

## Engaging Gospel Doctrine (Episode 218)

### LESSON 44: MORMON 7-9

*“I Speak Unto You As If Ye Were Present”*

Hook	<p>After Mormon’s final plea to the House of Israel, Moroni takes over the record. His despair and loneliness is palpable and touching in the beginning of Mormon 8. There are several introspection inciting gems in these chapters about weakness, pride, caring for the needy, and theological points about the nature of God and judgment.</p> <p>Moroni’s main points present more of a challenge however. These chapters are filled with judgments and warnings. He condemns latter day Churches and those who do not believe in Christ or miracles. Who makes up the audience for these warnings? What role did Joseph’s environment play in the way these passages are phrased? What lessons can we learn from the final Book of Mormon prophet’s inaugural words?</p>
Goal	
Overview	<p>7 Mormon’s farewell message to the House of Israel              8:1-5 Moroni’s shocked and lonely acceptance of record keeping responsibilities              8:6-12 Moroni recounts the end of the Nephites              8:13-41 Prophecies about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon in the midst of wickedness              9: Moroni admonishes those who do not believe</p>
Main Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mormon’s farewell (close reading of Mormon 7)</li> <li>• Discussion of “baptism by fire and by the Holy Ghost” (See quotes below)</li> <li>• Introduction to Moroni (his emotional state in Moroni 8, timeline, feelings of inadequacy and inability to fill his father’s role but also loyalty, overview of his contributions. Note the prophetic/scriptural technique of speaking to us directly!)</li> <li>• Moroni writes Mormon 8-9, Ether 5, 12, and Moroni 1, 10. These chapters and his commentary in Ether express his own thoughts. How inadequate he felt is revealed by how many sources he packs into his portion of the Book of Mormon. He abridges Ether because Mormon promised it would be done, Moroni 2-6 summarize Church organization, and Moroni 7-9 contain letters from his dad. We have here a reluctant editor acting out of love and loyalty to his father but acutely feeling his insecurity and shortcomings (watch for how often he brings up the idea of weakness and limitations of language).</li> <li>• Moroni’s comments on the wickedness of the latter days, focus on the vivid imagery regarding wealth and caring for the poor (37-40; if listeners think we are harping on this point, we are just being representative. Don’t be turned off by the name of this site; it just compiles pertinent scriptures) <a href="http://mormonliberals.org/scriptures-say-what/">http://mormonliberals.org/scriptures-say-what/</a></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insights about judgment: 9:4-6, this is a very important insight. We end up where we are most comfortable. *We* determine where we end up, and in a way every day is judgment because of the peace we feel.</li> <li>• I am busting out a fantasy novel quote (see below). You don't need to share this, but bear with me.</li> <li>• Close reading of Moroni 9, use this as a launching point for a discussion regarding belief .</li> <li>• Insights about God: (9:1-20)</li> <li>• What do we make of the treatment of miracles in these chapters?</li> </ul>
Other Comments/ Discussion Starters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Bible, Book of Mormon, and belief (7:8-9)</li> <li>• 7:10 DNA issue.</li> <li>• 9:10 “Imagined up unto yourselves a God” what is the relationship between the reality of God and our understanding of God?</li> <li>• Earth “rolled together as a scroll” (9:1) Does this presuppose the earth is flat? ☺ The imagery comes from Isaiah 34:4 and Revelation 6:14.</li> <li>• “judgment bar” (9:13) Interestingly this only appears in the Book of Mormon. The NT has “judgment seat”</li> <li>• Reformed Egyptian and Hebrew! (9:32-34)</li> </ul>
Concluding Points	

### **Baptism by Fire and by the Holy Ghost**

- Parley P. Pratt: “[A person is] an intelligent being, in the Image of God, possessing every organ, attribute, sense, sympathy, and affection that is possessed by God Himself. But these are possessed by man, in his rudimental state, in a subordinate sense of the word. Or, in other words, these attributes are in embryo, and are to be gradually developed. They resemble a bud, a germ, which gradually develops into a bloom and then, by progress, produces the mature fruit after its own kind. The Gift of the Holy Ghost adapts itself to all these organs or attributes. It quickens all the intellectual faculties, increases, enlarges, expands and purifies all the natural passions and affections and adapts them by the gift of wisdom, to their lawful use. It inspires virtue, kindness, goodness, tenderness, gentleness and charity. It develops beauty of person, form and features. It tends to give health, vigor, animation and social feeling. It invigorates all the faculties of the physical and intellectual man. It strengthens and gives tone to the nerves. In short, it is, as it were, marrow to the bone, joy to the heart, light to the eyes, music to the ears, and life to the whole being.  
In the presence of such persons (who have been thus affected by It), one feels to enjoy the light of their countenance, as the genial rays of a sunbeam. Their very atmosphere diffuses a thrill, a warm glow of pure gladness and sympathy of Spirit. No matter if the parties are strangers, entirely unknown to each other, each will be apt to remark in his own mind, and perhaps exclaim, when referring to the interview- "Oh, what an atmosphere encircles that stranger! How my heart thrilled with pure and holy feelings in

the presence of this person. What confidence and sympathy he inspired. His countenance and spirit gave me more assurance than a thousand written recommendations, or introductory letters." Such is the Gift of the Holy Ghost, and such are its operations, when received through the lawful channel—the Divine, Eternal Priesthood. (Parley P. Pratt, *Key to the Science of Theology*, pp. 101-103)"

- And stories of transformation: **Joseph F. Smith** "The feeling that came upon me was that of pure peace, of love and of light. I felt in my soul that if I had sinned—and surely I was not without sin—that it had been forgiven me; that I was indeed cleansed from sin; my heart was touched, and I felt that I would not injure the smallest insect beneath my feet. I felt as if I wanted to do good everywhere to everybody and to everything. I felt a newness of life, a newness of desire to that which was right. There was not one particle of desire for evil left in my soul. . . . Oh! that I could have kept that same spirit, that same earnest desire in my heart every moment of my life from that day to this. Yet many of us who have received that witness, that new birth, that change of heart, while we may have erred in judgment or have made many mistakes, and often perhaps come short of the true standard in our lives, we have repented of the evil, and we have sought from time to time forgiveness at the hand of the Lord; so that until this day the same desire and purpose which pervaded our souls when we . . . received a remission of our sins, still holds possession of our hearts, and is still the ruling sentiment and passion of our souls." General Conference April 10th 1898, Joseph F Smith (thanks to Geoff for finding the quote)

**Eliza Snow:** On the 5th of April, 1835, I was baptized by a “Mormon” Elder, and in the evening of that day, I realized the baptism of the Spirit as sensibly as I did that of the water in the stream. I had retired to bed, and I was reflecting on the wonderful events transpiring around me, I felt an indescribable, tangible sensation, if I may so call it, commencing at my head and enveloping my person and passing off at my feet, producing inexpressible happiness. Immediately following, I saw a beautiful candle with an unusual long, bright blaze directly over my feet. I sought to know the interpretation, and received the following, “The lamp of intelligence shall be lighted over your path,” I was satisfied. [P. 6 in Snow, Eliza R. 1957. *Eliza R. Snow—An Immortal: Selected Writings of Eliza R. Snow*.

**Lorenzo Snow:** I was baptized by Elder John Boynton, then one of the Twelve Apostles, June, 1836, in Kirtland, Ohio. Previous to accepting the ordinance of baptism, in my investigations of the principles taught by the Latter-day Saints, which I proved, by comparison, to be the same as those mentioned in the New Testament taught by Christ and His Apostles, I was thoroughly convinced that obedience to those principles would impart miraculous powers, manifestations and revelations. With sanguine expectations of this result, I received the baptism and ordinance of laying on of hands by one who professed to have divine authority; and, having thus yielded obedience to these ordinances, I was in constant expectation of the fulfillment of the promise of the reception of the Holy Ghost.

The manifestation did not immediately follow my baptism, as I had expected, but, although the time was deferred, when I did receive it, its realization was more perfect, tangible and miraculous than even my strongest hopes had led me to anticipate.

Some two or three weeks after I was baptized, one day while engaged in my studies, I began to reflect upon the fact that I had not obtained a knowledge of the truth of the work—that I had not realized the fulfillment of the promise ‘he that doeth my will shall know of the doctrine,’ and I began to feel very uneasy. I laid aside my books, left the house, and wandered around through the fields under the oppressive influence of a gloomy, disconsolate spirit, while an indescribable cloud of darkness seemed to envelop me. I had been accustomed, at the close of the day, to retire for secret prayer, to a grove a short distance from my lodgings, but at this time I felt no inclination to do so. The spirit of prayer had departed and the heavens seemed like brass over my head. At length, realizing that the usual time had come for secret prayer, I concluded I would not forego my evening service, and, as a matter of formality, knelt as I was in the habit of doing, and in my accustomed retired place, but not feeling as I was wont to feel.

I had no sooner opened my lips in an effort to pray, than I heard a sound, just above my head, like the rustling of silken robes, and immediately the Spirit of God descended upon me, completely enveloping my whole person, filling me, from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet, and O, the joy and happiness I felt! No language can describe the almost instantaneous transition from a dense cloud of mental and spiritual darkness into a refulgence of light and knowledge, as it was at that time imparted to my understanding. I then received a perfect knowledge that God lives, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and of the restoration of the holy Priesthood, and the fulness of the Gospel. It was a complete baptism—a tangible immersion in the heavenly principle or element, the Holy Ghost; and even more real and physical in its effects upon every part of my system than the immersion by water; dispelling forever, so long as reason and memory last, all possibility of doubt or fear in relation to the fact handed down to us historically, that the ‘Babe of Bethlehem’ is truly the Son of God; also the fact that He is now being revealed to the children of men, and communicating knowledge, the same as in the Apostolic times. I was perfectly satisfied, as well I might be, for my expectations were more than realized, I think I may safely say in an infinite degree.

I cannot tell how long I remained in the full flow of the blissful enjoyment and divine enlightenment, but it was several minutes before the celestial element which filled and surrounded me began gradually to withdraw. On arising from my kneeling posture, with my heart swelling with gratitude to God, beyond the power of expression, I felt—I knew that He had conferred on me what only an omnipotent being can confer—that which is of greater value than all the wealth and honors worlds can bestow. That night, as I retired to rest, the same wonderful manifestations were repeated, and continued to be for several successive nights. The sweet remembrance of those glorious experiences, from that time to the present, bring them fresh before me, imparting an inspiring influence which pervades my whole being, and I trust will to the close of my earthly existence.

[Pp. 7–9 in Smith, Eliza R. Snow. 1884. *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow*. Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret News Company.]

### **Sword of Shannarah quote** (Terry Brooks, 1983)

"In the vortex of emotion and basic self that comprised the centermost region of his being, the bearer of the Sword of Shannara came face-to-face with himself...the world that was his birthplace and life source, from past to present, lay open and revealed to him, stripped bare of his carefully nurtured illusions, and he saw the reality of existence in all its starkness. No soft dreams colored its view of life, no wishful fantasies clothed the harshness of its self-shaped

choices, no self-conceived visions of hope softened the rawness of its judgments. Amid its sprawling vastness, he saw himself displayed for the pitiful, insignificant spark of momentary life that he represented...he was paralyzed by what he saw.He struggled wildly for his grasp of the vision of self that had always sustained him, for what had been his hold on sanity, fighting to shield himself from the awesome view of his inner nakedness and the weakness of the thing he was compelled to recognize as himself...abruptly he saw another side to himself, a side he had never been able to recognize--or perhaps had simply refused to accept. It revealed itself in an endless line of events, all caricatures of the memories he had believed in so strongly. Here was an accounting of every hurt he had caused to others, every petty jealousy he had felt, his deep-seated prejudices, his deliberate half-truths, his self-pity, his fears--all that was dark and hidden within himself..

Yet drawing from some inner well of strength and understanding, his mind opened receptively to the images, expanding outward to embrace them, persuading him, or perhaps forcing him, to admit the reality of what he had been shown. He could not sensibly deny this other side of his character; like the limited image of the person he had always believed himself to be, this was only a part of the real [him]--but it was indeed a part, however difficult he found it to accept. But he had to accept it. It was the truth."