



KnowWhy #494
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The Bible and the Book of Mormon Testify of Christ by Greg K. Olsen

WHY IS THE BOOK OF MORMON “ANOTHER TESTAMENT OF JESUS CHRIST”?

“And that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together, unto the confounding of false doctrines and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins.”

2 Nephi 3:12

THE KNOW

In 1982, the phrase “Another Testament of Jesus Christ” was added as a subtitle to the Book of Mormon.¹ Some may wonder what it means that the Book of Mormon is “another testament” and why this additional description is so important. The following summaries provide several different ways to understand the meaning and purpose of this added subtitle.

Another Covenant

Most readers are likely familiar with the word *testament* as found in the Old and New Testaments of the

Bible. It comes from the Latin word *testamentum*, and in archaic English it meant “covenant.”² Just as the Old and New Testaments are records of God’s covenant relationship with His people in the Old World, the Book of Mormon is a record of God’s covenant with a branch of Israel in the New World.

The Lord established this covenant with the Book of Mormon’s founding prophets, Lehi and Nephi.³ He promised temporal and spiritual blessings to them and their posterity if they would obey His holy commandments, as well as curses if they disobeyed.⁴ The Book of Mormon clearly prophesies that this

covenant would be renewed in the latter-days as scattered Israel is gathered again.⁵

Another Sign

A *testament* can also be “something that serves as a sign or evidence of a specified fact.”⁶ This definition perfectly fits the meaning and purpose of the Book of Mormon’s added subtitle. For instance, the Title Page of the Book of Mormon declares that it was written “to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ.” Moreover, the Savior Himself spoke of the Book of Mormon as a type of proof or evidence. He explained that it would “show forth his power unto the Gentiles” and that it would “be a sign unto them” that the gathering of Israel had already begun to take place (3 Nephi 21:6–7).⁷

Another Scripture

Finally, the phrase “Another Testament” signals additional scripture. Millions of people throughout the world are familiar with the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. With its added subtitle, the Book of Mormon takes its place alongside them as an additional witness of Jesus Christ. The mutually supportive relationship between these volumes of holy scripture is explained in the Lord’s words to Joseph who was sold into Egypt, as recorded by the prophet Lehi:

... and that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins [the Book of Mormon], and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah [the Bible], shall grow together, unto the confounding of false doctrines and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, and bringing them to the knowledge of their fathers in the latter days, and also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord. (2 Nephi 3:12)

THE WHY

One reason the Book of Mormon’s status as another testament is important is because it helps overcome the effects of the Great Apostasy. The prophet Nephi prophesied that wicked men would pervert the ways of the Lord, “for behold, they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also *many covenants* of the Lord

have they taken away” (1 Nephi 13:26; emphasis added).⁸ For this reason, much of the world today has forgotten or no longer understands the nature of God’s covenants with His people. The Book of Mormon clearly explains what these covenants are, as well as the priesthood ordinances and authority necessary to enter into them.⁹

In addition, many people are losing their faith in God altogether, despite the fact that many of His true teachings are preserved in the Bible. The Book of Mormon provides a powerful and persuasive witness to reaffirm the reality and divinity of Jesus Christ in these latter days. This comes from the testimony of numerous Book of Mormon prophets as well as the book’s account of Christ’s personal, resurrected ministry in the Americas.¹⁰ This additional witness of Christ is sorely needed in a world that is increasingly distrustful and even hostile toward religious beliefs and organizations.¹¹

As a volume of scripture, the Book of Mormon clarifies, supports, and sustains the teachings found in the Old and New Testaments. As explained by Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, “Continuing revelation does not demean or discredit existing revelation. The Old Testament does not lose its value in our eyes when we are introduced to the New Testament, and the New Testament is only enhanced when we read the Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ.”¹²

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has even provided an extensive system of cross references between these works to help readers understand their unified message. Elder Boyd K. Packer described these scriptures as being “woven together in such a way that as you pore over one you are drawn to the other; as you learn from one you are enlightened by the other.”¹³

As a record of God’s covenants, as a sign of God’s power, and as a volume of holy scripture, the Book of Mormon rightfully stands alongside the Bible as another testament of Jesus Christ. Its added subtitle helps clarify to the world what the Book of Mormon truly is and why it is so important. All who look upon its title can now more clearly discern its Christ-centered focus and purpose.

FURTHER READING

Jeffrey R. Holland, “[‘My Words ... Never Cease’](#),” *Ensign*, May 2008, online at lds.org.

Boyd K. Packer, “[‘The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ—Plain and Precious Things’](#),” *Ensign*, May 2005, online at lds.org.

Boyd K. Packer, “[‘Scriptures’](#),” *Ensign*, November 1982, online at lds.org.

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NOTES

1. See “[‘Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ’](#)” online at mormonnewsroom.org. See also, Boyd K. Packer, “[‘Scriptures’](#),” *Ensign*, November 1982, online at lds.org.
2. See OED online, s.v. “testament,” online at oed.com, accessed October 16, 2018.
3. See [1 Nephi 2:20–24](#); [2 Nephi 1:20](#).
4. See Book of Mormon Central, “[‘What does it Mean to Prosper in the Land?’](#) (Alma 9:13),” *KnoWhy* 116 (June 7, 2016); Book of Mormon Central, “[‘How Is Prosperity Defined in Nephi’s Small Plates?’](#) (Words of Mormon 1:6),” *KnoWhy* 383 (November 21, 2017).
5. See [2 Nephi 25:17](#); [2 Nephi 29:1](#); [Jacob 6:2](#).
6. Oxford Living Dictionaries (English), s.v. “[testament](#),” online at en.oxforddictionaries.com.
7. For more on the Book of Mormon’s role as a sign of Israel’s gathering, see Book of Mormon Central, “[‘Why is the Book of Mormon So Important to the Restoration?’](#) (Mormon 9:36),” *KnoWhy* 281 (March 1, 2017).
8. See Book of Mormon Central, “[‘Were Plain and Precious Doctrines Lost?’](#) (1 Nephi 13:26),” *KnoWhy* 15 (January 20, 2016).
9. See Book of Mormon Central, “[‘What Does the Book of Mormon Teach about the Priesthood?’](#) (Mosiah 23:17),” *KnoWhy* 289 (March 20, 2017).
10. See Book of Mormon Central, “[‘Why Is 3 Nephi Sometimes Called the ‘Fifth Gospel?’](#) (3 Nephi 27:21),” *KnoWhy* 222 (November 2, 2016).
11. See “[‘Religious Freedom’](#),” online at lds.org.
12. Jeffrey R. Holland, “[‘My Words ... Never Cease’](#),” *Ensign*, May 2008, online at lds.org.
13. Packer, “[‘Scriptures’](#),” online at lds.org.