

The First Edition

of the Book of Mormon

The Original Book of Mormon Title Page

Explanation This photocopy of the title page of the original 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon gives modern readers an idea of how the book first appeared when it was published in Palmyra, New York. The first title page differs from the title page of the current (1981) edition, the most obvious difference being that Joseph Smith is listed as the “author and proprietor” of the Book of Mormon. As the copyright page explains (see chart 167), he named himself the “author and proprietor” consistent with federal law only to secure a copyright for the Book of Mormon, thus making illegal any alteration of text by those who do not hold the copyright.

Sources Joseph Smith Jr., title page of the Book of Mormon, 1830 edition (Palmyra, N.Y.: E. B. Grandin, 1830); and Miriam A. Smith and John W. Welch, “Joseph Smith: Author and Proprietor,” in *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), 154–57.

THE
BOOK OF MORMON:

AN ACCOUNT WRITTEN BY THE HAND OF MOR-
MON, UPON PLATES TAKEN FROM
THE PLATES OF NEPHI.

Wherefore it is an abridgment of the Record of the People of Nephi; and also of the Lamanites; written to the Lamanites, which are a remnant of the House of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile; written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of Prophecy and of Revelation. Written, and sealed up, and hid up unto the LORD, that they might not be destroyed; to come forth by the gift and power of GOD unto the interpretation thereof; sealed by the hand of Moroni, and hid up unto the LORD, to come forth in due time by the way of Gentile; the interpretation thereof by the gift of GOD; an abridgment taken from the Book of Ether.

Also, which is a Record of the People of Jared, which were scattered at the time the LORD confounded the language of the people when they were building a tower to get to Heaven: which is to shew unto the remnant of the House of Israel how great things the LORD hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the LORD, that they are not cast off forever; and also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD, manifesting Himself unto all nations. And now if there be fault, it be the mistake of men; wherefore condemn not the things of GOD, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment seat of CHRIST.

BY JOSEPH SMITH, JUNIOR,
AUTHOR AND PROPRIETOR.

PALMYRA:

PRINTED BY E. B. GRANDIN, FOR THE AUTHOR.

1830.

Preface to the Book of Mormon

Explanation Written by the Prophet Joseph Smith, the preface to the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon is not included in the current edition, for the preface already served its purpose. At the time he wrote it, Joseph needed to explain the 116 lost manuscript pages and why the book of Lehi was not retranslated. This preface also served to dissuade enemies of the Book of Mormon from their evil designs. Most important, the preface contains Joseph Smith's personal attestation that he translated the book "by the gift and power of God."

Source Joseph Smith Jr., preface to the Book of Mormon, 1830 edition (Palmyra, N.Y.: E. B. Grandin, 1830).

PREFACE.

TO THE READER—

As many false reports have been circulated respecting the following work, and also many unlawful measures taken by evil designing persons to destroy me, and also the work, I would inform you that I translated, by the gift and power of God, and caused to be written, one hundred and sixteen pages, the which I took from the Book of Lehi, which was an account abridged from the plates of Lehi, by the hand of Mormon; which said account, some person or persons have stolen and kept from me, notwithstanding my utmost exertions to recover it again—and being commanded of the Lord that I should not translate the same over again, for Satan had put it into their hearts to tempt the Lord their God, by altering the words, that they did read contrary from that which I translated and caused to be written; and if I should bring forth the same words again, or, in other words, if I should translate the same over again, they would publish that which they had stolen, and Satan would stir up the hearts of this generation, that they might not receive this work: but behold, the Lord said unto me, I will not suffer that Satan shall accomplish his evil design in this thing: therefore thou shalt translate from the plates of Nephi, until ye come to that which ye have translated, which ye have retained; and

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behold ye shall publish it as the record of Nephi; and thus I will confound those who have altered my words. I will not suffer that they shall destroy my work; yea, I will shew unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the Devil. Wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, I have, through his grace and mercy, accomplished that which he hath commanded me respecting this thing. I would also inform you that the plates of which hath been spoken, were found in the township of Manchester, Ontario county, New-York.

THE AUTHOR.

Copyright Page of the Book of Mormon

Explanation This chart shows the copyright page of the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon. It is of historical interest and is not included in the 1981 edition. As this photocopy shows, the copyright was secured on 11 June 1829. The copyright application used the language of the title page as the book's description. At the bottom of this page, the text of the federal copyright statute appears, authorizing "authors and proprietors" to secure copyrights for books. To protect the integrity of this sacred scripture, the Prophet Joseph Smith took all available steps to ensure its safety.

Source Joseph Smith Jr., copyright page of the Book of Mormon, 1830 edition (Palmyra, N.Y.: E. B. Grandin, 1830).

Northern District of New-York, to wit: **BE IT REMEMBERED,** That on the eleventh day of June, in the fifty-third year of the Independence of the United States of America, A. D. 1829, **JOSEPH SMITH, JUN.** of the said District, hath deposited in this office the title of a Book, the right whereof he claims as author, in the words following, to wit: "The Book of Mormon: an account written by the hand of Mormon, upon plates taken from the plates of Nephi. Wherefore it is an abridgment of the Record of the People of Nephi; and also of the Lamanites; written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the House of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile; written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of Prophecy and of Revelation. Written, and sealed up, and hid up unto the Lord, that they might not be destroyed; to come forth by the gift and power of God, unto the interpretation thereof; sealed by the hand of Moroni, and hid up unto the Lord, to come forth in due time by the way of Gentile; the interpretation thereof by the gift of God; an abridgment taken from the Book of Ether. Also, which is a Record of the People of Jared, which were scattered at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people when they were building a tower to get to Heaven: which is to shew unto the remnant of the House of Israel, how great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever: and also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile, that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting Himself unto all nations. And now if there be fault, it be the mistake of men; wherefore condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment seat of Christ.—By Joseph Smith, Jun. Author and Proprietor."

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned;" and also the act, entitled, "An act supplementary to an act, entitled, 'An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving, and etching historical and other prints.'"

R. R. LANSING,

Clerk of the Northern District of New-York.

Testimony of the Three Witnesses

Explanation The Testimony of Three Witnesses in the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon was originally included at the end of the book, as a final seal of its veracity. These witnesses—Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris—testified that they had heard God’s voice declare that the book had been translated by the gift and power of God, and also that they had seen the engravings on the plates, shown to them by an angel of God. Ancient documents often needed the signatures of witnesses in order to be considered authentic or legally binding. By providing the testimonies of witnesses and including them at the end of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith was following not only the ancient pattern called for by Nephi, but also the guidance and inspiration of the Lord.

Source Joseph Smith Jr., appendix to the Book of Mormon, 1830 edition (Palmyra, N.Y.: E. B. Grandin, 1830).

THE TESTIMONY OF THREE WITNESSES.

BE it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come, that we, through the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this record, which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, his brethren, and also of the people of Jared, which came from the tower of which hath been spoken; and we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us; wherefore we know of a surety, that the work is true. And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates; and they have been shewn unto us by the power of God, and not of man. And we declare with words of soberness, that an Angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; and we know that it is by the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true; and it is marvellous in our eyes: Nevertheless, the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear record of it; wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, we bear testimony of these things.— And we know that if we are faithful in Christ, we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found spotless before the judgement seat of Christ, and shall dwell with him eternally in the heavens. And the honor be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen.

OLIVER COWDERY,
DAVID WHITMER,
MARTIN HARRIS.

Testimony of the Eight Witnesses

Explanation This chart is a photocopy of the first printed Testimony of the Eight Witnesses. The punctuation and spelling are slightly different from that of the 1981 edition, although the words themselves remain unchanged. As was true for the Testimony of Three Witnesses, these names were included at the end of the Book of Mormon to place this seal of testimony upon the published record. The Eight Witnesses were shown the plates by Joseph Smith. They handled the plates and saw the engravings. Despite hardships and difficulties, the Book of Mormon witnesses remained true to their testimonies of this book throughout their lives.

Source Joseph Smith Jr., appendix to the Book of Mormon, 1830 edition (Palmyra, N.Y.: E. B. Grandin, 1830).

**AND ALSO THE TESTIMONY OF EIGHT
WITNESSES.**

BE it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come, that Joseph Smith, Jr. the Author and Proprietor of this work, has shewn unto us the plates of which hath been spoken, which have the appearance of gold; and as many of the leaves as the said Smith has translated, we did handle with our hands; and we also saw the engravings thereon, all of which has the appearance of ancient work, and of curious workmanship. And this we bear record, with words of soberness, that the said Smith has shewn unto us, for we have seen and hefted, and know of a surety, that the said Smith has got the plates of which we have spoken. And we give our names unto the world, to witness unto the world that which we have seen: and we lie not, God bearing witness of it.

**CHRISTIAN WHITMER,
JACOB WHITMER,
PETER WHITMER, JR.
JOHN WHITMER,
HIRAM PAGE,
JOSEPH SMITH, SEN.
HYRUM SMITH,
SAMUEL H. SMITH.**

Comparison of Chapter Divisions: 1830 and 1981 Editions

Explanation The differences in the chapter divisions between the first edition of the Book of Mormon and the 1981 edition are listed in this four-page chart. Chapters in the 1830 edition were longer, in part because the Book of Mormon was printed in narrative rather than verse form—what we would expect from a historical record. The text was first arranged into its present verses in the 1879 edition to facilitate the location of particular passages. Modern readers may be interested to see how the sections of the Book of Mormon were divided in the 1830 edition, which are divided along broad conceptual lines. For example, all of Jacob’s speech in Jacob 2–3 and all of Alma’s blessing to his son Corianton in Alma 39–42 were single chapters.

Comparison of Chapter Divisions

1830 and 1981 Editions

1830 Edition Chapters	Pages	1981 Edition Chapters	Pages
FIRST NEPHI			
I	5–16	1–5	1–11
II	16–21	6–9	11–17
III	21–35	10–14	17–30
IV	35–38	15	30–33
V	38–52	16:1–19:21	33–46
VI	52–56	19:22–21:26	46–50
VII	56–59	22	50–53
SECOND NEPHI			
I	59–66	1–2	53–60
II	66–68	3	60–62
III	68–71	4	62–65
IV	71–73	5	65–67
V	74–78	6–8	67–72
VI	78–83	9	72–77
VII	83–85	10	78–80
VIII	86–91	11–15	80–86
IX	91–99	16–22	86–93
X	99–102	23–24	94–96
XI	102–112	25–27	96–106
XII	112–118	28–30	106–112
XIII	118–120	31	112–115
XIV	120–121	32	115–116
XV	121–122	33	116–117
JACOB			
I	123–124	1	117–119
II	124–129	2–3	119–123
III	129–139	4–5	123–132
IV	139–140	6	132–133
V	140–143	7	133–135

1830 Edition		1981 Edition	
Chapters	Pages	Chapters	Pages
ENOS			
I	143–145	1	136–138
JAROM			
I	146–147	1	138–140
OMNI			
I	148–151	1	140–143
WORDS OF MORMON			
I	151–153	1	143–145
MOSIAH			
I	153–162	1–3	145–154
II	162–165	4	154–157
III	166–167	5	157–159
IV	167–168	6	159
V	168–173	7–8	159–164
VI	173–177	9–10	164–167
VII	177–184	11:1–13:24	167–173
VIII	184–189	13:25–16:15	173–179
IX	190–201	17–21	179–189
X	201–202	22	189–190
XI	202–215	23–27	190–202
XII	215–216	28:1–19	202–203
XIII	217–221	28:20–29:47	203–207
ALMA			
I	221–230	1–3	207–215
II	230–232	4	215–217
III	232–238	5	217–223
IV	238–239	6	223
V	239–242	7	223–226
VI	242–245	8	226–228
VII	245–248	9	228–231

1830 Edition

Chapters	Pages
VIII	248–254
IX	254–259
X	259–266
XI	266–268
XII	269–282
XIII	282–289
XIV	289–299
XV	299–304
XVI	304–323
XVII	323–330
XVIII	330–332
XIX	332–340
XX	340–347
XXI	348–362
XXII	362–366
XXIII	366–370
XXIV	370–377
XXV	377–381
XXVI	382–393
XXVII	393–398
XXVIII	398–400
XXIX	400–405
XXX	405–407

1981 Edition

Chapters	Pages
10–11	231–237
12:1–13:9	237–242
13:10–15:19	242–248
16	248–250
17–20	250–261
21–22	261–266
23–26	266–275
27–29	275–280
30–35	280–297
36–37	297–304
38	304–305
39–42	305–313
43–44	313–320
45–49	320–332
50	333–336
51	336–339
52–53	339–344
54–55	344–348
56–58	348–357
59–60	357–361
61	361–362
62	363–366
63	366–368

HELAMAN

I	407–411	1–2	368–372
II	412–426	3–6	372–384
III	426–436	7–10	384–392
IV	436–441	11–12	392–397
V	441–451	13–16	397–406

THIRD NEPHI

I	452–456	1–2	406–410
II	457–465	3–5	410–417
III	465–470	6–7	417–422

1830 Edition		1981 Edition	
Chapters	Pages	Chapters	Pages
IV	470–476	8–10	422–427
V	476–483	11–13:24	427–434
VI	483–485	13:25–14:27	434–435
VII	485–488	15–16	435–440
VIII	488–493	17–18	440–444
IX	493–500	19:1–21:21	444–452
X	501–503	21:22–23:13	452–454
XI	503–505	23:14–26:5	454–457
XII	506–508	26:6–27:22	457–460
XIII	509–513	27:23–29:9	460–464
XIV	513–514	30	464
FOURTH NEPHI			
I	514–518	1	465–468
MORMON			
I	518–524	1–3	469–474
II	524–528	4–5	474–478
III	529–531	6–7	478–481
IV	531–538	8–9	481–487
ETHER			
I	538–547	1–4	487–496
II	547–548	5	496
III	548–555	6–8	496–502
IV	555–562	9–11	502–508
V	562–566	12	508–512
VI	566–573	13–15	512–518
MORONI			
I	574	1	518
II	574	2	518–519
III	575	3	519
IV	575	4	519
V	575–576	5	519–520
VI	576	6	520
VII	577–580	7	521–525
VIII	581–583	8	525–527
IX	583–585	9	527–529
X	585–588	10	529–531