

What the Book of Mormon itself says about its Origin

by Bruce F. Levi, ICARE Ministries

A request, exhortation, or challenge is often given by missionaries of the LDS Church to pray to God about the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon. This challenge is based on a passage in the Book of Mormon. It is found in the book of Moroni, chapter 10, verse 4, page 529.

It seems obvious, however, that the Book of Mormon itself has already answered this question for us well before Moroni, 10:4. Let us take a look at what the writers in the Book of Mormon have to say about the origin of the Book of Mormon. I have underlined the salient words.

1. Moroni 10:1 “Now I, Moroni, write somewhat as seemeth me good...”

This statement is found on the same page, just a few verses above, where Moroni’s exhortation to pray about the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon is found. Moroni, himself, has already answered the question. Moron wrote words that seemed good to him, not what he was inspired by God to write. This casts doubt even on the validity of the exhortation itself.

2. Title Page of the Book of Mormon “And now, if there are faults they are the mistakes of man...”

Right there on its own title page we are alerted to the fact that the book contains, or may contain, “faults” and “mistakes of men.”

3. 1 Nephi 1:3 “...and I make it according to my knowledge.”

Here at the beginning of the narrative of the Book of Mormon, we are told by Nephi that he wrote a “record of my proceedings.” He states that he made it according to his own knowledge, and not that he wrote according to the inspiration of God.

4. 1 Nephi 19:6 “...I do not write anything upon plates save it be that I think it be sacred. And now, if I do err, even did they err of old; not that I would excuse myself because of other men, but because of the weakness which is in me, according to the flesh, I would excuse myself.”

This is quite a confession! Nephi states first that he writes only what he thinks is sacred, and not anything which God has told him is sacred. Then he admits to error in his writings, just as there was error in past writings, and excuses his error by the weakness of his own flesh.

5. Jacob 1:2 “And he [Nephi] gave me, Jacob, a commandment that I should write upon these plates a few of the things which I considered to be most precious...”

We see here that Jacob is writing because Nephi told him to write the things that he (Jacob) considered to be most precious. There is not even a hint here that Jacob was concerned about what God wanted him to write.

6. Jacob 7:26 “I have written according to the best of my knowledge.”

Jacob wrote this near the end of his life. So, he is summarizing what he has written. He says it is according to the best of his own knowledge, but does not say that any of it is according the inspiration of God.

7. Mormon 8:1 “I have but few things to write, which things I have been commanded by my father [Moroni].”

Moroni says that his writings are what his father, Mormon, told him to write, not what God told him to write.

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8. Ether 5:1 “I, Moroni, have written the words which were commanded me, according to my memory” We already saw above in #7 that Moroni was told what to write by his father. Moroni now states this same thing about the book of Ether. Moroni writes what his father, Mormon, told him to, not what God told him to write.

9. Moroni 1:4 “Wherefore, I write a few more things, contrary to that which I had supposed [as he stated in verse one]; 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...”

We see here that Moroni has already changed his mind about what to write from verse one to verse. His stated uncertainty appears to be the reason he then says about his own writings, “that perhaps they may be of worth...” The word suppose means “to lay down tentatively as a hypothesis” (Webster’s). **Are you willing to base your eternal destiny on a mere hypothesis?**

James admonishes us to ask God for wisdom in James 1:5. The Greek word that is translated wisdom means “practical skill or acumen, thoughtfulness and being discreet and cautious” (Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible).

After applying practical skill and acumen in a thoughtful, discreet and cautious manner, here is the conclusion. Book of Mormon writers, themselves tell us the origin of the Book of Mormon with their use of such words as: seemeth, faults, mistakes, suppose, my knowledge [as opposed to God’s knowledge], err, according to my memory, commanded by my father, supposed, and perhaps. The exhortation in Moroni 10:4 is an invalid one. It wants us to ask God a question to which the answer has already been given. The writers, themselves show that the Book of Mormon is of human origin.

Do you really want to rely on something of human origin when it comes to your eternal salvation?