

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.