom of God hereafter. ...Faith and hope are inseparable. Hope enables [us] to have faith in*

Mormon teaches that little children are saved through Christ's Atonement.

This chapter contains a letter from Mormon to his son Moroni.

Moroni 8:8-9, 11, 19-20 Little children do not need baptism because *"they are not capable of committing sin"* and *"the curse of Adam"* was removed from them by Christ's atonement. Note that Mormon's teachings about little children also apply to *"all they that are without the law"* [Moroni 8:22], which refers to those who are mentally incapable of understanding the commandments and ordinances of the gospel.

Moroni 7:16, 18-19 We have been given an influence to help us judge good from evil. The *"Spirit of Christ"* or *"light of Christ"* is *"an uplifting, ennobling, persevering influence that comes upon mankind because of Jesus Christ"* (Bible Dictionary, "Light of Christ," 725). It is available to all people and can prepare a person to find truth and receive the Holy Ghost. In its role of helping us discern between right and wrong, the light of Christ is often called our conscience.

Consider the ways the light of Christ has helped you discern good from evil. How can you become more receptive to the guidance of the light of Christ?

the first instance and then because of faith that hope increases until salvation is gained" (Mormon Doctrine, 2nd ed. [1966], 365-66).

Moroni 7:43 We find here that meekness and lowliness of heart must precede faith and hope. Think about the reason this is true--Why must a person be *"meek, and lowly of heart"* to have true faith and hope? Could it be that we must be free of pride before we can truly accept the testimony of Christ?

Moroni 7:46-47 Mormon taught that in addition to faith and hope, we must have charity, which he defines as *"the pure love of Christ"*.

Moroni 7:45 Characteristics of charity include longsuffering, kind, envieth not, humble, unselfish, tolerant, pure in thought, joyful in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, and endureth all things.

Reflect on how experiences in your life have confirmed that *"charity never faileth"*.

Moroni 10:20-21 We increase our faith and hope as we increase our testimony of Christ. The challenge is to become filled with the pure love of Christ by becoming so close to the Savior that we become like Him in our thoughts, feelings, and desires. We must strive to possess faith, hope, and charity because it is not easy given our carnal natures--we must desire those virtues fervently and make them a daily priority.

Moroni 8:20, 22-23 The baptism of little children is *"mockery before God"* because it denies the power of the Savior's redemption and his mercy. Small children cannot repent because they are not accountable and they are not under any condemnation.

Moroni 8:10, 24-26 Little children are saved because they are innocent and incapable of sinning. Those of us who have sinned can gain salvation through the Atonement of Christ by becoming like little children in their meekness, humility, submissiveness, and obedience to our Father's requirements.

The Holy Ghost testified of all truth. Spiritual gifts followed those who came unto Christ.

As the final chapter in the Book of Mormon, Moroni 10 contains Moroni's closing words.

Moroni 10:1 This chapter is addressed to Moroni's brethren, the Lamanites.

Moroni 10:2 Moroni closes with "a few words by way of exhortation". The word *exhort* means to advise or urge strongly.

Moroni exhorts his readers to:

- a) "Remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men" (verse 3).
- b) "Ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true" (verse 4).
- d) "Deny not the power of God" (verse 7).
- e) "Deny not the gifts of God" (verse 8).
"Remember that every good gift cometh of Christ" (verse 18).
- f) "Remember that [Christ] is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (verse 19).
- g) "Remember these things [that Moroni has written]" (verse 27).
- h) "Come unto Christ" (verse 30).

Think about it---have you gained a testimony that the Book of Mormon is the word of God?

Moroni 10:4-5 The role of the Holy Ghost in our gaining testimonies of spiritual things is clear: He will testify of the truth to us.

1 Corinthians 2:11; Alma 26:21-22; Moroni 10:6-7 We cannot gain our testimonies through our intellect alone because a testimony does not just encompass knowledge--we must also have faith in that which we do not know but which we must accept on faith. We must have faith that the teachings of the scriptures, the prophets, and the Holy Ghost are true.

Moroni 10:7 Moroni exhorted us to "deny not the power of God".

In what ways might we sometimes deny God's power? **Elder Jeffrey R. Holland** taught:

Conclusion

President Gordon B. Hinckley said: "I would like to urge every man and woman ... and every boy and girl who is old enough to read to again read the Book of Mormon during this coming year. ... There is nothing we could do of greater importance than to have fortified in our individual lives an unshakable conviction that Jesus is the Christ, the Living Son of the Living God. ... That is the purpose of the coming forth of this remarkable and wonderful book" (in *Church News*, 4 May 1996, 2).

President Joseph Fielding Smith said: "No member of this Church can stand approved in the presence of God who has not seriously and carefully read the Book of Mormon" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1961, 18).

President Ezra Taft Benson said: "The Book of Mormon is studied in our Sunday School and seminary classes every fourth year. This four-year pattern, however, must not be followed by Church members in their personal and family study. We need to read daily from the pages of the book that will get a man 'nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book' (*History of the Church*, 4:461)" (in Conference Report, Oct. 1988, 3; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1988, 4).

President Benson also said: "Every Latter-day Saint should make the study of this book a lifetime pursuit" (in Conference Report, Apr. 1975, 97; or *Ensign*, May 1975, 65).

Gospel Doctrine Notebook

Record your thoughts on the teachings and events discussed in this lesson.

- How can you become more receptive to the guidance of the light of Christ?
- What are the blessings that have come to you because of faith?
- How have experiences in your life confirmed that "charity never faileth"?
- What are some ways in which this year's study of the Book of Mormon has helped you come unto Christ?

*"The Savior said, 'Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you....Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid' (John 14:27). 'I submit to you, that may be one of the Savior's commandments that is, even in the hearts of otherwise faithful Latter-day Saints, almost universally disobeyed; and yet I wonder whether our resistance to this invitation could be any more grievous to the Lord's merciful heart. I can tell you this as a parent: as concerned as I would be if somewhere in their lives one of my children were seriously troubled or unhappy or disobedient, nevertheless I would be infinitely more devastated if I felt that at such a time that child could not trust me to help or thought his or her interest was unimportant to me or unsafe in my care. In that same spirit, I am convinced that none of us can appreciate how deeply it wounds the loving heart of the Savior of the world when he finds that his people do not feel confident in his care or secure in his hands or trust in his commandments'" ("Come unto Me," *Ensign*, Apr. 1998, 19).*

Moroni 10:8-19 Moroni taught about spiritual gifts, saying that they are numerous, they come from God, they can be administered in different ways, they are given by the Spirit, and they are beneficial to men.

D&C 46:11-12 We each receive different gifts from God so that we may share our gifts with others, they may share theirs with us, and we may all be profited thereby. Consider what you have learned and felt as you have pondered the messages of the Book of Mormon.

Moroni 10:30, 32 Moroni's exhortation to "come unto Christ" reflects the entire message of the Book of Mormon, which is another testament of Jesus Christ.