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[Title Page]

# The Book of Mormon

An Account Written by the Hand of Mormon  
[An Account Written] upon Plates Taken from the Plates of Nephi  
**[Preface]** *[to the whole Abridgment]*

## Wherefore,

it is an **abridgment** of the **record** of the **\*people of Nephi** *[the covenant tribe of Joseph]*  
**and also** of the **Lamanites** *[of the covenant tribe of Joseph]*

## Written

to the **Lamanites**, who are a remnant of the **[covenant] house of Israel**  
**and also** to [the] **Jew** *[the rest of the covenant house of Israel]*  
**and** [to the] **Gentile** *[the rest of the world]*

## Written

**\*by [the] way** **\*of commandment,** *[^? / deleted in 1920]*  
**and also** **\*by the spirit** **\*of prophecy**  
**and** **[\*by the spirit]** **\*of revelation**

## Written

**and** **[A] sealed** up,  
**[B] and hid up unto the Lord,** that they [the **records**] might NOT be **destroyed**  
**[C] to come forth** by the **gift**  
**and power of God**  
**[D] unto the interpretation thereof**  
**[A] sealed** by the hand of Moroni,  
**[B] and hid up unto the Lord,**  
**[C] to come forth in due time** by the **way of Gentile**  
**[D] the interpretation thereof**  
by the **gift**  
**[and power] of God.**

[Wherefore]

[It is] an **abridgment** taken from the Book of Ether also,  
which **abridgment** is a record of the people  
of Jared,  
who were **scattered** [separated]  
**at the time** **the Lord confounded** the language  
of the people,  
**when** they [the people] were **building a tower** to get to **Heaven**

Which **abridgment** is to **show** unto the remnant \_\_\_ of the **house of Israel**  
**^how /what** great **things the Lord** hath done for their **fathers** [**^P / 1837**]

**and that** they [the remnant] may **know** \_\_\_ the **covenants**  
of **the Lord**  
**that** they [the remnant] are NOT **cast off** **forever** [from **the Lord**]

**And** [which **abridgment**] also [is] to the **\*convincing** of \_\_\_\_\_ the **Jew**  
**and** [the] **Gentile**  
**that** **Jesus is The Christ,**  
**The Eternal God,**  
**manifesting Himself** unto ALL Nations

**And now,** **if** there **^be/are** **faults** {**AL** – “there be”}  
**[then]** **^it be / they** [the **faults**] **are** the \_\_\_ **mistake /s** of Men [**^P / 1837**]

**Wherefore\*** **condemn** NOT \_\_\_\_\_ the **things** of **God,**  
**that** ye [ALL men] may be found **spotless** at the **judgment-seat**  
of **Christ**

\*\*\*

**^ [ ] / Moroni / [ ] [ ^O [ ] / 1840 / deleted in 1879**

By Joseph Smith, Junieur, Author & proprietor] / [added in P /  
^Translated by Joseph Smith, Jun. / changed in ^1837]

Title Page: **(Arrangement):**

Daniel Ludlow was asked to prepare some papers on the Title Page for The Second Annual Book of Mormon Symposium in 1986. After reviewing all previously published commentaries on the Book of Mormon he noted:

I soon became convinced that the title page of the Book of Mormon is one of the least studied and least understood parts of this holy scripture. Articles and comments on the title page are, indeed, few and far between. Perhaps more disturbing, some of us may have been applying a misleading "personal interpretation" to the origin and the meaning of some of the statements in the title page because of the lack of thoughtful consideration.

Ludlow obtained copies of the title pages from all the major editions of the Book of Mormon: 1830, 1837, 1840, 1852, 1879, 1920, 1981. He also studied the earliest available sources of the title page text. The earliest available source is the "printer's manuscript," which is largely in the handwriting of Oliver Cowdery. It is now in the possession of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. He obtained a copy and made a typewritten copy of that manuscript page, listing its text word for word and letter by letter (see illustration #1 below). He also obtained copies of the two other early documents which contain the title page. The earliest is a handwritten copy on the copyright application form of 11 June 1829 (see illustration #2 below). One will note that in the space on the application form for the title of the book, the Prophet Joseph Smith included all of the text of what we now call the title page. You will also note that the text is written with some capitalization and a considerable degree of punctuation, but is not divided into paragraphs.

The later of these two documents is the *Wayne Sentinel* dated 26 June 1829 (see illustration #3 below). You will note that the text is separated into an introduction and two paragraphs. The *Wayne Sentinel* was published by the E. B. Grandin publishing concern. Undoubtedly this 26 June 1829 version reflects the punctuation and paragraphing that had already been determined for the first printing of the Book of Mormon. One will notice in the reproduction of the title page in the 1830 first edition (see illustration #4 below) that the wording, the essential punctuation, and the paragraphing are identical to that in the article already published in the *Wayne Sentinel*. These two versions established the pattern of publishing the title page in three sections: a brief introduction and two paragraphs. This same format has been used in all subsequent editions published in English.

A Typewritten Copy of the Title Page of the Book of Mormon  
(As it appears in the Printer's Manuscript)  
(The spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are as shown)  
by Daniel Ludlow

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 & also of the Lamanites written to the Lamanites which are a remnant of the house of Israel & also to Jew & Gentile written by way of commandment & also by the spirit of Prophecy & of revelation written & sealed up & hid up unto the Lord that they might not be destroid to come forth by the gift & power of God unto the interpretation thereof sealed by the hand of Moroni & hid up unto the Lord to come forth in due time by way of the Gentile the enterpretation thereof by the gift of God an abridgment taken from the Book of Ether also which is a record of the People of Jared who 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 & that they may know the covenants of the Lord that they are not cast off forever & also to the convincing of the Jew & Gentile that Jesus is the Christ the Eternal God manifesting himself unto all Nations & 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 Junieur, Author & proprietor

Title Page (**Arrangement**) [**Illustration #1**]: A typewritten copy of the title page of the Book of Mormon as it appears in the Printer's Manuscript. The spelling, capitalization, and punctuation are as shown. [Daniel H. Ludlow, "The Title Page," in The Book of Mormon: First Nephi, The Doctrinal Foundation, p. 21]

Northern District }  
of New York. } Do wit:

Be it remembered, That on the 11th day of June in the 5th year of the Independence of the United States of America, A. D. 1829 Joseph Smith Proprietor of the said District, has 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 plate of Nephi; Wherein is contained a abridgement of the record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Nephites, which are a remnant of the house of Israel, and also of the Jews & Gentiles written by way of commandment and also by the spirit of prophecy & of revelation, written through the gift & power of God unto the intent that they should be distinguished, to come forth by the gift & power of God unto the intent that they should be gathered up by the hand of Mormon & hid up unto the Lord, to come forth in due time by the way of truth, the interpretation thereof by the gift of God; a abridgement taken from the book of Ether: Also, which is a record of the people of America, which were written at the time the Lord commanded the language of the people, when they were but a few & yet numerous; which is to show unto the remnant of the house of Israel the things the Lord hath done for their fathers; & that they may know the covenants of the Lord that they are not cast off forever; and also to the knowledge of the Jews & Gentiles the name of Christ & Christ's Son; manifesting himself unto all nations, & that of their be faithful, it be the will of the Father, otherwise inasmuch as the things of God, the Father, the Son, & the Holy Spirit, shall be made manifest unto the world, by the power of the Father, & the Son, & the Holy Spirit.*

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, to 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."

*J. P. K. Smith, Clerk of the District Court of the United States for the Northern District of New York*

Title Page (Arrangement) [Illustration #2]: The copyright application of 11 June 1829 for the Book of Mormon. Note that in the space on the application form for the title of the book, the Prophet Joseph Smith included all of the text of what we now call the title page. Note also that the text is written with some capitalization and a considerable degree of punctuation, but is not divided into paragraphs. [Daniel H. Ludlow, "The Title Page," in *The Book of Mormon: First Nephi, The Doctrinal Foundation*, p. 23]

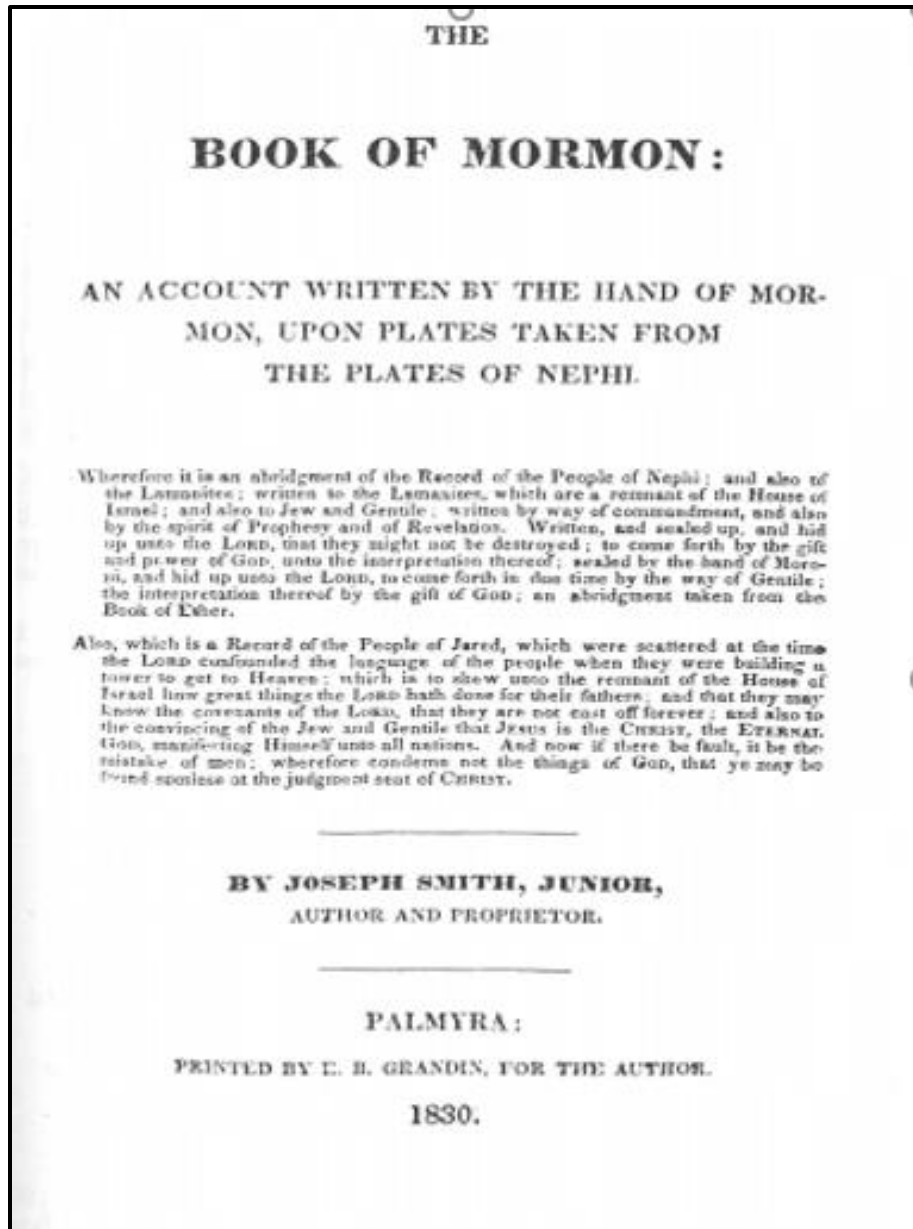
It is pretended that it will be published as soon as the translation is completed. Meanwhile we have been furnished with the following, which is represented to us as intended for the title page of the work—we give it as a curiosity:—

“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, 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 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 up by the hand of Mormon, 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”

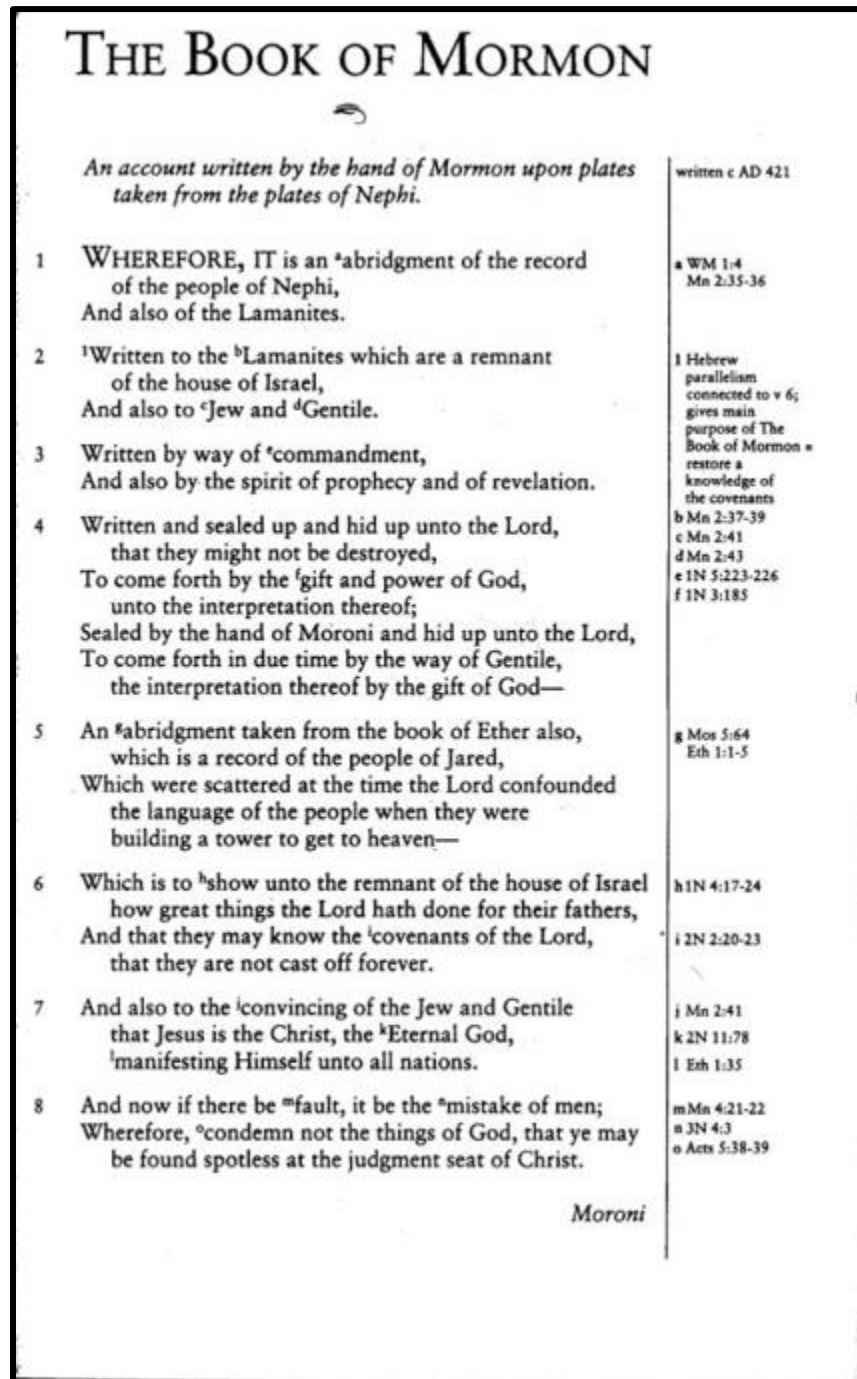
Title Page (Arrangement) [Illustration #3]: An excerpt from the *Wayne Sentinel* dated 26 June 1829 regarding the future publication of the Book of Mormon and containing the text of what we now call the title page. Note that the text is separated into an introduction and two paragraphs. [Daniel H. Ludlow, "The Title Page," in *The Book of Mormon: First Nephi, The Doctrinal Foundation*, p. 24]



Title Page (Arrangement) [Illustration #4]: A reproduction of the title page in the first edition (1830) of the Book of Mormon. Note that the wording, the essential punctuation, and the paragraphs are identical to that in the article already published in the *Wayne Sentinel*. [Daniel H. Ludlow, "The Title Page," in *The Book of Mormon: First Nephi, The Doctrinal Foundation*, p. 25] [See also The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and Deseret Book Company, *150th Year Anniversary Facsimile of the 1830 Edition of the Book of Mormon*, 1980] [See also John W. Welch & J. Gregory Welch, *Charting the Book of Mormon: Visual Aids for Personal Study and Teaching*, Chart 165]

One change was made in the title page in the second edition (1837). The clause "An abridgment taken from the book of Ether" was moved from the last part of the first paragraph to the beginning of the second paragraph, bringing the two elements about the book of Ether together. This clause has remained in this position in all subsequent editions in English.

The 1840 edition of the title page is virtually identical to the 1837 edition, except that the word *Moroni* appears after the second paragraph [see additional commentary]. The name Moroni also is printed in the same place both in the LDS edition of 1852 and in the RLDS editions of 1874 and 1908. [And also the 1999 Restored Covenant Edition--see the illustration #5 below]



Title Page (Arrangement) [Illustration #5]: A reproduction of the title page in The Restored Covenant Edition (1999). Note the name "Moroni" at the bottom. [Zarahemla Research Foundation, [The Restored Covenant Edition](#), Title Page]



The only other changes between the 1830 and the 1981 editions in the words used, spelling, or word order are shown as follows:

"*who* are a remnant" instead of "which . . .";

"spirit of *prophecy*" instead of ". . . prophesy";

"*by way of* the Gentile" instead of "by the way of . . .";

"*who* were scattered" instead of "which . . .";

"Which is to *show*" instead of ". . . shew";

"*what* great things the Lord hath done" instead of "how . . .";

"*if there are faults they are the mistakes* of men" instead of "if there be fault, it be the mistake";

"*judgment-seat*" instead of "judgment seat";

"*Translated by Joseph Smith, Jun.*" instead of "By Joseph Smith, Junior, Author and Proprietor"

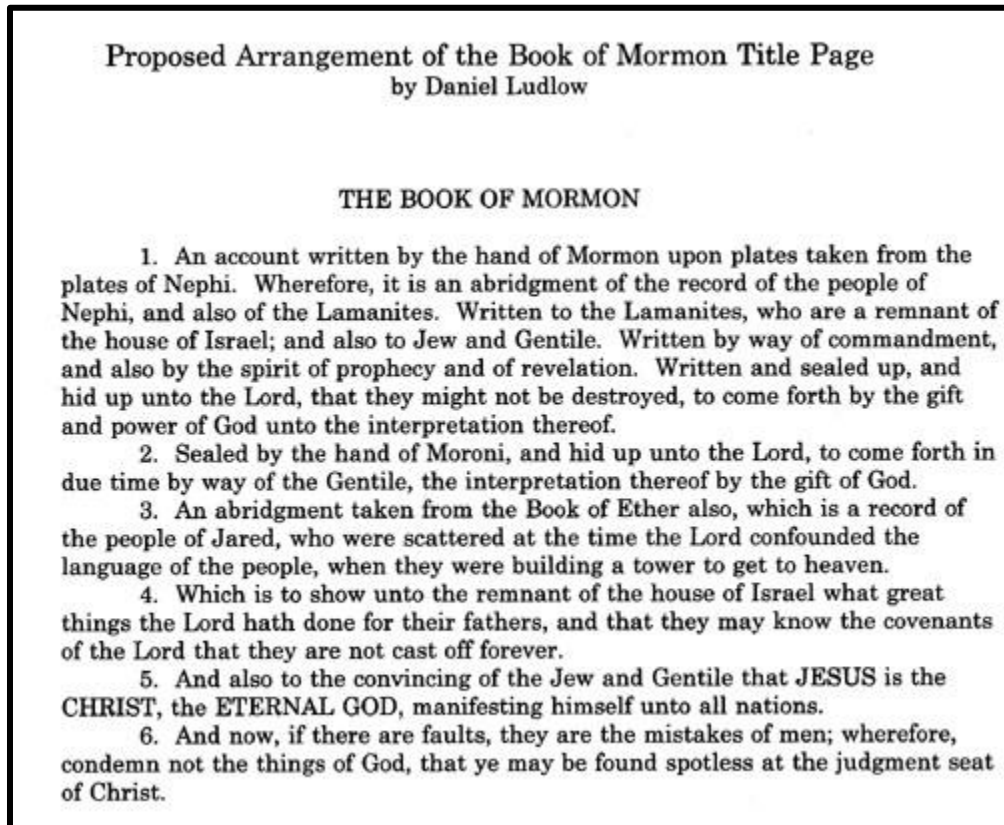
Interestingly, changing the number of paragraphs might lead to additional insights as we ask such questions as: (1) *who* the author is (or who the authors are) of the various statements of the title page, and (2) *when* the various statements were written. For example, publishing the title page in two paragraphs and adding the word *Moroni* in some editions undoubtedly influenced virtually all early students of the Book of Mormon to conclude that Moroni was the only author of the title page. According to this reasoning, one would conclude that the title page must have been written sometime after about A.D. 385 when Moroni received the plates from his father, Mormon. This view has been expressed by different scholars, including Dr. Sidney B. Sperry (1959), who concluded that Moroni wrote the entire title page at two distinctively different times in his life:

In the opinion of the writer this statement [Mormon 8:12-13] was Moroni's original farewell. . . . It is quite likely that at this point Moroni wrote the first paragraph (as we now have it) of the title page of the Book of Mormon. . . . He did not write the second paragraph of the title page at this time for the very good and sufficient reason that he had not yet abridged the Book of Ether which is mentioned therein.<sup>i</sup>

. . . [After reviewing the contents of Mormon 8:14-9:37 Sperry adds] Having finished his task of abridgment, Moroni then proceeded to add another paragraph to his title page.

According to Dr. Sperry, Moroni then proceeded to give us the text now found in Moroni chapters 1 through 10.

Ludlow notes that virtually all other scholars and students of the Book of Mormon who had written commentary up until his 1986 presentation had reached exactly the same two conclusions: (1) the title page was written entirely by Moroni, and (2) Moroni wrote it at two different times in his life. But Ludlow takes a different approach. In order to illustrate that approach he proposes changing the title page into a brief title and six paragraphs. (see illustration #6 below).



Title Page (**Arrangement**) [Illustration #6]: A Proposed Arrangement of the Book of Mormon Title Page. Ludlow's proposal consists of a brief title and six paragraphs. [Daniel H. Ludlow, "The Title Page," in The Book of Mormon: First Nephi, The Doctrinal Foundation, pp. 28-29]

Ludlow proposes that in reading the first proposed paragraph (see illustration), one should change one's mind-set and assume that Mormon wrote it rather than Moroni. After all, Mormon was the major abridger or compiler of the writings in our present Book of Mormon. Surely, he would have been justified in writing a preface of some type for his work. It is plausible that everything in the proposed first paragraph could reasonably and logically have been written by Mormon. He was the only writer who had written on the plates that he refers to throughout the record as the "plates of Mormon."

Ludlow asks that one now read the proposed second paragraph, assuming that Moroni is its author. He has received the plates from his father and has engraved on the plates the text

of Mormon chapters 8 and 9. Then he adds these words to the title page that his father had written:

Sealed by the hand of Moroni, and hid up unto the Lord, to come forth in due time by way of the Gentile, the interpretation thereof by the gift of God.

The assumption that Mormon wrote the first paragraph and Moroni wrote the second paragraph helps explain other difficulties that scholars have pointed out. Note, for example, the close parallels in wording and thought patterns between the last sentence of the first paragraph and the sentence now comprising the second paragraph of the six parts proposed. If Moroni had written both of these sentences, why would he have repeated himself so closely?

In the traditional printings with only two paragraphs, the second paragraph appears to pertain *only* to the initial phrase "An abridgment taken from the Book of Ether," although most readers have quoted them as though they pertain to the entire Book of Mormon. The paragraphing suggested by Ludlow would indicate that they do indeed pertain to the entire book, which, according to him, is the most logical interpretation.

Ludlow does not suggest that the present paragraphing of the title page is necessarily wrong. However, the decision to publish the title page text in two paragraphs was not determined by the Prophet Joseph Smith but by John H. Gilbert,<sup>ii</sup> the typesetter at E. B. Grandin's publishing house, *before* Gilbert had the opportunity to read and study the entire Book of Mormon. Thus he would not have understood the separate and different contributions of Mormon and Moroni in the Book of Mormon. That first setting of the type in "the forepart of June 1829"<sup>iii</sup> obviously established the two-paragraph pattern followed in (1) the 26 June 1829 article in the *Wayne Sentinel*; in (2) the first edition of the Book of Mormon; and in (3) all subsequent editions of the Book of Mormon in English.

Thus Daniel Ludlow believes that we may at least consider dividing the text of the title page into more than two paragraphs, knowing that the Book of Mormon is true and that the paragraphing of the title page in no way detracts from its divine nature. [Daniel H. Ludlow, "The Title Page," in The Book of Mormon: First Nephi, The Doctrinal Foundation, pp. 19-33]

Note\* For more commentary on the Title Page, see the commentary on Title Page ("sealed by the hand of Moroni"), Mormon 8:12, and Moroni 1:1

#### Title Page (**Position**):

Joseph Smith wrote that "the title-page of the Book of Mormon is a literal translation, taken from *the very last leaf*, on the left-hand side of the collection or book of plates, which contained the record which has been translated."<sup>iv</sup> In the 1830 edition, the title-page was thus positioned at the end of the text. It was later moved to its present position at the front of the Book of Mormon. The idea of a title-page at the end of the text was counterintuitive in the early nineteenth century when title pages appeared at the beginning, not the end, of books.

William Hamblin notes that in a recent study of the cultural dependence of Greek civilization on the ancient Near East, Walter Burkert maintains that one of the connections which linked these cultures was a practice called "subscriptio." This practice "connect[ed] the layout of later Greek books with cuneiform [Near Eastern] practice, [which is] the indication of the name of the writer/author and the title of the book right at the end, after the last line of the text; this is a detailed and exclusive correspondence which proves that Greek literary practice is ultimately dependent upon Mesopotamia. It is necessary to postulate that Aramaic leather scrolls formed the connecting link."<sup>v</sup>

If the existence of the practice of *subscriptio* among the Greeks represents "a detailed and exclusive correspondence which proves that Greek literary practice is ultimately dependent upon Mesopotamia [via Syria]," as Burkert claims, cannot the same thing be said of the Book of Mormon--that the practice of *subscriptio* represents "a detailed and exclusive correspondence" which offers proof that the Book of Mormon is "ultimately dependent" on the ancient Near East? [William J. Hamblin, "Metal Plates and the Book of Mormon," in Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon, F.A.R.M.S., 1999, pp. 21-22]

#### Title **The Book of Mormon:**

According to Raymond Treat, the title "The Book of Mormon" might have more meaning to it than one might think. Someone acquainted with the story of the Book of Mormon might assume that the name "Mormon" simply refers to the man who compiled the book. However, although Mormon acknowledges that "my father's name was Mormon" (Mormon 1:5), he tells us in 3 Nephi 5:12 that he was not named after his father, rather he was named after the land in which the restoration of Christ's covenant and church took place:

And behold, I am called Mormon, being called after the land of Mormon, the land in which Alma did establish the church among this people: Yea, the first church which was established among them after their transgression. (3 Nephi 5:12)

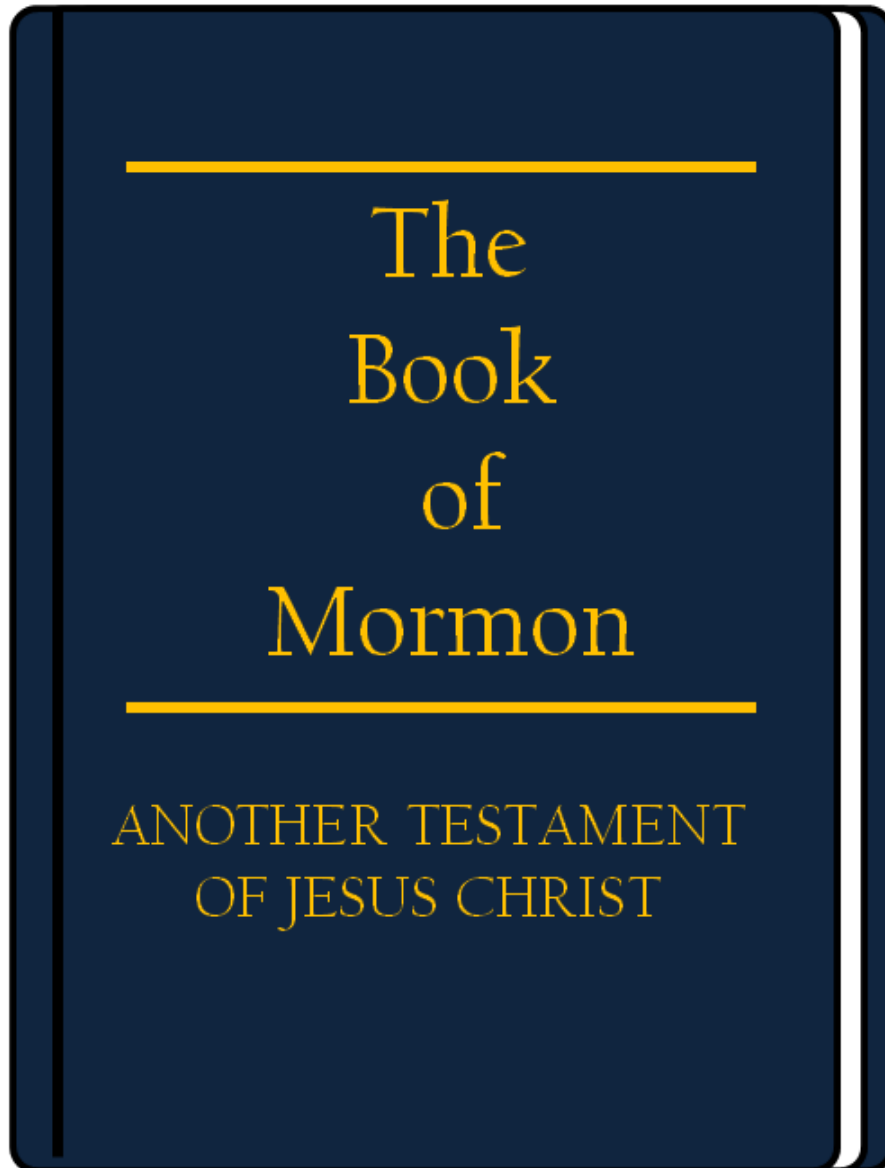
[And] if they will repent and hearken unto my words, and harden not their hearts, I will establish my church among them, and they shall come in unto the covenant and be numbered among this the remnant of Jacob, unto whom I have given this land for their inheritance. (3 Nephi 21:22)

[See Raymond C. Treat, "Covenants: Key to the Restoration of the House of Israel," in Recent Book of Mormon Developments, Vol. 2, pp. 52-53]

So perhaps it is coincidence, perhaps not, that the title of the Book of Mormon was changed in 1986 to read, "The Book of Mormon, Another Testament of Jesus Christ." If we focus on the idea that the name Mormon was associated with a restored covenant, and if the word "testament" means a covenant witness, then we might read the title according to Mormon's own definition as "The Book of the Restored Covenant, Another Covenant Witness of Jesus Christ." When this meaning is understood, the Book of Mormon can better be viewed in its rightful place alongside two other published witnesses of Christ's covenant with his children: The Old Testament (the "Old Covenant") and The New Testament (the "New Covenant").

It is also interesting that Mormon's abridgment (entitled the book of Mormon) is taken from two sets of records, the small plates of Nephi and the large plates of Nephi. As the reader will find in the more detailed commentary of the title of the book "First Nephi" the name "Nephi" is also associated with the restoration of the Covenant gospel. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

Note\* See the commentary on the title of First Nephi, also 3 Nephi 5:12.



[Bookofmormonseminary.blogspot.com](http://Bookofmormonseminary.blogspot.com)

Title Page **The Book of Mormon [Another Testament of Jesus Christ] (Illustration):** The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, [The Book of Mormon Another Testament of Jesus Christ](#)

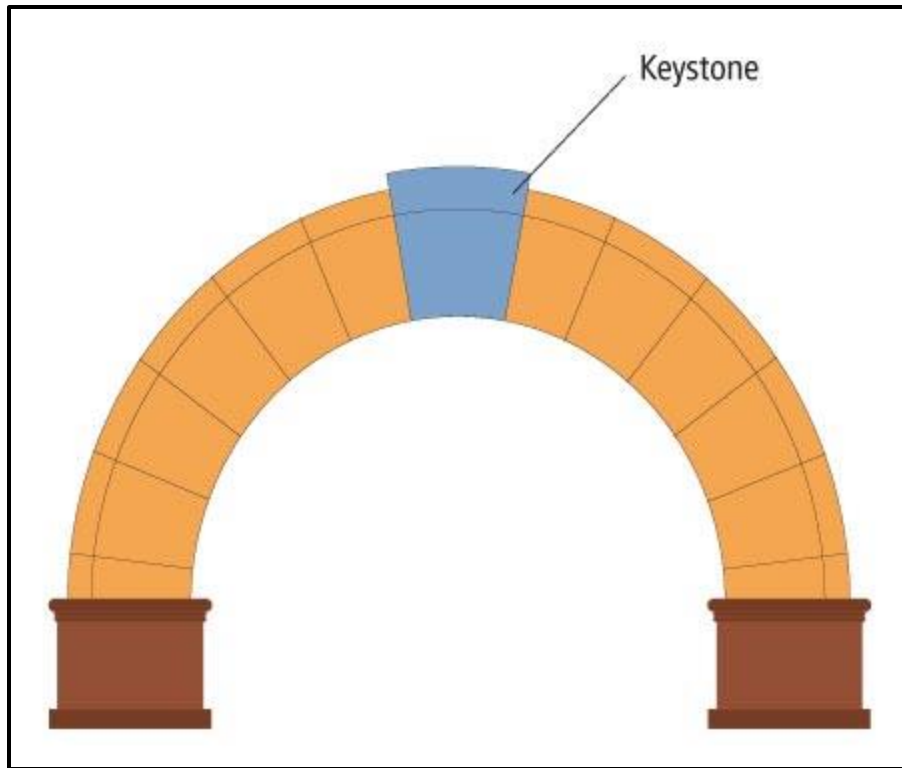
Title Page: **An Account Written by the Hand of Mormon upon Plates Taken from the Plates of Nephi:**

In the Title Page itself of the Book of Mormon it is claimed that it is a translation of "an account written by the hand of Mormon upon plates taken from the plates of Nephi." Elder James E. Talmage, a former General Authority of the Church, wrote about one's attitude in investigating this claim:

The authenticity of the Book of Mormon constitutes our most important consideration of the work. This subject is one of vital interest to every sincere searcher after truth. Claiming to be, as far as the present dispensation is concerned, a new scripture, presenting prophecies and revelations not heretofore recognized in modern theology, announcing to the world the message of a departed people, written by the way of commandment, and by the spirit of prophecy and revelation--this book is entitled to the most thorough and impartial examination. Not only does the Book of Mormon merit such consideration, it claims, even demands the same; for no one professing belief in the power and authority of God can receive with unconcern the announcement of a new revelation, professedly bearing the seal of divine authority. The question of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon is therefore one in which the world is concerned. (James E. Talmage, *A Study of the Articles of Faith*, 1925 edition, p. 273)

Moreover, if Mormon and Moroni wrote what they did "by the way of commandment, and by the spirit of prophecy and revelation," then I have to believe that the Lord was directly involved in the contents of the book. Joseph Smith declared that the Book of Mormon was "the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book." (HC 4:461) Ezra Taft Benson noted, "Just as the arch crumbles if the keystone is removed [see illustration], so does all the Church stand or fall with the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon." (Conference Report, Oct. 1986, 6; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, 6) [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

Note\* See Title Page, "If there are faults they are the mistakes of men."



lds.org

Title Page: **The Book of Mormon: An Account Written by the Hand of Mormon (Illustration):** Drawing of a Stone Arch. [lds.org]

Title Page **Sealed by the Hand of Moroni:**

According to Clyde Williams, it seems clear that Joseph Smith understood Moroni to be the author of the title page. We know from Joseph's words that the title page "is a literal translation, taken from the very last leaf, on the left hand side of the collection or book of plates."<sup>vi</sup> Since Moroni was the last person to handle the plates before he buried them (see Moroni 10:2), he likely engraved "the very last leaf." In the 1840 edition of the Book of Mormon, which Joseph Smith helped prepare, Moroni's name as author was added at the end of the title page (see photo). We can safely assume that this change was done under Joseph's direction, because he indicated that he was still making corrections to the scripture as late as 1842.<sup>vii</sup> Moroni's name was probably added to avoid confusion about the actual authorship of this page, for some had thought that Joseph Smith originated it. The addition of Moroni's name to the title page was not unique to the 1840 edition; it also appeared in a facsimile of the title page in *Times and Seasons* in 1841,<sup>viii</sup> the second printing of the 1852 edition of the Book of Mormon, the 1858 Jas. O. Wright edition, and the 1874 and 1892 RLDS editions.<sup>ix</sup> Apparently Joseph saw no reason to suggest two authors.

It has been suggested that Moroni's words in Mormon 8:5--"my father hath made this record, and he hath written the *intent* thereof"--are a direct reference to Mormon's writing on

the title page. However, Mormon's final words in Mormon 7 are a statement of the intent for which the Book of Mormon was written:

For behold, this [the Book of Mormon] is written for the *intent*[ that ye may believe that [the Bible]; and if ye believe that ye will believe this also; and if ye believe this ye will know concerning your fathers, and also the marvelous works which were wrought by the power of God among them. And ye will also know that ye are a remnant of the seed of Jacob; . . . and if it so be that ye believe in Christ, . . . following the example of our Savior, . . . it shall be well with you in the day of judgment. (Mormon 7:9-10; see 5:14-15)

Perhaps the most compelling evidence for Moroni's authorship of the entire title page comes from a study of two unusual words or word combinations that appear infrequently in the Book of Mormon. The word *interpretation* appears 7 times in the Book of Mormon text, written once by Nephi and 6 times in the writings of Moroni (Mormon 9:7, 34; Ether 2:3; 4:5; 15:8; Moroni 10:16). The words *seal(ed) up* occur only 14 times in the Book of Mormon, 5 times by Nephi and 9 times in Moroni's writings (Ether 3:22-23, 27-28; 4:5; 5:1; Moroni 10:2). Those expressions do not appear anywhere in Mormon's translated writings, yet they do occur in the very portions of the title page that some scholars have attributed to both Mormon and Moroni. The distribution of those expressions weighs heavily in favor of Moroni as the sole author. (see note by Wade Brown below)

There is another issue in considering whether Mormon wrote the first portion of the title page. Could the statement "written and sealed up, and hid up unto the Lord" have come from him? It is clear from Mormon's own words that he intended to hide up all the Nephite records "save it were" the abridged set of plates he had written (see Mormon 6:6) and the small plates of Nephi (see Words of Mormon 1:5-6). Mormon did not intend to seal and hide up these last plates personally, for it was his feeling and desire that his son, Moroni, would "survive, . . . that he may write somewhat concerning [the Nephites], and somewhat concerning Christ" (Words of Mormon 1:2). Thus Mormon did not envision the Book of Mormon plates being sealed up or buried during his own lifetime. Moroni confirmed this point when, some 16 years after the final Nephite-Lamanite battle, he declared he would write a few things that his father had commanded him to write (see Mormon 8:1, 6; 6:5). It was at this time that Moroni first mentioned burying or sealing up the plates (see Mormon 8:4, 14). Fortunately for us, Mormon's intuition was right and Moroni lived for at least 36 years after the final battle. He recorded much of importance pertaining to the Savior and his gospel before burying the plates.

Ultimately, all who have taken the time to comment on or study the issue of authorship of the title page would likely be happy with either Mormon or Moroni as the author, or even both as coauthors. However, when the information presented in this article is joined with what was recognized by earlier writers, perhaps we might now consider the question answered definitively: Moroni himself wrote the title page while faithfully echoing what he had learned from his father, Mormon. [Clyde J. Williams, "More Light on Who Wrote the Title Page," in Journal of Book of Mormon Studies, vol. 10 num. 2, 2001, pp. 28-29]



Note\* Wade Brown writes:

After several years of studying differences in word combinations it became easy with just a few sentences to identify various Nephite authors. For example, historically it has been understood that the preface to the Book of Mormon was translated from the plates and was written by Moroni. An early edition even had his name attached to it. However, in recent years some have questioned his authorship and have suggested that it was composed by someone else.

But the preface contains nearly a dozen word combinations which are characteristic of Moroni. This makes it difficult to believe that someone else could have composed the text but included Moroni's personal language patterns. The study of word combinations reinforces the historic claims [of the Book of Mormon]. [C. Wade Brown, The First Page of the Golden Plates, p. 32]

Note\* In a telephone conversation with Wade Brown (4/25/02) he clarified a number of the word combinations in the Preface that are significant to Moroni:

"written to" = Moroni uses this phrase

"by way of" = Moroni 10:2

"the spirit of prophecy and of revelation" = Mormon reverses this phrase as do all others: "revelation and prophecy."

"sealed up" = this phrase is used 10 times in the book of Ether (abridged by Moroni)

"interpretation" = this word is used 6 times by Moroni, none by Mormon

"confounded the language" of the people = Ether 1:33 (abridged by Moroni)

"great things the Lord hath done for their fathers" = Ether 6:30; 7:27 (abridged by Moroni)

"the covenants of " = used multiple times by Moroni

"Jesus is the Christ" = (Mormon)

"the Eternal God" = see Mormon 6:22, Moroni 4:3, Moroni 10:4

"If there are faults they are the mistakes of men" = Mormon 8:17

"found spotless" = Mormon 9:6-8

Brown, C. Wade, *The First Page of the Golden Plates*. Orem: Granite Publishing and Distribution, 2001.

Note\* While the evidence might tend to agree that Moroni was the "writer" of the Title Page, the idea that he was the "author" of the ideas contained within it is a bit presumptuous, for it glosses over the contribution of Moroni's father Mormon, over the contribution of the great prophet Nephi, and ultimately over the contribution of the Lord himself. The purposes

that are detailed in the Title Page for the Book of Mormon are woven throughout the entire text of the Book of Mormon in the most splendid of ways from the very beginning of First Nephi (which came from the small plates of Nephi and not the abridgment of Mormon). Furthermore, with such a magnificently interwoven work needing to be finished, I doubt Moroni would have comprehended the task with just a couple of simple verses of "intent" left by his father and found in Mormon 7:9-10. To me, Mormon's "intent" involved much more.

For authors to have Moroni putting the title "Book of Mormon" on the title page and then referring to him as the sole "author" of what follows does not reflect how close the relationship was between Mormon and his son Moroni in overseeing the content on the plates. Nor does it emphasize the fact that the Lord directed the whole affair. What purpose does it serve to declare Moroni the sole writer of the Title Page when what he wrote was specifically "commanded" by his father Mormon? (Mormon 8:1, 5, 11) If the Title Page represents the purpose or essence of the Book of Mormon, as I believe it does, then I doubt Mormon would have left the particulars of the Title Page uncommunicated to Moroni. Yet in focusing on either Mormon or Moroni as the author we miss the point. Even if we were to award authorship of the details of the Title Page to Moroni (or Mormon), I doubt either would claim authorship of the Title Page for himself, for in multiple passages in the text, Mormon as well as Moroni and Nephi reveal that it was *the Lord* who was the one directing what was included and what was not. (see 1 Nephi 14:28; 19:3; Words of Mormon 1:6-7, 9; 3 Nephi 26:11-12; Ether 4:4-5; 5:1; 8:9-26; 12:22; 13:13). And once we understand this, we understand how Nephi's writings (the small plates) fit so wonderfully into the space left by the lost 116 pages of translated manuscript for Mormon's abridgment, and why Mormon, upon discovering Nephi's writings and absorbing the intent thereof understood and declared by revelation, "Wherefore, I chose these things [the purposes woven into Nephi's record], to finish my record upon them" (WofM 1:5). Thus the purposes outlined on the Title Page of the Book of Mormon apply to the whole book, and they are the Lord's purposes--He is the author. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

Note\* See the commentary on Words of Mormon 1:5, Moroni 10:1-2.

#### Title Page **To Come Forth in Due Time by Way of the Gentile:**

On the Title Page of the Book of Mormon we find that it was "written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of prophecy and of revelation--Written and sealed up . . . to come forth in due time by way of the Gentile." President Ezra Taft Benson taught:

The Book of Mormon . . . was written for our day. The Nephites never had the book; neither did the Lamanites of ancient times. It was meant for us. . . . Each of the major writers of the Book of Mormon testified that he wrote for future generations. . . . If they saw our day and chose those things which would be of greatest worth to us, is not that how we should study the Book of Mormon? We should constantly ask ourselves, "Why did the Lord inspire Mormon (or Moroni or Alma) to include that in his records?"

[Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Conference Reports*, Oct. 1986, p. 5; or *Ensign*, Nov. 1986, p. 6]

Title Page **That They May Know the Covenants of the Lord (Purpose):**

According to Raymond Treat, the main purpose of the Book of Mormon is to restore a knowledge of the covenants made anciently with the house of Israel to a remnant of the house of Israel. One way to demonstrate that this is the primary purpose of the Book of Mormon is to point out that the book begins (and ends) with the covenant. In the title page we read:

A written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel [the covenant people];

B and also to Jew [the rest of the house of Israel] and Gentile [everyone else] . . .

A' to shew unto the remnant of the house of Israel [the covenant people]

[1] what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers, and

[2] that *they may know the covenants of the Lord* that they are not cast off forever,

B' and also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile [the rest of the house of Israel and the whole world]

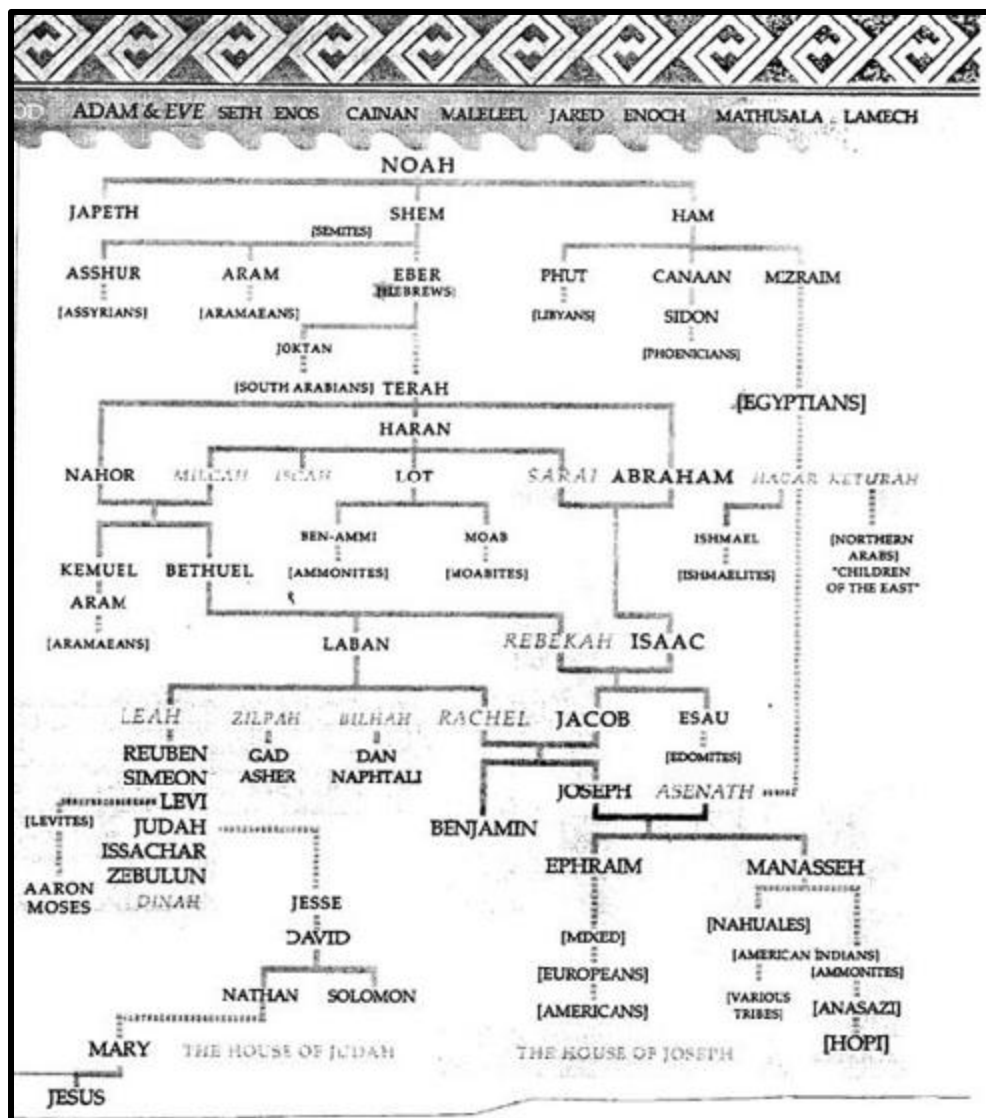
[1] *that Jesus is the Christ,*

[2] *the Eternal God* manifesting himself unto all nations.

[See Raymond C. Treat, "Understanding Our Covenant," in Recent Book of Mormon Developments, Vol. 2, Zarahemla Research Foundation, p. 34]

Note\* While some might debate what the "main" purpose of the Book of Mormon might be, in reality they are all connected. Whether the main purpose of the Book of Mormon is that people might "know the covenants of the Lord" versus knowing that "Jesus is the Christ," in truth these concepts are inseparable. A covenant is only as true and valid as its maker. Thus the covenants made with the house of Israel became true only because they were tied to Jesus Christ. And Jesus "the anointed" (implying a covenant with God the Father as well as the house of Israel) validated the covenant way by his life and Atonement (the "great things the Lord has done for their fathers"). [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

Note\* See the commentary on 1 Nephi 1:1-2, Mormon 7.



Title Page **To the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel [Tribe of Joseph]; and also to [the] Jew [Tribe of Judah] (Illustration):** Genealogy of the House of Judah and the House of Joseph. [Tom Cryer, *Visual Sermons*, p. 125, Unpublished]

Title Page **To the Convincing of the Jew and Gentile That *Jesus Is the Christ* (Purpose):**

According to Ezra Taft Benson, the major mission of the Book of Mormon, as recorded on its title page, is "to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations." Let us consider some of the attributes of our Lord, as found in the Book of Mormon, that show that Jesus is the Christ. [The following are only part of those given in President Benson's speech.]:

He is the *Exemplar*: He "set the example. . . He said unto the children of men: Follow thou me" (2 Nephi 31:9,10).

He is *Generous*: "He commandeth none that they shall not partake of his salvation" (2 Nephi 26:24).

He is the *Healer*: "The "sick, and . . . afflicted with all manner of diseases, . . . devils and unclean spirits, . . . were healed by the power of the Lamb of God" (1 Nephi 11:31).

He is *Humble*: "He humbleth himself before the Father" (2 Nephi 31:7).

He is *Joyful*: "the Father hath given " Him a "fulness of joy" (3 Nephi 28:10).

He is *Kind*: He has "loving kindness . . . towards the children of men" (1 Nephi 19:9).

He is the *Liberator*: There is no other head whereby ye can be made free" (Mosiah 5:8).

He is *Loving*: "He loveth the world, even that he layeth down his own life" (2 Nephi 26:24).

He is *Obedient*: Obedient unto the Father "in keeping his commandments" (2 Nephi 31:7).

He is the *Resurrection*: He brought to pass "the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise" (2 Nephi 2:8).

He is the *Ruler*: He rules "in the heavens above and in the earth beneath" (2 Nephi 29:7).

He is *Sinless*: He "suffereth temptation, and yieldeth not to the temptation" (Mosiah 15:5).

. . . Now, my beloved brethren and sisters, let us read the Book of Mormon and be convinced that Jesus is the Christ. Let us continually reread the Book of Mormon so that we might more fully come to Christ, be committed to Him, centered in Him, and consumed in Him. [Ezra Taft Benson, "Come unto Christ," *Ensign*, November, 1987, pp. 83-85]

According to Susan Black, by earnestly seeking, we can discover that the Book of Mormon writers wrote primarily about our Savior. They wrote of him because of their conviction of his divinity, for they knew him. . . . He is so important to the Book of Mormon prophets that as they wrote their testimonies of the promised Messiah, they mentioned some form of his name on an average of every 1.7 verses. These prophetic scribes referred to Jesus Christ by, literally, 101 different names from the first reference to him as "Lord" in 1 Nephi 1:1 to the final name in the Book of Mormon given him as "Eternal Judge" in Moroni 10:34. Each of the 101 names signified to the prophets a different attribute or characteristic of him and was used appropriately to convey their recognition of who he is and what his mission represents. As a result, his profound character, his singular mission, and his divine relationship to us are most clearly revealed. [Susan Easton Black, *Finding Christ through the Book of Mormon*, p. 5]

Note\* Although authors continue to refer to Susan Black's 1987 study, I have since done much more extensive research revealing more than 500 descriptive titles given for the Lord in the Book of Mormon (See Appendix B), and posted it on our website ([www.ancientamerica.org](http://www.ancientamerica.org)) for a number of years. I have contacted sister Black and notified her of the research. She seemed pleased and said that her research was done without the aid of sophisticated computer programs. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

Note\* See the commentary on 1 Nephi 1:1.

#### Title Page **To the Convincing of the Jew:**

Richardson, Richardson and Bentley note that the Book of Mormon uses a grammatically strange expression on its title page: ". . . to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ. . . ." Critics have questioned the claim of an inspired translation that included improper English. They say that the expression "For the convincing of the Jew . . ." would be more grammatically correct.

While the Church does not teach that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon through a word-for-word dictation from God, there is evidence that it was, indeed, originally written in a language consisting of elements of Hebrew and Egyptian. The evidence for this conclusion is that idioms and characteristics peculiar to the Hebrew language filter through the language barrier even after translation. Though the words "to the convincing of the Jew . . ." may be imperfect English, it is proper Hebrew, based on the Hebrew particle (*lamedh*) which is "an inseparable preposition, prefixed to nouns, pronouns, and verbs." (See John Tvedtnes, "Hebraisms in the Book of Mormon: A Preliminary Survey, 1970, p. 58)

[Allen H. Richardson, David E. Richardson and Anthony E. Bentley, 1000 Evidences for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Part Two-A Voice from the Dust: 500 Evidences in Support of the Book of Mormon, p. 263]

#### Title Page **That Jesus Is *the Christ*:**

The word "Christ" comes from a Greek word for "the anointed." Literally translated, the Hebrew "Messiah" or the Greek "Messias" also means "Anointed one." Thus Christ is the Anointed One. (See Psalms 2; Acts 4:23-30.)

According to Adam Clarke the name "Christ" points out the Saviour of the world in his *prophetic, regal, and sacerdotal* offices:

In ancient times, anointing was used on three occasions, viz. the installation of *prophets, kings, and priests* into their respective offices. . . . But why should such an anointing be deemed necessary? Because the common sense of men taught them that all good, whether spiritual or secular, must come from God, its origin and cause. Hence it was taken for granted, 1. That no man could *foretell events* unless inspired by the Spirit of God. And therefore the *prophet* was anointed, to signify the communication of the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge. 2. That no person could offer an acceptable *sacrifice* to God for the sins of men, or profitably minister in holy things, unless enlightened,

influenced, and directed by the Spirit of grace and holiness. Hence the *priest* was anointed, to signify his being divinely qualified for the due performance of his sacred functions. 3. That no man could enact just and equitable laws; which should have the prosperity of the community and the welfare of the individual continually in view, or could use the power confided to him only for the suppression of vice and the encouragement of virtue, but that man who was ever under the inspiration of the Almighty. Hence *kings* were inaugurated by anointing with oil. . . . As no man was ever dignified by holding the three offices, so no person ever had the title, the anointed one, but Jesus the Christ. He alone is *King of kings*, and *Lord of lords*: the king who governs the universe and rules in the hearts of his followers; the prophet to instruct men in the way wherein they should go; and the great high priest, to make atonement for their sins. Hence he is called the *Messias*, a corruption of the word *ha-mashiach*, the *anointed* one, in Hebrew; which gave birth to *ho Christos*, which has precisely the same signification in Greek. [Adam Clarke, Clarke's Commentary: Matthew--Revelation, p. 371]

Title Page: **And Now, If There Are Faults They are *the Mistakes of Men*; Wherefore, Condemn Not the Things of God:**

From very early on, critics of the Book of Mormon have pointed to the "thousands of changes" which they have found to have been made in the editions of the Book of Mormon since its first publication. They have used these examples as evidence that Joseph Smith was not inspired in translating because, of course, God wouldn't make a mistake. The Book of Mormon reader should note that most all of these "mistakes" can easily be attributed to "the mistakes of men" (Title Page).

Joseph Smith said "the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth." George Horton writes that part of the definition for the word *correct* from Webster's *American Dictionary of the English Language* is as follows: "Literally, set right; conformable to truth, rectitude or propriety, or conformable to a just standard; not faulty; free from error. . . . Correct manners correspond with the rules of morality and received notions of decorum. Correct principles coincide with the truth." Thus it seems evident that Joseph Smith was not talking about grammar, punctuation, or spelling. He was referring to the clarity and depth of doctrine, to the mission and message of the book, to the spirit of inspiration that it fosters, to the divine desire that it sparks in the soul to make the "mighty change," and to the abiding love of the Lord that it brings into our hearts. When the Prophet was criticized in 1834 for "glaring errors" in a published revelation, he replied that shades of meaning or literary mechanics were not as important as the general message: "We did not think so much of orthography [spelling], or the manner, as we did the subject matter, as the word of God means what it says."<sup>x</sup> That same attitude can be taken with the translation of the Book of Mormon.

In examining the process of transmission from the original translator to the printed text of later editions, let us briefly consider some of the problems:

(1) *Inherent Problems in the Translation*: One should keep in mind that in translating ,

(a) Although Oliver Cowdery was Joseph Smith's main scribe, Joseph used a number of other scribes.<sup>xi</sup> Each scribe had their own manner of handwriting style and their own way of writing what they heard.

(b) The scribes seem to have written just what they heard, no more and no less. There does not appear to have been any explanatory conversation between the translator and themselves. Regarding the translation, Oliver Cowdery wrote: "Day after day I continued, uninterrupted, to write from his mouth, as he translated with the Urim and Thummim . . . the history, or record called 'The Book of Mormon'."<sup>xii</sup>

(c) Capitalization, spelling, and punctuation were apparently not specified during the dictation process. John H. Gilbert, the non-Mormon typesetter who worked for E. B. Grandin (a Palmyra, New York, printer), said:

After working a few days, I said to [Hyrum] Smith on his handing me the manuscript in the morning: "Mr. Smith, if you would leave this manuscript with me, I would take it home with me at night and read and punctuate it." . . . I assured Smith that it should be returned all right when I got through with it. For two or three nights I took it home with me and read it, and punctuated it with a lead pencil. . . . Every Chapter, if I remember correctly, was one solid paragraph, without a punctuation mark, from beginning to end. Names of persons and places were generally capitalized, but sentences had no end. I punctuated it to make it read as I supposed the Author intended. . .<sup>xiii</sup>

(d) Whatever the process of translation, it allowed for human errors to appear in the grammar of the scribal copy. On 25 June 1833, Joseph wrote to W. W. Phelps (a printer), "As soon as we get time, we will review the manuscripts of the Book of Mormon [for the Second Edition], after which they will be forwarded to you."<sup>xiv</sup> This Edition was not published until 1837. Over one thousand corrections were made, and some minor clarifications were added, the majority [of the corrections] having to do with grammar. The most frequent change, occurring 707 times, was a shift from *which* to *who*. The 1837 edition was followed in 1840 by a third edition.<sup>xv</sup> Appearing on the title page of the Third Edition (1840) are the words "Carefully Revised by the Translator." It also appears that improving the printed copy of the Book of Mormon was a continual concern with Joseph Smith.<sup>xvi</sup>

(2) *Inherent Problems in Spelling:* One of the first things a modern reader notices about the first edition of the Book of Mormon is some of its "unusual" spellings.

(a) *Spellings were affected by the King James Bible:* For reasons we do not fully understand, Joseph Smith used the language of the King James Bible in his translation. We have long been aware that the spelling of words in our English Bible has undergone many changes through the centuries. For example, the word "sins" was "synnes" in the 1611 version and later became "sinnes" before the present spelling was adopted.<sup>xvii</sup>



(b) American English in 1839 was changing. When Noah Webster's dictionary was published in 1828, that made at least six dictionaries that were in use at the time. At times, each of these dictionaries had different spellings for various words. It is interesting that the noted contemporary author Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-81) included in his writings a number of words with seemingly odd spellings such as *ancles*, *cieling*, *sithe*, *choaked*, *chrystal*, *musquito*, etc. One author has said: "One immutable fact about a living, spoken language is that it inevitably changes. . . .Therefore no one can make an absolutely authoritative statement about the correctness of spelling, punctuation, or even, in some cases grammar and idiom."<sup>xviii</sup>

(3) *Inherent Problems in Transcription and Publishing:*

(a) One problem arose from misspellings that were caused from mistakes in setting of the type.

(b) Other problems arose from simple omission of short words and accidental skipping of single letters, syllables, words, or lines.

(c) Still other problems were so common that the publishing world has identified most of them with technical names. They include haplography (omission of adjacent letter, syllables, words, or lines), dittography (accidental addition of letters or words), homoeoteleuton (accidental omission due to similar ending), homoeoarchton (accidental omission due to similar beginnings), and other simple problems.

In summary, there is a difference between word changes and idea changes. Some of the sharpest detractors of the Book of Mormon have been forced to admit that "most of the 3,913 changes which we found were related to the correction of grammatical and spelling errors and do not really change the basic meaning of the text."<sup>xix</sup> Even before the 1981 edition was published, a careful student of the original manuscript and printer's copy said, "A great value of these early manuscripts is that for the most part they substantiate the correctness of the present Book of Mormon text--fully 99.9% of the text is published correctly."<sup>xx</sup> [George A. Horton, Jr., "Book of Mormon Transmission--from Translator to Printed Text," in The Book of Mormon: The Keystone Scripture, BYU Religious Studies, 1988, pp. 237-255]

Title Page: **And Now, If There Are Faults They are *the Mistakes of Men*; Wherefore, Condemn Not the Things of God:**

Some have used this phrase, as well as others in the Book of Mormon to make a case for the idea that the Book of Mormon might contain some significant errors. Granted, there have been changes in the text for various reasons: capitalization, grammar, readability, punctuation, errors in copying. But these changes are minor, and while they might make reading the text somewhat orderly and reasonable, they uphold the original text almost 99.9% of the time.

In a discussion on the possibilities of more significant errors or "faults" creeping into the Nephite records, John Sorenson writes, "The title page of the Book of Mormon indicates that Moroni (or Mormon) considered that their record could contain 'the mistakes of men;' they did not believe it to be infallible." (John L. Sorenson, "The Significance of the Chronological Discrepancy between Alma 53:22 and Alma 56:9," p. 3).

However, if we look at the complete text of the Title Page, we find that before we come to the phrase quoted above, Moroni and Mormon establish the purposes that the Book of Mormon was supposed to accomplish. Thus when we take Moroni's comments about "faults" in context, it appears that he (and his father Mormon) were more concerned with their perceived imperfect methods ("faults") in describing what "great things the Lord hath done" than apologizing for outright misstatements of fact, whether it might relate to a discussion of gospel doctrine, a geographical description or an historical account. This idea is brought home very clearly in Moroni's words found in Mormon 9:31-33:

31. Condemn me not because of mine imperfection, neither my father, because of his imperfection, neither them who have written before him; but rather give thanks unto God that he hath made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may learn to be more wise than we have been.

32. And now, behold, we have written this record according to our knowledge, in the characters which are called among us the reformed Egyptian, being handed down and altered by us, according to our manner of speech.

33. And if our plates had been sufficiently large we should have written in Hebrew; but the Hebrew hath been altered by us also; and if we could have written in Hebrew, behold, ye would have had no imperfection in our record.

34. But the Lord knoweth the things which we have written, and also that none other people knoweth our language; and because that none other people knoweth our language, therefore he hath prepared means for the interpretation thereof. . . .

It is clear here that Moroni is talking about method. Furthermore, Moroni states in verse 34 something even more significant. He says that "the Lord knoweth the things which we have written." This brings us to the centerpoint of the debate, Would the Lord would allow significant conceptual mistakes to be part of such a record as the Book of Mormon?

If we open ourselves up for significant conceptual mistakes in the Book of Mormon, as inviting as it might seem in order to explain textual problems, then we open ourselves up to a multifaceted dilemma, Who decides what constitutes a mistake? A General Authority? If so, what rank and under what circumstances? A scholar? What are the scientific criteria for proving his theory? Whoever it is must put their authority above that of Moroni, who says in Mormon 8:17, And if there be faults they be the faults of a man. But behold, we know no fault; nevertheless God knoweth all things. . . ." Moroni also says in the Title Page that the content of the Book of Mormon came "by the spirit of prophecy and of revelation." Thus, while problems might arise in the text of the Book of Mormon, and while we might struggle for a time to come

up with an explanation, patience seems to be a better option than revising the text to suit a particular viewpoint.

Note\* The following verses have been viewed by some as lending support to or containing significant conceptual errors in the text of the Book of Mormon:

1 Nephi 19:6 (but see v. 7)  
2 Nephi 19:1 when compared with Matthew 4:12-16  
Mosiah 6:4  
Alma 53:6  
Alma 53:22 compared with Alma 56:9  
3 Nephi 1:5  
3 Nephi 8:1-2  
Mormon 8:12-17  
Mormon 9:31-33  
Ether 4:1 compared with the First edition & Mosiah 6 & 7  
Ether 12:24-25

Note\* See the commentaries for the above notations.

Title Page: **[Moroni]:**

See the other commentaries on the Title Page: "Arrangement," and "Sealed by the Hand of Moroni."

Title Page: ***Translated by Joseph Smith Jun.:***

In a well documented and concise paper, Stephen Ricks writes that when Joseph Smith wrote the now-famous letter to John Wentworth outlining the rise and progress of the Church, he described the translation of the Book of Mormon as proceeding "through the medium of the Urim and Thummim . . . by the gift and power of God."<sup>xxi</sup> On the other occasions when the Prophet made mention of the translation, he used similar language, yet in no extant statement does he provide details of the translation.

During the process of translation of the Book of Mormon, two different instruments were employed: the "seerstone" and the "spectacles" (or "Nephite interpreters"--the Urim and Thummim). Good descriptions exist for both the seer stone<sup>xxii</sup> and the Urim and Thummim.<sup>xxiii</sup> The Urim and Thummim was part of those sacred items buried in the stone box with the golden plates (Ether 3:23; D&C 17:1; JSH 2:52). Through carelessness in lending Martin Harris 116 pages of manuscript whereby they became lost, Joseph Smith was denied possession of the Urim and Thummim for a time (see D&C 10:1-2). According to D&C 10:3 ("it is now restored unto you again") and the statements of Oliver Cowdery, the principal scribe of what constitutes

the printed version of the Book of Mormon, there is a possibility that after a time the Nephite interpreters continued to be used in the translation process.<sup>xxiv</sup> On the other hand, in the *Historical Record* of the Church is recorded: "As a chastisement for this carelessness [the loss of the 116 pages], the Urim and Thummim was taken from Smith. But by humbling himself, he again found favor with the Lord and was presented a strange ovalshaped, chocolate colored stone, about the size of an egg, but more flat which it was promised should answer the same purpose. With this stone all the present book was translated."<sup>xxv</sup> Indeed, according to a number of accounts, the seer stone was used during all stages of the translation of the Book of Mormon, both before and after the loss of the first 116 manuscript pages.

Ricks finally notes (after presenting much more documentation than I have presented here), that it seems most likely that both instruments were used during the entire translation process, but whether this is so or whether Joseph restricted himself to the use of the seer stone following the loss of the 116 manuscript pages, no witness disputes that superhuman means were used to enhance the Prophet's ability to translate.

A question which naturally suggests itself is why supernatural instruments were used in the translation process at all. Orson Pratt, who had himself pondered this very matter, reported that the Prophet told him that the Lord gave him the Urim and Thummim "when he was inexperienced in the spirit of inspiration. But now he had advanced so far that he understood the operation of that spirit and did not need the assistance of that instrument."<sup>xxvi</sup>

Several people close to the Prophet related their ideas concerning the translation process<sup>xxvii</sup> (see the endnote for details), however a number of things argue against their explanations:

(1) Despite rather detailed statements, neither David Whitmer nor Martin Harris had knowledge of the method of translation of the Book of Mormon from personal experience while Joseph himself seems to have given only the most general outline of the process.

(2) Oliver Cowdery was given the chance to translate but failed (see D&C 9:7-8). These D&C verses suggest that effort was required on the part of the translator to search for and find the appropriate expression, something which would not have been the case if the Book of Mormon had been translated by plenary dictation.

(3) The numerous changes made in 1837 by Joseph Smith in the second edition of the Book of Mormon (mostly of a grammatical nature) also argue strongly against the idea that he rendered it into English by automatic translation. If he had, then he would certainly have considered the text inviolate and refrained from making any changes

In reality, the Prophet left no more explicit details concerning the manner in which the seerstone or the interpreters functioned than to say that they operated "by the gift and power of God." Joseph's hesitation to speak in detail about the translation process is reflected in his response to his brother Hyrum's request at a conference held in Orange, Ohio in October 1831 that he provide a first-hand account concerning the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. The Prophet replied that "*it was not intended to tell the world all the particulars of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon and . . . it was not expedient for him to relate these things.*"<sup>xxviii</sup> This is particularly unfortunate, since only Joseph Smith was in a position to describe how these

instruments enhanced his power to translate. [Note\* Thus one might conclude that any historical quote regarding the process of translation must only be considered heresay.]

Nevertheless, a reasonable translation scenario, in Ricks' estimation, would be one in which the means at Joseph's disposal (the seerstone and the interpreters) enhanced his capacity to understand the basic meaning of the words and phrases of the book as well as to grasp the relation of these words to each other. However, the actual translation was Joseph's alone and the opportunity to improve it in grammar was Joseph's alone and the opportunity to improve it in grammar and word choice still remained open. All who have had experience in translating are aware of the often considerable cleavage between being able to construe a sentence and actually rendering it in a felicitous translation. All who have translated are also keenly aware that it is a rare translation which cannot be improved. Thus, while it would be incorrect to minimize the divine element in the process of translation of the Book of Mormon, it would also be misleading and potentially hazardous to deny the human factor. [Stephen D. Ricks, "Joseph Smith's Means and Methods of Translating the Book of Mormon," *F.A.R.M.S.*, pp. 1-5.

Note\* Ricks' article is one of a three-part paper published by FARMS on the historical background and translation of the Book of Mormon. Because it is not within my focus with my Step-by-Step commentary to delve too deeply into the historical background surrounding the translation of the Book of Mormon, the reader is strongly advised to obtain and read those additional articles: John W. Welch and Tim Rathbone, "The Translation of the Book of Mormon: Basic Historical Information," 1986; and Dean Jesse, "Joseph Knight's Recollection of Early Mormon History," 1976 because they are concise and well-documented. [Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

Additional Note\* Critics of the Book of Mormon have come down hard on the use of both the King James Bible language and its specific phrases in the text of the Book of Mormon. They point to large sections (Isaiah, Malachi, Matthew--the Sermon on the Mount, etc.) as evidence that Joseph Smith just plagiarized the Bible. They also point to several hundred other examples of both Old Testament and New Testament phrases within the text (unacknowledged quotes, supposed anachronistic quotes, phrases supposedly used only in a King James Version context, supposed New Testament paraphrases of Old Testament verses, etc.).<sup>xix</sup> However, before one follows these critics' lead and moves too quickly to condemn both Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon, I would ask them to note and ponder at least two thoughts:

(1) From the Book of Mormon itself we find that one of the Lord's purposes in bringing forth the Book is to "establish the truth of [the Bible]" and "to make known the precious things which have been taken away from [it]" (1 Nephi 13:40; Mormon 7:8-10). This purpose alone would necessitate a proximity of their texts.

(2) It is not up to men to dictate to the Lord the parameters of how He might inspire the writers, the abridgers, or the translators of the Nephite records in order to help establish the truth of the Bible (as well as fulfilling other purposes). As Stephen Ricks has noted, it would be foolish for any person to set their own limits, either divine or human, on what an inspired Joseph Smith could or couldn't do in the translation process, especially when Joseph Smith himself apparently never revealed the true process to anyone.

[Alan C. Miner, Personal Notes]

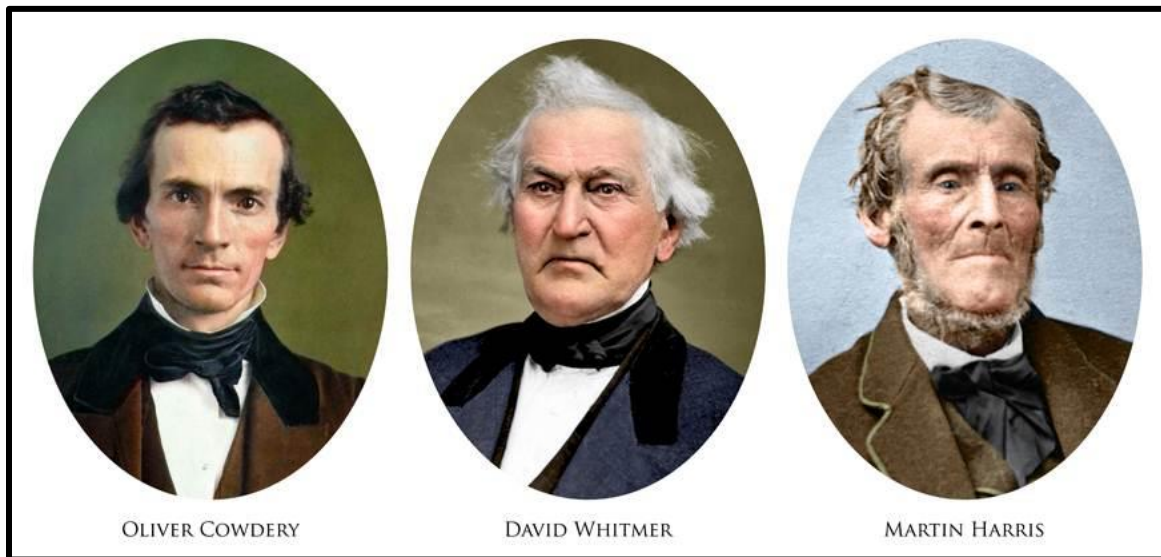
Note\* See the commentary on Moroni 10:4; See Vol. 6, Appendix C.

Title Page: **[By Joseph Smith, Junior, Author and Proprietor]:**

Brent Anderson and Diane Wirth note that some have suggested that Joseph Smith admitted that he was the author of the Book of Mormon because the title page of the first edition lists him as "Author and Proprietor." This language, however, comes from the federal copyright statutes and legal forms in use in 1829 (1 *Stat.* 125 [1790], amended 2 *Stat.* 171 [1802]). In the preface to the same 1830 edition, Joseph Smith stated that he translated Mormon's handwriting "by the gift and power of God." The position of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has invariably been that the truth of Joseph Smith's testimony can be validated through the witness of the Holy Ghost. [D. Brent Anderson and Diane E. Wirth, "Authorship of the Book of Mormon," in To All the World: The Book of Mormon Articles from the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, (Daniel H. Ludlow editor), p. 15]

Preface:Origin: **Testimony of Three Witnesses:**

Critics of the Book of Mormon always seem to dredge up one incident or another<sup>xxx</sup> to undermine the testimonies of the witnesses who put their signature to the written testimony included with the Book of Mormon. In view of the difficulty everyone has in reconstructing Mormon history from the statements of those who chose to comment on events of that time (stories vary widely), it might be wise for the reader to note these witnesses' final testimonies.



Preface:Origin: **Illustration):** The Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon. ScottWoodward.org.

*Martin Harris:*

Francis Kirkham writes that about the last of December, 1869, William Harrison Homer was returning from a mission to England when he met Martin Harris at Kirtland, Ohio. After describing his visit to the Kirtland Temple with Martin Harris, Elder Homer relates the following:

I asked him, "Is it not true that you were once very prominent in the Church, that you gave liberally of your means, and that you were active in the performance of your duties?" "That is very true," replied Martin Harris, "Things were alright then. I was honored while the people were here, but now that I am old and poor it is all different." "Really," I replied, "how can that be?" "What about your testimony to the Book of Mormon? Do you still believe that the Book of Mormon is true and that Joseph Smith was a Prophet?" Again the effect was electric. A changed old man stood before me. It was no longer a man with an imagined grievance. It was a man with a message, a man with a noble conviction in his heart, a man inspired of God and endowed with divine knowledge. Through the broken window of the Temple shone the winter sun, clear and radiant.

"Young man," answered Martin Harris with impressiveness, "Do I believe it! Do you see the sun shining! Just as surely as the sun is shining on us and gives us light, and the moon and stars give us light by night, just as surely as the breath of life sustains us, so surely do I know that Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God, chosen of God to open the last dispensation of the fulness of times; so surely do I know that the Book of Mormon was divinely translated. I saw the plates; I saw the Angel; I heard the voice of God. I know that the Book of Mormon is true and that Joseph Smith was a true prophet of God, I might as well doubt my own existence as to doubt the divine authenticity of the Book of Mormon or the divine calling of Joseph Smith." It was a sublime moment. It was a wonderful testimony. We were thrilled to the very roots of our hair. The shabby, emaciated little man before us was transformed as he stood with hand outstretched toward the sun of heaven. A halo seemed to encircle him. A divine fire glowed in his eyes. His voice throbbed with the sincerity and the conviction of his message. It was the real Martin Harris whose burning testimony no power on earth could quench. It was the most thrilling moment of my life.

I asked Martin Harris how he could bear so wonderful a testimony after having left the Church. He said, "Young man, I never did leave the Church, the Church left me."

Martin Harris was the first scribe to assist in the translation of the Book from the original plates as dictated by the prophet who was led by the Holy Ghost! It was Martin Harris who was called by revelation to assist in the selection and ordination of the first Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, of the newly organized Church. It was Martin Harris who was called upon to accompany the prophet to Missouri to assist in the selection of the First High Council of the Church, and he was a member of said Council. When the new presidency of the Church was chosen Martin Harris felt greatly disappointed that he was not called to leadership, but Martin Harris never denied the faith, never affiliated with any other sect or denomination, but when the church came West, Martin Harris

remained behind. It is true that Martin Harris did not apostatize; he was never tried for his fellowship; he was never excommunicated.

During the summer of 1870, Elder Edward Stevenson was authorized to collect money by subscription to bring Martin Harris to Utah. About two hundred dollars was raised; and on August 30, 1870, Martin Harris arrived in Salt Lake City, in the company of Elder Stevenson. . . . He visited Brigham Young at his home. They became reconciled, and Martin Harris was invited to speak in the Tabernacle, and he bore a faithful testimony. He went to Smithfield, and later to Clarkston and made his home with his son, Martin Harris, Jr., and in course of time he returned to full fellowship and communion with the Saints. (*The Improvement Era*, volume 29, 1924-1926, pages 468-472).

Kirkham writes that Martin Harris passed the last five years of his earthly career at Clarkston, Cache County, Utah. Visitors came from far and near to see and hear him, and he was never happier than when he had an opportunity to bear his testimony. One day in the month of July, 1875, Elder Ole Jensen and others heard the venerable witness relate his wonderful story. After having stated the circumstances attending the appearance of the angel with the plates, he said:

The angel stood before me and said, "Look!" When I gazed upon him, I fell to the earth, but I rose to my feet again and saw the angel turn the golden leaves over and over, and I said, "That is enough, my Lord and my God." Then I heard the voice of God say, "the book translated from these plates is true and translated correctly."

Martin Harris added solemnly:

As sure as you are standing here and see me, just as sure did I see the angel with the gold plates in his hand as he showed them to me. I have promised that I will bear witness of this both here and hereafter.

Among those who heard Martin Harris bear his testimony was Elder William Waddoups. He was introduced to Martin Harris in Salt Lake City. To him Harris said:

Young man, I had the privilege of being with the Prophet Joseph Smith, and with these eyes of mine, (pointing to his eyes) I saw the angel of the Lord, and I saw the plates and the Urim and Thummim and the sword of Laban, and with these ears (pointing to his ears), I heard the voice of the angel, and with these hands (holding out his hands), I handled the plates containing the record of the Book of Mormon, and I assisted the Prophet in the translation thereof. I bear witness that this testimony is true. (J.M. Sjodahl, *Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon*, pp. 58-60)



*David Whitmer:*

Kirkham writes that after his separation from the Church, David Whitmer located at Richmond, Mo., where he resided until he passed away, January 25, 1888. In that place he was honored and respected, as a citizen and a Christian gentleman. This is evident from the following statement, which appeared in the Richmond, *Conservator* of March 25, 1881, signed by twenty-one prominent business and professional men:

We, the undersigned citizens of Richmond, Ray Co., Mo., where David Whitmer, Sr., has resided since the year 1838, certify that we have been long and intimately acquainted with him and know him to be a man of the highest integrity and of undoubted truth and veracity.

In 1881, as reported in the Richmond *Conservator* of March 25, David Whitmer made the following statement in response to some rumors that had reached him to the effect that he had denied or amended his testimony concerning the Book of Mormon:

Those who know me best know well that I have always adhered to that testimony. And that no man may be misled or doubt my present views in regard to the same, I do again affirm the truth of all my statements as then made and published. . . .  
In the spirit of Christ, who hath said, "Follow thou me, for I am the Life, the Light, and the Way," I submit this statement to the world; God in whom I trust being my judge as to the sincerity of my motives and the faith and hope that is in me of eternal life.

In 1886, David Whitmer said to Elder Edward Stevenson:

As sure as the sun shines and I live, just so sure did the angel appear unto me and Joseph Smith and I heard his voice and did see the angel standing before us. (J.M. Sjodahl, *Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon*, pp. 60-61)

*Oliver Cowdery:*

According to Francis Kirkham, Oliver Cowdery held positions of trust and responsibility in the Church in its beginnings and had the confidence and affection of the Prophet. He was his counselor and intimate friend. Yet, in 1838, he was disfellowshipped by his brethren and declared unworthy of the high positions to which he had been called. (*M. S.* 16:133-34) After that time he never spoke to the Prophet again, but at no time in that absence and while living among the enemies of the Church, did he deny or modify in any degree his testimony of the divine origin of the Book of Mormon. In 1848, four years after the death of the Prophet, he turned again to the Church.

On October 29, 1848, he addressed at Council Bluffs, Iowa, about two thousand people. "He bore testimony, in the most positive terms, to the truth of the Book of Mormon, the restoration of the Priesthood to the earth, and the mission of Joseph Smith, as the prophet of the last days." (*Era 14:391*) A part of his address was written at the time by Reuben Miller. The following is copied from *The Deseret News*, April 13, 1859:

Friends and Brethren,

My name is Cowdery, Oliver Cowdery. In the early history of this Church I stood identified with her, and one in her councils. True it is that the gifts and callings of God are without repentance; not because I was better than the rest of mankind was I called; but, to fulfill the purposes of God, he called me to a high and holy calling. I wrote, with my own pen, the entire Book of Mormon (save a few pages) as it fell from the lips of the Prophet Joseph Smith, as he translated it by the gift and power of God, by the means of the Urim and Thummim, or, as it is called by that book "Holy Interpreters." I beheld with my eyes, and handled with my hands, the gold plates from which it was transcribed. I also saw with my eyes and handled with my hands the "Holy Interpreters." That book is true.

While preparing to leave for Utah, Oliver returned to visit his wife's relatives, the Peter Whitmer family at Richmond, Missouri, where he died March 3, 1850. In the year 1878, David Whitmer said to Elders Orson Pratt and Joseph F. Smith concerning his departure: "Oliver died the happiest man I ever saw. After shaking hands with the family and kissing his wife and daughter, he said, "Now I lay me down for the last time; I am going to my Savior"; and he died immediately, with a smile on his face. (*M. S.*, vol. 40; p. 774)

Kirkham finishes with the following note:

If there had been fraud or deception in the writing of the Book of Mormon, Oliver Cowdery would have known it. He was a daily companion with the Prophet during almost the entire time of its production, for he wrote as the Prophet dictated. He also shared with him heavenly visions and received with him from immortal messengers the power to act for God in the establishment of the Restored Church. During his long separation from the Prophet and the Church he was constantly urged to repudiate his published testimony in the Book of Mormon. This he never did.

[Francis W. Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America: The Book of Mormon*, Vol. 1, pp. 69-74, 247-255]

Preface:Origin: **The Testimony of Eight Witnesses:**

Francis Kirkham writes that all of the eight witnesses maintained their testimonies to the last. *Joseph Smith, Sr.*, who was the first to receive the message of his chosen son as from

God, passed away Sept. 18, 1840, after having endured faithfully all trials and hardships for the sake of the gospel. He was, at the time of his death, the Patriarch to the Church.



Hyrum Smith [mormonwiki.com](http://mormonwiki.com)

*Hyrum Smith* sealed his faithful testimony with his blood, June 27, 1844, the day of the martyrdom of the prophet, his brother, and the two, united in life, were not separated in death.



Samuel Smith [en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)

*Samuel Smith* also passed away in 1844, faithful to the last.



Jacob Whitmer en.wikipedia.org



John Whitmer historyofmormonism.com

Of the Whitmers, *Christian Whitmer* died in 1835, and *Peter Whitmer, Jr.* in 1836, both in full fellowship with the Church. *Jacob Whitmer* and *John Whitmer* were separated from the Church in 1838, but neither retracted his testimony at any time. The latter died forty years later at Far West maintaining to the last the truth of his testimony.

*Hiram Page* was one of the prominent men of the Church, who fell by the wayside in 1838. But he never denied what he had testified to. He died in 1852, rejoicing that he had been privileged to see the plates of the Book of Mormon (See J. M. Sjodahl, *An Introduction to the Study of the Book of Mormon*, pp. 62-63). [Francis W. Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America: The Book of Mormon*, Vol. 1, pp. 254-255]

According to Richard L. Anderson, persecution and hardship took its toll on the eleven Book of Mormon witnesses, most of whom died by 1856. Only three lived beyond that year-- Martin Harris died in 1875, John Whitmer in 1878, and David Whitmer in 1888. Because of increasing public curiosity, these survivors were personally interviewed many times and sometimes queried in correspondence.

*John Whitmer:* John Whitmer responded to inquiries several times in writing. The following, his longest surviving letter, is written entirely in his own handwriting. It begins, "Dear Sir," and the complementary close of "Yours respectfully" is followed by John Whitmer's signature. John penned it at his residence at Far West, Missouri, addressing it to "Mark H. Forest, Esq.," who is more accurately Mark H. Forscutt, an able member of the Reorganized Church who seems to have asked Whitmer whether he or other witnesses had modified their written testimonies.<sup>xxx</sup> Dating the letter 5 March 1876, (two years before his death), John wrote in part:

. . . I have never heard that any one of the three or eight witnesses ever denied the testimony that they have borne to the Book as published in the first edition of the Book of

Mormon. There are only two of the witnesses to that book now living, to wit., David Whitmer, one of the three, and John Wh[itmer], one of the eight. Our names have gone forth to all nation, tongues and people as a divine revelation from God. And it will bring to pass the designs of God according to the declaration therein contained, &c.<sup>xxxii</sup>

In the Forscutt letter, John Whitmer gave a historical evaluation of the testimonies of the eleven Book of Mormon witnesses, an act significant in part because he knew the views of the Eight Witnesses, particularly his brothers and brother-in-law who died in Missouri before they could provide their own detailed documentation of their experience with the plates. The intense tone of John Whitmer's 1876 reaffirmation matches that of the statement he joined in forty years earlier. In fact, all the Three Witnesses and three of the Eight Witnesses left personal restatements of their 1830 printed certificates. All say not only that they saw the plates, but also that their testimonies have binding significance for the modern world.

*Hiram Page:* William McClellin had queried Hiram Page about his written testimony as one of the Eight Witnesses, and Hiram asserted that his printed 1830 Book of Mormon statement was still true and was according to "what I saw." Hiram Page writes:

In the next place you want to know my faith relative to the Book of Mormon and the winding up of wickedness. As to the Book of Mormon, it would be doing injustice to myself and to the work of God of the last days, to say that I could know a thing to be true in 1830, and know the same thing to be false in 1847. To say my mind was so treacherous that I had forgotten what I saw. To say that a man of Joseph's ability, who at that time did not know how to pronounce the word Nephi, could write a book of six hundred pages, as correct as the Book of Mormon, without supernatural power. And to say that those holy angels who came and showed themselves to me as I was walking through the field, to confirm me in the work of the Lord of the last days--three of whom came to me afterwards and sang an hymn in their own pure language. Yea, it would be treating the God of heaven with contempt to deny these testimonies, with too many others to mention here.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

*Hyrum Smith:* After having escaped from Liberty Jail and fleeing to Illinois, Hyrum Smith published an account of the abuse he had suffered and why he endured it, and in the preface he explained why he reaffirmed his 1830 statement that he saw the gold plates. Near the end of his narrative he said the following:

Thus I have endeavored to give you a short account of my sufferings while in the state of Missouri. . . . I had been abused and thrust into a dungeon, and confined for months on account of my faith, and the "testimony of Jesus Christ." However, I thank God that I felt a determination to die rather than deny the things which my eyes had seen, which my hands had handled, and which I had borne testimony to, wherever my lot had been cast. And I can assure my beloved brethren that I was enabled to bear as strong a testimony, when nothing but death presented itself, as ever I did in my life.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

Richard L. Anderson, "Personal Writings of the Book of Mormon Witnesses" in Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited, pp. 50-56.

## NOTES

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- ii. Concerning the setting of the type for the title page, Mr. Gilbert has written: proof was read and corrected, several copies were printed. (Wilford C. Wood, *Joseph Smith Begins His Work*, Introductory section (Salt Lake City: Wilford C. Wood, 1958.)
- iii. Ibid.
- iv. *History of the Church*, 1:71, emphasis added, see 6:366.
- v. Walter Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 30.
- vi. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1946), 1:71.
- vii. Ibid., 4:495.
- viii. *Times and Seasons* 2 (15 March 1841): 354-55.
- ix. Personal correspondence with Royal Skousen provided this information. It is my opinion that the omission of Moroni's name from the first 1852 printing was an oversight that was corrected in the second printing. That correction indicates it was the feeling to follow the addition of Moroni's name that Joseph had made.
- x. Letter to William Edward, et al., 30 March 1834, from Oliver Cowdery's letter book, pp. 30-36, quoted in Dean Jessee, *Journal of Mormon History* 3 (1976): 28-29.
- xi. Paul R. Cheesman, *The Keystone of Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1973), pp. 55-56, lists Martin Harris, Emma Smith, Samuel Smith, Reuben Hale, Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, John Whitmer, and Christian Whitmer as one time or another scribes.
- xii. *Messenger and Advocate* 1 (1834): 14.
- xiii. Quoted in Wilford C. Wood, *Joseph Smith Begins His Work* (Salt Lake City: Wilford C. Wood, 1958), introductory pages.
- xiv. *HC* 1:363.
- xv. By now, Oliver Cowdery had been excommunicated and had taken the printer's manuscript with him.
- xvi. *HC* 4:494.
- xvii. Sir Frederic Kenyon, *Our Bible and the Ancient Manuscripts* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958), Appendix II.
- xviii. Elinore Hughes Partridge, "Nineteenth-Century Spelling: The Rules and the Writers," *Ensign*, August 1975, p. 76.

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xix. Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *The Changing World of Mormonism* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1980), p. 131.

xx. Stanley R. Larson, "Textual Variants in Book of Mormon Manuscripts," *Dialogue*, 10 (August 1977): 8.

xxi. *Times and Seasons* III:9 (March 1, 1842), 707 = Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, B. H. Roberts, ed., 7 volumes (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1960), IV:537.

xxii. The seerstone was apparently found when Joseph and his brother Alvin were digging a well on the Mason Chase property in 1822. It was "about the size of a small hen's egg, in the shape of a high instepped shoe. It was composed of layers of different colors passing diagonally through it. It was very hard and smooth, perhaps from being carried in the pocket." See Eber D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville, OH: Eber D. Howe, 1834), 241-42; cf. Martin Harris' account in *Tiffany's Monthly* (June 1859), 163. W. D. Purple's account in *The Chenango Union*, 3 May 1877, cited in Francis W. Kirkham, *A New Witness for Christ in America*, 2 vols. (Independence, MO: Zion's Printing and Publishing Company, 1951), 2:365. David Whitmer in an interview in the *Kansas City Journal*, 5 June 1881: *Omaha Herald*, reprinted in the *Chicago Inter-Ocean* October 17, 1886 and in the *Saints' Herald* 33 (November 13, 1886), 706. "The Book of Mormon" in *The Chicago Tribune* 17 December 1885, p. 3. *Saints' Herald* 26 (November 15 1879), 341. "Journey About Ended," *The Chicago Times* January 24, 1888, p. 8. Emma Smith Bidamon describes it briefly in an unpublished letter to Mrs. George W. (Emma) Pilgrim, March 27, 1870, RLDS Archives P 4 F 20.

Interestingly, the seer stone came (through a series of events detailed by Richard van Wagoner and Steven Walker--"Joseph Smith: 'The Gift of Seeing'," *Dialogue* 15:2 (1982), 57) into the hands of Brigham Young and has remained--with only a brief lacuna--in the possession of the First Presidency since that time.

xxiii. There are several accounts containing descriptions of the Nephite interpreters. In one account, J.W. Peterson and W.S. Pender interviewed Joseph's brother William in 1891 and reported:

Among other things we inquired minutely about the Urim and thummim and the breastplate. We asked him what was meant by the expression "two rims of a bow," which held the former. He said a double silver bow was twisted into the shape of the figure eight, and the two stones were placed literally between the two rims of a bow. At one end was attached a rod which was connected with the outer edge of the right shoulder of the breast-plate. By pressing the head a little forward, the rod held the Urim and Thummim before the eyes much like a pair of spectacles. A pocket was prepared in the breastplate on the left side, immediately over the heart. When not in use the Urim and Thummim was placed in this pocket, the rod being of just the right length to allow it to be so deposited. This instrument could, however, be detached from the breastplate and his brother said Joseph often wore it detached when away from home, but always used it in connection with the breastplate when receiving official communications, and usually so when translating as it permitted him to have both hands free to hold the plates. (J.W. Peterson in *The Rod of Iron* I:3 (February 1924), 6-7.)

xxiv. During an 1830 trial of Joseph on the "charge of misdemeanor" Oliver Cowdery "testified under oath, that said Smith found with the plates, from which he translated his book, two transparent stones, resembling glass, set in silver bows. That by looking through these, he was able to read in English, the reformed Egyptian characters, which were engraved on the plates." (see A.W. Benton, "Mormonites,," *Evangelical Magazine and Gospel Advocate* n.s.



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2:15 (April 9, 1831). Since Oliver's only experience in translating the Book of Mormon came after the loss of the 116 manuscript pages, his testimony at this trial clearly suggests that he was acquainted with the Nephite interpreters from personal observation.

<sup>xxv.</sup> *The Historical Record. Devoted Exclusively to Historical, Biographical, Chronological and Statistical Matters*, p. 632, LDS Archives, cited in van Wagoner and Walker, *ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>xxvi.</sup> (Report of) "Two Days' Meeting at Brigham City June 27 and 28, 1874," *Millennial Star* 36:32 (August 11, 1874), 499.

<sup>xxvii.</sup> In his *Address to All Believers in Christ*, (Richmond, MO: n.p., 1887, 12) David Whitmer wrote:

I will now give you a description of the manner in which the Book of Mormon was translated. Joseph would put the seer stone into a hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing. One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal scribe, and when it was written down and repeated to Brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another with the interpretation would appear. Thus the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God, and not by any power of man.

According to Edward Stevenson, Martin Harris explained the translation as follows:

By the aid of the seer stone, sentences would appear and were read by the Prophet and written by Martin, and when finished he would say, 'Written,' and if correctly written that sentence would disappear and another appear in its place, but if not written correctly it remained until corrected, so that the translation was just as it was engraven on the plates, precisely in the language then used.

<sup>xxviii.</sup> "Minutes of a General Conference held at the dwelling of br. Serenes Burnet in the Town of Orange, Cuyahoga County, Ohio, October 25, 1836," *Far West Record*, p. 13 = Joseph Smith, *op. cit.* 1:220, note.

<sup>xxix.</sup> *The Book of Mormon and the Bible*, <http://primenet.com/~heuvcl/bom/intro.htm>. Wesley P. Walters, *The Use of the Old Testament in the Book of Mormon*. Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1990. H. Michael Marquardt, *The Use of the Bible in the Book of Mormon and Early Nineteenth Century Events Reflected in the Book of Mormon*, Institute of Pastoral Studies of The Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation, 1979. Reprinted from *The Journal of Pastoral Practice*, Vol. II, No. 2, pp. 95-136 (1978); Vol. III, No. 1, pp. 114-136 (1979). Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *Joseph Smith's Plagiarism of the Bible*, Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1998.

<sup>xxx.</sup> One of their favorite themes is that Martin Harris did not see the actual "plates," but somehow saw them in "vision with his "spiritual eyes," as if the spirit had nothing to do with the whole witnessing process or the appearance of an angelic being, and as if Martin Harris had more than one opportunity to view the plates, which he didn't. They list a number of carefully crafted statements in the same pattern. For example:

I was well acquainted with Martin Harris, who was often at my house for days at a time. I have questioned him much about the plates from which the "Book of Mormon" purports to have been translated. He never claimed to have seen them with his natural eyes, only spiritual vision. (A statement by Reuben P. Harmon, *Naked Truths About Mormonism*, vol. 1, no. 2, April 1888, p. 1)

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Martin Harris stated in an interview with Anthony Metcalf and James Bowman about 1873 (two years before Harris' death)--"I never saw the golden plates, only in a visionary or entranced state" (*Ten Years Before the Mast . . .* by A. Metcalf, 1888, p. 70).

xxxi. For information on Forscutt, see Edwards, *The History of the Reorganized Church*, 6:78-9.

xxxii. Printed courtesy of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri. Author's transcription of the holograph letter, found in the RLDS archives.

xxxiii. Hiram Page, letter to William E. McLellin, 30 May 1847, *Ensign of Liberty* 1 (January 1848): 63.

xxxiv. Hyrum Smith, "To the Saints Scattered Abroad," *Times and Seasons* 1 (December 1839):20.