

Moroni 1 — I Had Supposed Not to Have Written More — Moroni Returns to the Plates

Moroni 1: c. AD 401–421, after Moroni has finished abridging the Jaredite record. He had thought his work was done — but he has not yet perished, and so, hunted by the Lamanites who put to death every Nephite who will not deny Christ, he takes up the plates again to write a few more things, that they might be of worth to his Lamanite brethren in some future day. It is the short, quiet hinge between the book of Ether and the priceless final chapters of the Book of Mormon — the moment the last man, who thought he was finished, is given more time and chooses to spend it writing for us.

Moroni 1 is four verses long, and it is one of the most quietly moving openings in scripture. Moroni had finished abridging the book of Ether and *had supposed not to have written more* (v. 1) — he thought his work was complete, his record closed. But he has *not as yet perished*, and the extra time becomes a gift he chooses to spend on us. The chapter is the hinge between the Jaredite record and the final, precious chapters of the Book of Mormon — the sacrament prayers, the sermon on charity, the great promise. And it frames all of them with the circumstance of the man writing them: a fugitive, hunted by Lamanites who *put to death every Nephite that will not deny the Christ* (v. 2), wandering *whithersoever I can for the safety of mine own life* (v. 3), writing in stolen moments because he *will not deny the Christ*. Everything that follows in the book of Moroni is written under sentence of death by a man who could have saved his life by one denial and would not.

Hebrew Word Studies

***kachash* / 'achim / 'atid** (כַּחַשׁ / אֶחִים / אֶתִיד) — **to deny, to deceive, to renounce / brethren, kinsmen / future, that which is to come, the time appointed vv. 2–3, v. 4, v. 4.** Three Hebrew ideas frame this short chapter. *Kachash* — to deny — is the act Moroni refuses (vv. 2–3). *Kachash* means to deny, to deceive, to renounce, and in covenant terms to *kachash* God is the gravest betrayal — to renounce the One to whom one belongs. Moroni's *I will not deny (kachash) the Christ* is the refusal of the one act that would save his life; he will not renounce his Lord even under sentence of death, the opposite of Peter's threefold denial (which used the same idea), and the seal of his witness. 'Achim — brethren — is whom he writes for (v. 4): *my brethren, the Lamanites*. The word is striking in its generosity; the Lamanites are the people killing every Nephite who will not deny Christ, yet Moroni calls them 'achim, kinsmen, brethren. The covenant word for family is extended to the persecutors, exactly as the gospel extends it — the enemy named as brother, written for in love. 'Atid — the future, the time to come — lies under *in some future day* (v. 4). Moroni writes not for his own time, which is ending, but for the 'atid, the appointed future *according to the will of the Lord* — a day he will not see, for a people not yet born. The whole book of Moroni is written into the 'atid, a message buried for the future, by a man who refused to *kachash* (deny) his Lord, in love for his 'achim (brethren), the future descendants of his enemies.

From the Chapter's Architecture

“cross-references Matt. 10:32–33 (*whosoever shall confess me before men... but whosoever shall deny me... him will I also deny — the confession Moroni will not abandon*, v. 3); Matt. 10:22 (*ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved — Moroni hunted for Christ's name*, vv. 2–3); Mk. 8:34–35 (*whosoever will save his life shall lose it — Moroni risking his life rather than deny*, v. 3); Lk. 12:8–9 (*confessing and denying Christ before men — vv. 2–3*); Jn. 15:18–20 (*if the world hate you... the servant is not greater than his lord — the hunted witness*, vv. 2–3); Acts 7:54–60 (*Stephen the lone faithful witness put to death rather than recant — the martyr-spirit of v. 3*); 2 Tim. 2:12 (*if we deny him, he also will deny us — v. 3*); Rev. 2:13 (*thou hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr — Moroni's refusal to deny*, v. 3); Rev. 12:11 (*they overcame and they loved not their lives unto the death — Moroni wandering rather than deny*, v. 3); Alma 24:18–22 (*the people of Ammon who would die rather than break their covenant — the fidelity of v. 3*); Mormon 7:1–10 (*Mormon's last words written for the remnant of the Lamanites — the love-for-enemies of v. 4*); Mormon 8:1–4 (*Moroni alone, whither I go it mattereth not — the survival and solitude of v. 1*); Ether 5:1–6; 12:38 (*Moroni's earlier farewells, supposing the record done — v. 1*); Ether 15:34 (*Ether's it mattereth not... if I am saved — the matching submission to Moroni's wandering*, v. 3); D&C 6:34 (*fear not... for the kingdom is yours — the assurance behind Moroni's fearless confession*, v. 3); D&C 98:13–14 (*whoso is not willing to lay down his life for my sake... is not my disciple — the standard Moroni meets*, v. 3). ”