

# Is the Book of Mormon from God?

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The Bible teaches that it is noble and necessary to question the teachings of men to find out whether they are true (Matt. 7:15-20; Acts 17:11; Eph. 5:11; 1 Thess. 5:21; 1 John 4:1). When one turns his attention to the Mormon religion and puts it to the test, what does he discover? The basis for the Mormon religion goes back to the early 1800's, when Joseph Smith claimed he received plates with ancient writings on them. These plates were said to have been translated into English, which became the Book of Mormon. For the purpose of helping precious souls go to Heaven, the question is now asked, "Is the Book of Mormon from God?"

## IT CONTRADICTS THE BIBLE

The Mormons believe that the Bible is "a volume of holy scripture," but they also believe that "The Book of Mormon is a volume of holy scripture comparable to the Bible."<sup>1</sup> It should first of all be stated that God gave us "*all things pertaining to life and godliness*" in the first century A.D., when the Holy Spirit guided those men into ALL Truth (2 Pet. 1:3; John 16:13; cf. 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Zech. 13:1-5; 1 Cor. 13:8-12; Eph. 4:11-16; Jude 3, etc.). If the Holy Spirit did His job (and He did), then there is no more Truth to be revealed to man other than what was revealed in the first century A.D.! Smith claimed that an angel told him of "another testament of Jesus Christ," but notice the warning Paul gave us in the first century about such things:

*I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed (Gal. 1:6-9).*

If it were the case that both the Bible and the Book of Mormon came from God, the two books would not contradict one another. However, Joseph Smith's alleged revelations in the nineteenth century contain a plethora of unequivocal contradictions to the true Holy Scriptures, which were delivered some 1800 years before his writings. For example, because Joseph Smith obviously did not know his Bible very well, his writings state that Jesus was born in Jerusalem instead of Bethlehem (Alma 7:10). Some have pitifully tried to cover up this error by claiming that Bethlehem is a suburb of Jerusalem,

but how do they explain another passage where Joseph Smith taught that Jesus was born in Nazareth? (1 Nephi 11:13-20). The Book of Mormon also states that the “church of Christ” existed 147 years before Christ came to earth! (Mosiah 18:17). However, when Christ was on earth, He stated that His church had not yet been built: “...upon this rock I will build my church...” (Matt. 16:18). The Bible teaches that the church of Christ was not built until after Jesus shed His blood to purchase it: “feed the church of the Lord, which He hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28 ASV). Joseph Smith also wrote that people were called “Christians” in 73 B.C. (Alma 46:13; 48:10); yet the Bible tells us that “the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch” in the first century A.D. (Acts 11:26). The Book of Mormon teaches that there were three days of darkness upon Christ’s crucifixion, rather than three hours, which was obviously another blunder by someone who seemed to know just enough about the Bible to be dangerous (1 Nephi 19:10; cf. Matthew 27:45). The Book of Mormon also teaches that “a seer is greater than a prophet” (Mosiah 8:15), yet the Bible teaches that the words “seer” and “prophet” are synonymous (1 Samuel 9:9). More contradictions could be listed, but these are sufficient to show that the Book of Mormon is not in harmony with the true Holy Scriptures, the Bible.

#### **IT CONTRADICTS ITSELF**

Not only does the Book of Mormon contradict the Bible, it also contradicts itself! It has already been mentioned that the Book of Mormon contradicts itself regarding where Jesus was born, but there are many other contradictions. For example, in the original Book of Mormon, Mosiah 21:28 stated that “king Benjamin” was still alive, however the writer had apparently forgotten that fifteen chapters earlier in his story king Benjamin had died! The second edition of the Book of Mormon had this blatant error removed, but by making that change, the Mormons admitted the error.<sup>2</sup>

#### **IT DIRECTLY QUOTES FROM THE KING JAMES TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE**

Why would plates which were supposedly created hundreds of years before King James was even born contain direct quotes from the King James translation of the Bible? Yet the Book of Mormon is replete with direct quotes from the King James translation. One example is Mosiah chapter 14. The whole chapter is a direct quote of Isaiah 53:1-12 from the KJV! Even all eleven of the italicized words from the KJV (which were not supplied in the original Hebrew text) are directly quoted in Smith’s book! It has been estimated that as much as 4% of the Book of Mormon can be traced to the King James translation of the Holy Scriptures.<sup>3</sup>

#### **IT IS LITERALLY FULL OF ERRORS**

Joseph Smith proudly boasted that the Book of Mormon was “the most accurate book on earth,” yet some 3,913 errors have had to be corrected!<sup>4</sup> “There are literally

thousands of grammatical errors in the original edition of the Book of Mormon, errors that have been gradually changed in later editions. These take the form of such things as double negatives, incorrect adverbs and adjectives, and especially incorrect tenses.”<sup>5</sup> Here are a few examples: “I would cite your minds forward to the time when the Lord gave these commandments” (Alma 13:1; this error is still in recent editions!); “they did not fight against God no more” (Alma 23:7); “Adam and Eve, which was our first parents” (1 Nephi 5:11); “Behold, for none of those things I cannot hope” (2 Nephi 33:9). Joseph Smith even made up his own words, such as “preparator” (for preparer, 1 Nephi 15:35, still found in later versions); “arriven” (for arrived, Alma 20:30); “numerority” (for a vast number, Alma 56:10); “enormity” (for a vast number, Alma 52:5); and “cimeter” (for sword, Enos 1:20). Not only did the Book of Mormon contain fabricated words, it also had common words misspelled, such as “bellowses” (for bellows, 1 Nephi 17:11); “phrensied” (for frenzied, Alma 30:16); “eatheth” (for eateth, 3 Nephi 20:8); “tempels” (for temples, Alma 16:13), etc.

Perhaps one might try to explain away such errors as those mentioned above by saying that Joseph Smith was not given the actual words to record, but merely the ideas, which he had to translate into English. However, that is not what Joseph Smith and the early “witnesses” of the plates claimed! They claimed that the actual process of translation was overseen and guided by God: “the plates...have been translated by the gift and power of God.”<sup>6</sup> As a matter of fact, the Mormons have stated that EVERY LETTER OF EVERY WORD was revealed to Smith, and the words had to be copied down correctly before the next part of the text would even be revealed by God! David Whitmer, one of the original “three witnesses,” stated the following:

Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the 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 a 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 character with the interpretation would appear.<sup>7</sup>

Martin Harris, another of the three witnesses, wrote, “The translation of the characters appeared on the Urim and Thummim, sentence by sentence, and as soon as one was **correctly translated** the next appeared.”<sup>8</sup> Mormon historian Brigham H. Roberts

wrote that “the interpretation...was reflected in the sacred instrument, there to remain **until correctly written** by the scribe.”<sup>9</sup> Joseph Smith stated that “the translation of them (the plates – JPH) which you have seen is correct.”<sup>10</sup> The Mormons claim that the Book of Mormon is from God, and the actual letter by letter translation was overseen by God Himself, but how can anyone believe that God would have made even one mistake, let alone thousands of mistakes?

### IT REFUTES ITS OWN CLAIMS OF INSPIRATION

The very characters of Smith’s fanciful story admit that the book is not inspired by God! In the first chapter of the Book of Mormon, Nephi says the following about his writing: “...I make it with mine own hand; and I make it according to **my knowledge**” (1 Nephi 1:3). Later, Nephi writes, “Nevertheless, I do not write anything upon plates save it be that **I think** it be sacred. And now, **if I do err**, even did they err of old...” (1 Nephi 19:3-10). “...I have written according to **the best of my knowledge**...” (Jacob 7:26). “And now it came to pass, **if there was no mistake made by this man** in the reckoning of time...” (3 Nephi 8:2). Perhaps this admission is the most surprising: “And whoso receiveth this record, and shall not condemn it because of **the imperfections which are in it**, the same shall know of greater things than these...” (Mormon 8:12). It is evident that Joseph Smith anticipated that his errors would be quickly detected!

### IT HAS NO HISTORICAL OR ARCHAEOLOGICAL VALUE

Regarding the Bible, the late Nelson Glueck, a famous archaeologist, said, “It may be stated categorically that no archaeological discovery has ever controverted a Biblical reference. Scores of archaeological findings have been made which confirm in clear outline or exact detail historical statements in the Bible.”<sup>11</sup> However, the same cannot be said about the Book of Mormon. “It records hundreds of people and places that have never been authenticated! In fact, when questioned about its historical and archaeological reliability, major institutions such as the Smithsonian institute have clearly said that it has **none**.”<sup>12</sup>

### IT CONTAINS ABSURDITIES

One may merely read the account of football-shaped barges with plugs in the top and bottom to see a clear example of the absurdities of the Book of Mormon (Ether 2:16-25). In God’s plan for the barges, He had supposedly failed to provide a means of air and light for the boats. When God was asked about the lack of such, he apparently realized His error, and told them to make holes in the top and bottom of the boats, and they were to plug and unplug them as needed. Since the boat was shaped like a football, they would be rolling around in the sea, and the top of the boat would soon become the bottom! Can you imagine the battering and seasickness they would have experienced? Compare such

silliness to the scientifically accurate dimensions and specifications of Noah's ark (Gen. 6:14ff), which dimensions have been used even in modern ships for carrying large amounts of cargo. Another absurdity can be found in the account of Shiz, the decapitated man who "raised up on his hands and fell; and after that he had struggled for breath, he died" (Ether 15:31). One also wonders how people in 73 B.C. were using a compass, since the compass was not invented until about A.D. 1100! (Alma 37:38).

### CONCLUSION

Entire books have been written exposing the falsehoods of the Book of Mormon, but hopefully the information presented here is sufficient to convince the objective reader that the Book of Mormon is not from God. It is interesting that the first purported witnesses of the plates later apostatized from the Mormon church.<sup>13</sup> John H. Gilbert, printer of the first edition of the Book of Mormon, stated in a legal affidavit that he had asked one of those "witnesses," Martin Harris, the following question: "Martin, did you see those plates with your naked eyes?" Martin looked down for an instant, raised his eyes up, and said, 'No. I saw them with a spiritual eye.'<sup>14</sup> Many wonder why Mormons are willing to risk their souls on something that is so clearly false. May the Mormons and everyone else do what the Holy Spirit commanded in the **true** Holy Scriptures: "*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good*" (1 Thess. 5:21).

<http://www.TheBibleDomain.com>

### REFERENCES

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  - <sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 17.
  - <sup>4</sup> Conley, Darrell. Mormonism. 2001 Spring Bible Institute Lectures, p. 373.
  - <sup>5</sup> Williams, p. 9.
  - <sup>6</sup> Smith, Joseph. The Book of Mormon. "The Testimony of Three Witnesses," (Salt Lake City, UT: 1981).
  - <sup>7</sup> Whitmer, David. Address to All Believers in Christ, Richmond, Missouri, 1887, p. 12.
  - <sup>8</sup> Harris, Martin. The Myth of Manuscript Found, p. 91.
  - <sup>9</sup> Roberts, Brigham H. New Witnesses for God, Vol. III, p. 114.
  - <sup>10</sup> Smith, Joseph. History of the Church, Vol. I. pp. 54-55.
  - <sup>11</sup> Glueck, Nelson. Rivers in the Desert: A History of the Negev, p. 31.
  - <sup>12</sup> Williams, p. 29.
  - <sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 33.
  - <sup>14</sup> Gilbert, John H. "Memorandum," in Joseph Smith Begins His Work.