Revelation or Fabrication - Challenges of the Book of Mormon

Many people have opinions as to the nature of God and Jesus Christ, which is why there are so many different religions, or so many different ideas about religion and God. Regardless of your current beliefs, preconceptions, or unbelief's, or what your reasons are for those beliefs, this booklet will explain things that you have never considered previously or if you have, you might have been misinformed by those who do not want you to know the true facts. So this short explanation about **The Book of Mormon,** the **Bible**, **Joseph Smith**, **God**, and **Jesus Christ** will hopefully shed light in a little known area about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. If what follows proves to be true then whatever your reasons for disagreement were, they would be invalid and require new scrutiny for analysis. Since every church has different doctrines, they can't all be the true church.

There are two approaches to discerning truth from God. A **spiritual** awareness, i.e., you can pray with a sincere heart and inquire of the LORD as the scriptures state, ***"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of GOD, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed"*** James 1: 5-6, and you will be led to the truth, which is probably why you now have this. For those who are not interested in discovering truth spiritually, or believe they know it already, but are interested in further light and knowledge, then use all intellect and logic and deduce from common sense, rationality, and by reasoning, if not by prayer, from the many **internal and external** evidences shown here-in, what else may be true. The truth referred to is that **Joseph Smith** was a prophet of God, who by direct revelation from God (as revelation was received in ancient days) was instructed to restore the true gospel which is contained in **The Book of Mormon,** the **Bible**, and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. These truths, unknown to most previously, will be self evident as you read this.

History

First a brief but true and accurate history of the subject matter, **Joseph Smith** and **The Book of Mormon**. Joseph read the above passage of scripture from the **Bible** and put it to the test. He was 14 years old and he, with his family, read from the **Bible** regularly. He went off to a secluded nearby forest on his father's farm and followed the instructions. He was visited by two personages who identified themselves as our Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. Since no church, priest, or people had every said they were two separate personages, Joseph must have seen two people. He would not have invented something so contrary to all "established" doctrines. This, if it is true (as we will see from the evidence), of necessity would mean that the Jews missed their own Messiah, all other Christians have created their own opinions about the Godhead, and all others are out in left field. After several more instructive angelic visits Joseph was shown where a book was buried that contained a record of an ancient people who inhabited this continent anciently. By the gift of God and many more visits of heavenly beings he restored the true church under the divine direction of Jesus Christ, which church is one of only a handful which bear the name of the Savior which is one of many requirements of the true church, (Isa. 43:7; II Chr. 7:14; etc.). The fact that there would be an apostasy and a restoration of the original gospel is well documented in the **Bible** and references to this are listed on the **Bible** genealogy page below. Anyone who reads what was translated and recorded in **The Book of Mormon** will know it is true because of the promise in the book, "***And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask GOD, the Eternal Father, in the name of CHRIST, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in CHRIST, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost***". Would a book by Lucifer teach of Christ as Savior as The Book of Mormon does? The Book of Mormon even teaches that the **Bible** is the Word of God.

Here is just a little more history to help you on this journey. The "**Bible**" is the recorded history of Gods dealings and teachings to an ancient group of people whose descendants became known as the **tribe of Judah** of the 12 tribes of Israel and the lineage of Jesus Christ. "**The Book of Mormon**" is similarly a recorded history of Gods dealings with an ancient group of people whose descendants were from the **tribe of Joseph** of the same 12 tribes of Israel. The history of Judah is found in the "Bible" and took place in modern day Asia Minor. The history of Joseph of old begins in the Bible and it is shown that his posterity leaves Jerusalem in 600BC and that is where "**The Book of Mormon**" begins. The record shows that it took place in modern day North America. The last

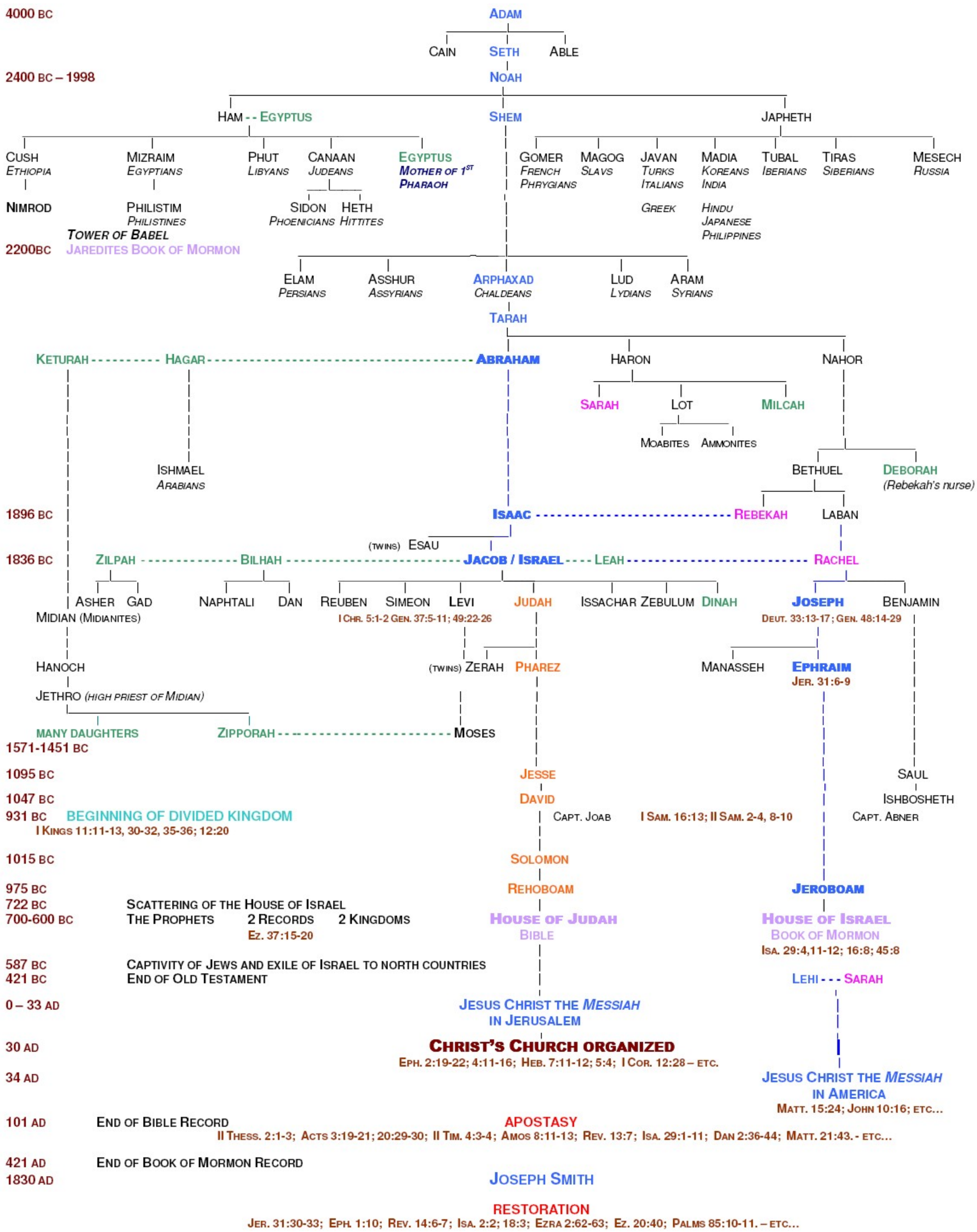
living prophet of this record of ancient America buried it in 421 A.D. and in 1827 as a resurrected being, delivered it to Joseph Smith, under the direction of the Lord, for translation and publication.

Two Records

The **Bible** states that there are two records of the people of Israel. Ezekiel 37: 15-20 says that these two records, one for Judah and one for Joseph, will exist in one hand after Israel is established again in the latter days. Israel is now established as a nation (since 1948). If the **Bible** and **The Book of Mormon** are not these two records spoken of, where are they? Ezekiel said they should be in our hands today? Isaiah, the Book of Revelations, and numerous other scriptures, tell us the exact method of the restoration of this second record. It has all come to pass as it was prophesized. **The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints** is the only church in the world to claim to have this second record. Both the **"Bible"** and **"The Book of Mormon"** are in our hands as one book and they testify that Jesus Christ is our Savior and the Son of God. Would you not want to know if there were additional teachings of the Savoir or want to have some clarification on various gospel doctrines if it were available? Or are you like the many that rejected the prophets and Christ when He lived here in mortality? We know there are many contradictions in the **Bible** and many unclear passages if it were not so there would not be hundreds of churches all with different doctrines, yet they all profess that it is from reading the same book, though many have rewritten it to suit their personal beliefs. If we had another testament of Jesus Christ, do you think it could help clear up these disputations since Christ said there should be no disputation among His people? Are we not all His people? Or as the scriptures say, "in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established". Jesus said He was one witness, His father the other; the **Bible** is their record and **Book of Mormon** is the other. The scripture cannot mean two people for everyone has differing witnesses, hence numerous churches. The answer is self-evident, if you read **The Book of Mormon**. So where are these two records of the house of Israel, Judah and Joseph, as defined by Ezekiel? Here are some options; you do not believe in Christ, you are Jewish or Heathen. You are agnostic or atheist; you disregard the prophecies of the old testament about a God or Messiah. You are a Catholic, meaning you take it on faith that there is a link from the apostles to the first pope even though there is no proof whatsoever and you disregard history and the multiplicity of the popes when there were many vying for control and power through murder and debauchery - you can agree with that and still want to be a protestant, meaning you protest the Catholics, however that would mean there is no link from the original 12 to you either. Of course, there are the religions which are founded on the wisdom and philosophies of an individual such as Buddha or Mohammad in which case you have to reject the only documented history of the ancient world. It is interesting that Mohammad says he believes Christ was a prophet but completely ignores all His teachings. Lastly, you can agree with the scriptures about the apostasy and restoration that would come to pass in the future and be LDS, the only church which claims to be a restored gospel, not a protesting (protestant) church or established by the will of man.

By looking up any of the scripture references on the chart below you can see that there was clearly a house of Judah and a house of Israel (through Joseph) and an apostasy which of necessity requires a restoration.

The following pages are ***a very small*** sampling of internal and external truths that very clearly demonstrate that **The Book of Mormon** is the word of God or another testament of Jesus Christ, the Messiah of the Old Testament. Consider the criteria on page 4; the requirements to fulfill the prophecies of the **Bible**; to be a prophet of God; to restore all truth to the world, and become the third largest Christian church in America, fourth in the world. **Consider, could this have been accomplished without divine intervention?** Well, let us consider some facts or conditions, with which you must comply, in order for you or someone else to produce a similar record, **The Book of Mormon**, under comparable conditions. For this is what Joseph Smith did! Has the founder of any church ever done anything even remotely similar? "By their fruits ye shall know them." So these are the conditions of Joseph Smith at the time he translated the book. (page 4)



www.LDSMusicAndBooks.com

Challenges of "The Book of Mormon"

Developed from a list by Bruce R. McConkie

1. You must be between 23 and 24 years of age.

2. You cannot be a college graduate; in fact, you can have only three years of formal schooling during the 1820s and yet be able to translate a language which is no longer part of any language on earth known or unknown.

3. Whatever you translate and record must be on the basis of what you now know; no research is permitted.

4. You must write a book with 239 chapters, 54 of them about wars, 21 about history, 55 about prophecy, 71 about doctrine, 17 about missionaries and 21 about the mission of Jesus Christ. Your record must be 522 pages with over 510 words per page, 266,220 words.

5. You must include in your writings the history of two distinct and separate nations, along with histories of different contemporary nations or groups of people of which no one ever knew existed. The main group of people is also divided into two groups and covered a period from 600 B.C. to 421 A.D. The second group covered a time 1000 years earlier yet lived in approximately the same place of which the latter group had the records of the former group and had translated their record into their language and included it in their history. And as if that is not complicated enough, there are also single and double overlapping flash backs included without breaking the congruency of the story line. All three nations will have artifacts and complete cities discovered by modern archeologists ***which will prove and will bear record of their existence down to the minutest detail.***

6. Your writings must describe the religious, economic, social and political cultures, the manner of their written and spoken languages, types of buildings, geographic locations including their topographies, tools and materials used, the monetary math system they used, which was a base 8 system of math completely unknown to the world in 1830, and many other facts completely unknown in 1830, ***yet subsequently discovered***.

7. You must include three independent dating systems that are all maintained accurately throughout over 800 years and are consistently accurate and include their various government types. The well known ancient Aztec calendar stone, found many years after this publication, is just one of the many discoveries which have proven these civilizations existed, ***of which Joseph wrote before they were discovered.***

8. You must weave into your history the religion of Jesus Christ and the pattern of Christian living and not have it be in conflict with the Bible or within its own record.

9. When you start to produce this record, covering a period over 2000 years of these two groups of people, you must finish it in approximately 80 days. Of course it is known by man today that the bible was translated by a group of 52 scholars from a known language and it took them 16 years to complete the work and it has numerous contradictions and references to things nobody has yet discovered.

10. When you have finished you must not make any changes in the text. The first edition must stand forever not withstanding punctuation or changes to modern day grammar and typos in type setting from 1830 to now. There have been about 3000 punctuation and grammar/typos fixed over the years. No doctrine!

11. After pauses for sleep and food, if you are dictating to a stenographer you must never ask to have the last paragraph or last sentence or even the last word read back to you because you are translating not creating. Without watching what your scribe is writing, you stop and correct his spelling of many of the new proper nouns and other mistakes that come up and still do not go back to read what was written by your scribe. No writer in history has ever done this.

12. You must add 180 proper nouns to the English language. William Shakespeare added only 30. Some words and names are used in a way that is contrary to known applications at the time of translation. Time has proven

them accurate. As an example, the proper name Alma has only been used as a female name throughout history, yet in this translation it is the name of a man. Recent discoveries show that it was originally a man's name. How could Joseph Smith had known this? Also, the use of many words and phrases in his translation were **unknown** in his time or **anywhere** in history outside of the time period of the record. Such an example is the case with the use of the word “precious” to describe a metal. The only other place in literature it is found is in the Bible about 600 B.C., the same time period it is used in “The Book of Mormon”, and the word valley being referred to as “steady and immovable”. Lehi, a prophet in the book, was referring, of course, to the sand deserts where sand dunes move but valleys stay the same. There is no way Joseph could have known these things. He had never even seen a sand dune.

13. You must announce that your "smooth narrative" is not fiction but true, yes, even that it is an ancient sacred record of history.

14. In fact, it must fulfill the Bible prophecies; even in the exact manner in which it shall come forth, to whom given, its purpose, and accomplishments, respectively - Psalms 85:10-11; Isa. 29:2-4; Isa, 29:11-14; Ezek. 37:18-21, etc.

15. You must publish it to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, declaring it to be the Word of God at your own expense and persecution.
16. You must include, in the record itself, this marvelous promise recorded in the book by a prophet; "And when you shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, He will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things."

17. Tens and hundreds of thousands even millions must bear record to the world from then on that they know the record to be true, because they put the "promise" to the test and found it to be true, the truth manifested to them by the power of the Holy Ghost.

18. Thousands of great men, intellectual giants, and scholars must subscribe discipleship to the record and its movement even to the point of laying down their lives for it.

19. There can be no flaw whatsoever in the entire record. No contradictions or inconsistencies, (which the Bible has many and yet is accepted), yet you must not make any absurd or impossible statements.

20. Even so, many of the facts, ideas, and statements about these people including where they lived, you must profess as true in your record even though these people’s artifacts and cities are not known to the world for another 30 years and must be entirely inconsistent, even the direct opposite of the prevailing beliefs of the world where very little is claimed to be known about these civilizations and their 2,000 years of history.

21. You must invite the ablest scholars and experts to examine the text with care. You must strive diligently to see that your book gets into the hands of all those most eager to prove it a forgery and who are most competent to expose any flaw in it. They have not been able to disprove anything.

22. Thorough investigation, scientific evidence, and archaeological discoveries for the next 150 plus years must verify your claims and prove even the minutest details of your history to be perfectly true, even to the types of roads they built.

23. After years of extensive analysis, no claim or fact in the book is disproved, but all is vindicated. Many theories and ideas, as to its origin, rise and fall, leaving your claims as the only possible one.

24. Internal and external prophecies must be confirmed and fulfilled from time to time.

25. Three honest, creditable witnesses must testify to the whole world that an angel from heaven appeared to them and showed to them the ancient records from which you claim your record is translated and the voice of the

Redeemer declares to these three witnesses that your record is true and that it is their responsibility to bear their testimony of this truth. And they do it. Eight other well know public men must also testify that they have seen the gold plates from which this record was supposed to have been taken. They must handle and feel the engravings on the record as did the other three witnesses. They all testified until their death!

26. Shortly after the Church is organized; 12 Apostles are called along with the first presidency of the church and all of them testify that they saw the Father and the Son. This they do for the remainder of their lives.

27. The first three, the second eight, the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, and the First Presidency must all witnesses and bear their testimony not for profit or gain, but under great personal sacrifice and severe persecution, even to their death by being murdered.

28. You must find someone to finance the publishing of your book with the understanding that neither they nor you will ever receive any monetary remuneration from it. You must sell the book at cost or at less than its production value or cost.

29. You must tell the world that the written record from which you have translated was engraved on gold plates, even though at the time you make this claim, **no one has ever found anywhere in the world of past history, any civilizations using gold as a method of keeping records**, and not until about 100 years later were any similar engraved gold plates found thereby vindicating your claim.

30. Finally, after suffering persecution and revilement for 20 years after you finished the book, you must willingly give your own life for your testimony that the record is from God as a mob breaks into your jail and kills you.

Surely no one, without God's help, could produce a similar record complied with all of the above conditions without being an instrument in God's hands. Is there anyone else in all of history, outside of the prophets of the scriptures, who have done anything even remotely close to this? Did any Pope, any founder or leader of any church or organization, or Plato? Yet how many people follow their teachings and study their works, none of whom have ever done even the minutest portion of what Joseph Smith accomplished? Did any other founder of **any church or congregation** ever write such a complete history of unknown nations and then have science and archeologists actually prove everything you have said to be absolute fact? The scriptures say “by their fruits ye shall know the truth”, so who else has produced so much? No local community church has nor any other church.

Did Buddha, Confucius, Mohammad, any Jewish leader after Christ, or any other founder of any sect walk on water, raise the dead, or resurrect himself as did Jesus? Of course not! Yet they are all revered as “great” men or “prophets” and spiritual leaders and many follow their man-made philosophies. If Joseph Smith was not a prophet of God, then he was the most intelligent man ever to live on this earth in order for him to have accomplished all that he did, and for that reason alone should be cause and reason sufficient enough to study his teachings and to read “The Book of Mormon” more so than any other book or person who has ever lived on this earth. It would also make “The Book of Mormon” the most correct book ever written.

Another Challenge of “The Book of Mormon”

Criteria/Requirements to be a prophet of God

Recorded By Russell M. Nelson --

REFLECTIONS OF SAMI HANNA

My neighbor, Sami Hanna, is a native Egyptian. He is an academic scholar who moved into our neighborhood to accept an assignment with the University as a specialist in Middle Eastern Studies and the Semitic group of languages such as Arabic, Abyssinian, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Assyrian. Being a newcomer into our community, he felt the Mormons were a bit of a curiosity. Upon learning the name Mormon came from our belief that the Book

of Mormon is divine scripture, he was intrigued by the existence of the Book of Mormon. He had erroneously thought this was American literature.

When he was told that the Book of Mormon was translated from the ancient Egyptian or modified Hebrew type of hieroglyphic into the English language by the prophet Joseph Smith, he became even more engrossed, for this was his native language and he knows much about the other Semitic languages as well as the modern languages and if Joseph Smith were a fraud he would be able to tell.

So, challenged was he by this book that he embarked on the project of translating the Book of Mormon from English to Arabic. This translation was different from other translators, for this was to be a translation back to the original language of the book. To make a long story short, the process of this translation became the process of his conversion; for he soon knew the Book of Mormon to be a divine document even though he knew virtually nothing of the organization of the Church or of its programs or the angel Moroni returning to earth to restore the true gospel as foretold would happen.

His conversion came purely from the linguistics of the book which he found could not have been composed by an American, no matter how gifted. Some of these observations I think will be of interest to you, as they were to me, for they clarify some of the unique aspects of the book.

1. In Jarom 2, "It musts needs be...," this expression, odd and awkward in English is excellent Arabic grammar. Elsewhere in the book the use of the compound verbs "did eat", "did go", "did smile" again awkward and rarely used in English, are classical and correct grammar in the Semitic languages.

2. In Omni 18, "Zarahemla gave a genealogy of his fathers, according to his memory." Sami Hanna indicates that this is a typical custom of his Semitic forbearers to recite their genealogy from memory.

3. In Words of Mormon 17, reference is made here as in other parts of the Book of Mormon, to the "stiffneckedness" of his people. Brother Hanna perceives that this word would be a very unusual word for an American youth, Joseph Smith, to use. An American would likely prefer an adjective such as stubborn or inflexible. But the custom in the Arabic language is to use just such a descriptive adjective. Stiff necked is an adjective they use in describing an obstinate person.

4. In Mosiah 11:8, "King Noah built many elegant and spacious buildings and ornamented them with fine work and precious things, including ziff." Have you ever wondered about the meaning of the word "ziff" referred to in this scripture? This word, although in the Book of Mormon, is not contained in dictionaries of the English language. Yet it translates freely back into the Arabic language, for ziff is a special kind of curved sword somewhat like a scimitar which is carried in a sheath and often used for ornamentation as well as for more practical purposes. The discovery of the word "ziff" in the Book of Mormon really excited my neighbor, Brother Hanna.

5. In Alma 63:11, reference is made to Helaman, son of Helaman. Why did not Joseph Smith interpret this as Helaman, Jr., which would have been more logical for him, bearing the same name as his father, Joseph, and being named Joseph Smith, Jr.? In Arabic, Brother Hanna explains, there is no word "junior" to cover this circumstance. Their custom is to use the terminology Joseph, son of Joseph; Helaman, son of Helaman, etc.

6. In Helaman 1:3, reference is made to the contending for the judgment seat. Brother Hanna observes that the use of the term "judgment seat" would be quite strange to an American who might have used a more familiar noun such as governor, president, or ruler. Yet, in Arabic custom, the place of power rests in the judgment seat and whoever occupies that seat, is the authority and power. The authority goes with the seat and not with the office or the person. So, this, in the Semitic languages, connotes the meaning exactly.

7. In Helaman 3:14, there are a total of eighteen "ands." Reviewers of the Book of Mormon have, on occasion, been critical of the grammar in such a passage where the use of the word "and" seems so repetitious. Yet Brother Hanna explains that each of the "ands" in this verse is absolutely essential to the meaning, when this verse is expressed in Arabic, for the omission of any "and" would nullify the meaning of the words.

8. In Helaman 3: 18-19, have you wondered why the Book of Mormon cites a numbering system such as this? Do we say "forty and six, forty and seven, forty and eight?" No! Joseph Smith's natural interpretation would more appropriately have been forty-six, forty-seven, forty-eight without the "ands." Brother Hanna excitedly observes that the use of "and" in "forty and six" is precisely correct Arabic. Remember they number, as well as read, from right to left and recite their numbers with the "and" to separate the columns. Well, I have just cited a few of these examples. There are many more! As Latter-day Saint, we are aware of the Semitic origin of the Book of Mormon as the book itself testifies. The fact that an Arabic scholar, such as this, sees a beautiful internal consistency in the Prophet Joseph Smith's translation of the book is of great interest, if not complete recognition of its divinity. The Prophet Joseph did not merely render an interpretation, but a word for word translation from the Egyptian type of hieroglyphic into the English language. Brother Hanna said the Book of Mormon simply flowed back into the Arabic language which could only have been done if it was in actuality originally derived from that ancient language as it in fact purports to be.

One has to ask or at least question; how could Joseph Smith know these things if this was not a translation? These points of grammar structure were unknown to the entire world when The Book of Mormon was translated. Could he have done this without being a prophet? If the answer is yes then you would have to concede the previous premise that he was the most intelligent person in the world.

Just a couple more internal evidences of the Book of Mormon

A significant battle scene (one in which the long-term survival of the Nephite nation might have been at stake) is described in Alma 51 at the end of their year, (March to them). After heavy fighting and major marches, both sides were very tired because of their "labors and heat of the day." This takes place on the east coast (of Mexico), "in the borders on the beach by the seashore" (Alma 51:32). At this season, the rain-swollen rivers have just begun, but the east region (Monterrey, Mexico) is still rather wet, low, and hot. The hottest weather was still months away, but down on the coast it was hot and muggy enough to contribute to the fatigue of the troops.

Alma 51 shows that the land of the Book of Mormon peoples was not a cold, snow-covered place in winter, as upstate New York is from where young Joseph Smith was. If he made up the book based on what he knew, he would have had fighting occur in the summer, not during winter. The internal consistency of many passages dealing with war during the proper season of war for Mexico and southern America is also remarkable--and has not been noted or recognized until the last decade or so. Though it is a minor point in the text, the geographical and climatic information provided fits and makes sense. It must be considered as one of many powerful internal evidences for authenticity.

Almost all wars occur between the 11th and 3rd months, (April is the first month in the ancient Hebrew times and still is today – these are Hebrew descendants), with a small number reported in the 4^{th,} 5^{th,} and 10th months, and none mentioned in the 6th through 9th months. Why this pattern? Well, the text also refers to cultivation of food a number of times in the 4th through 9th months. The problem of getting food to the troops is mentioned as a concern mainly in the 11th through 2nd months, February through May. Thus, it seems that the harvest may have been in months 10 through 12, January through March. This would not occur in the northern states. Therefore, to summarize: Nephite cultivation of fields: months 4-9; main harvest: months 10-12; time of warfare: mainly months 11-3 when they are not planting or harvesting). Could Joseph have known this or is this a true record?

Detractors of the church and book make a point of the many grammatical changes made in the text from the first publication. There certainly were many strange and awkward structures in the original manuscript, as partially enumerated above, for the English of Joseph's day and his educational background. For example, instead of the normal "if ... then ..." construction, the Book of Mormon had a multiple phrase with "if ... and ...." such as "**if** ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, **and** he shall manifest the truth of it unto you" (Moroni 10:4, 1830 edition). That is completely unacceptable English, but it's very good Hebrew, known as the Hebraic conditional (see "Hebraic Conditionals in the Book of Mormon," in *Pressing Forward with the Book of Mormon*, edited by John W. Welch and Melvin J. Thorne (Provo, Utah: FARMS, 1999), pp. 201-203). Another

example is 1 Nephi 17:50, which Joseph initially translated as "*if* he should command me that I should say unto this water be thou earth, *and* it shall be earth." When Oliver Cowdery prepared the printer's manuscript from the original manuscript, he deleted the word *and* to improve the English. Thirteen other examples printed in the 1830 edition were later changed by Joseph Smith for the 1837 edition, including Moroni 10:4 (ibid., p. 202). Examination of the text and the original and printer's manuscripts suggests that this was no simple scribal error, and Joseph's own dialect of English did not include this awkward construction, nor does the King James Bible provide language that would have motivated a forger to include Hebraic conditionals. So why do they occur in the original Book of Mormon? Is any explanation more plausible than the claim, it was a literal translation of the Hebraic conditional from the original Semitic text? Joseph said he translated the record. He did not write it and he could not have know what had not yet been discovered or analyzed. Has any other sect ever done this?

There are dozens of other examples of expressions and grammatical structures in the 1830 Book of Mormon, many of which survive in the current printing, that are unusual or awkward in English yet are natural and proper in Hebrew as demonstrated above. The simplest explanation is that the text was dictated as a translation from an ancient Semitic document. Critics have been unable to explain away these and many other signs of authenticity (Edward Ashment tried, as discussed by John Gee in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon,* Vol. 6, No. 1, pp. 51-120, esp. pp. 88-91.) It's much easier to just mock the poor grammar and punctuation, or scream about the many minor changes that were needed to make the Book of Mormon text more properly comply with basic standards of spelling, punctuation, and grammar in modern day English rather than do a critical analysis. Compared to the numerous textual, grammatical and conflicting doctrinal statements in the Bible, the Book of Mormon has very few changes. In the process of making the Book of Mormon conform to our English, not one doctrinal point has been altered and there has never been found one contradiction, (unless you miss interpret what you are reading). However, the Bible as it is today, compared to the surviving original Hebrew and Greek manuscripts (The King James version as it is known), has been rewritten by almost every Christian church and not just from old English to our English but doctrinal changes, grammar, (some even just cut out verses) to fit what their leaders determined should be the doctrine according to them, but no one every says their church's are false because they have changed the text. Why has no one criticized those churches for changing numerous things, or is the Bible false because of its inconsistencies and all the grammatical, doctrinal, and conflictual changes man has made from addition and deletion? You can not say the Book of Mormon is false for these grammar changes and not say the same for the Bible. So, the argument of grammatical changes does not stand up to reality.

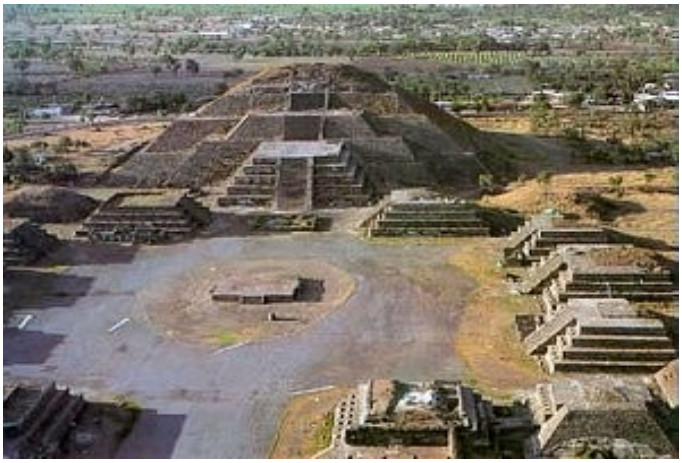
Again, if he was not divinely inspired, how did he know these things? If the book is true, Joseph Smith had to be a prophet of God. If Joseph Smith was a prophet the book has to be true and therefore the church he established under the Lords direction is true. If this book has additional teachings of Jesus Christ and He actually did restore the true church, would you not want to know? Shouldn't you investigate the Book and the man and pray about them?

Now consider these following internal and external evidences and decide for yourself.

NOW

Just a few archeological (external) evidences of The Book of Mormon

The following are ruins from the period of time described in The Book of Mormon and thereafter that were 100% unknown to history in 1830 when Joseph Smith translated the record of the people who wrote The Book of Mormon.



Pyramid of the Sun

Above - The Pyramids at Chichén Itzá Yucatan Peninsula and the Temple of Kukulcan, Yucatan, Mexico

Erected in honor of the great white bearded God that said he would return. This is recorded in the Book of Mormon before it was discovered. How did Joseph know this?

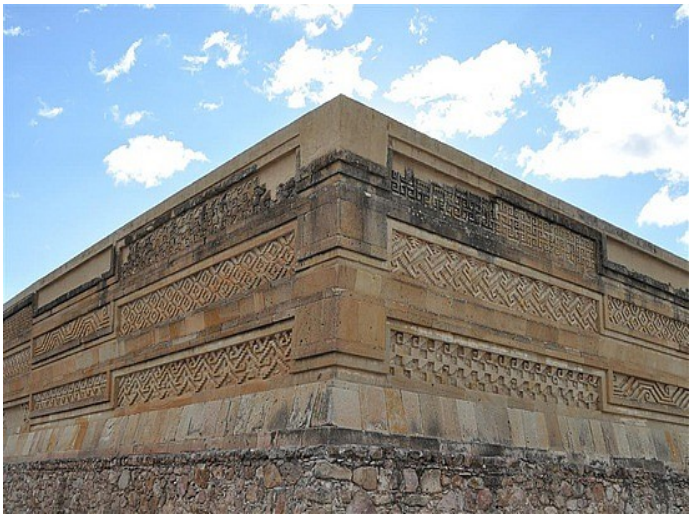
Tikal, Peten, Guatemala – Dates back to 600 BC as described in the Book of Mormon discovered in April, 1959. A Jaredite structure listed in the Book of Mormon. Above before and after excavation shows how it was when it was first located. The jungle had covered everything up in the Mexican and Central American areas.

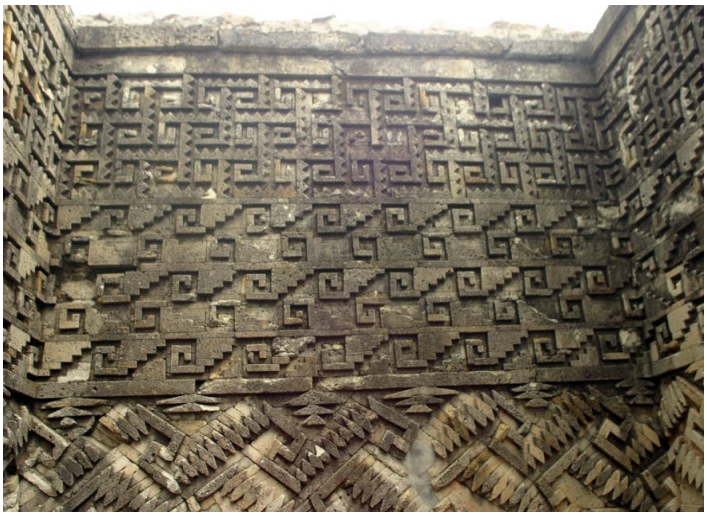
All of these ancient cities (over 4000) have been uncovered in the last 100 years and have been hidden from the world because of the speed at which the jungle grows, covering everything that is not kept up. The governments in many of these places hire families to live near them to keep the jungle form covering them up. Everything from toys to paved roads with white lines to baptismal fonts **have been discovered**. All things listed in the Book.

Above, the observatory at **Chichen Itza, Yucatan, Mexico** where it shows these people knew that the earth revolved around the sun, an unknown to the rest of the world until the 17th century. This information is in the Book of Mormon. How could Joseph have known that these people would know that?

Above **-Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico** – part of a major city complex. This structure dates from about 373 AD which matches the people of the Book of Mormon. These cities are many miles large. Not a small village.

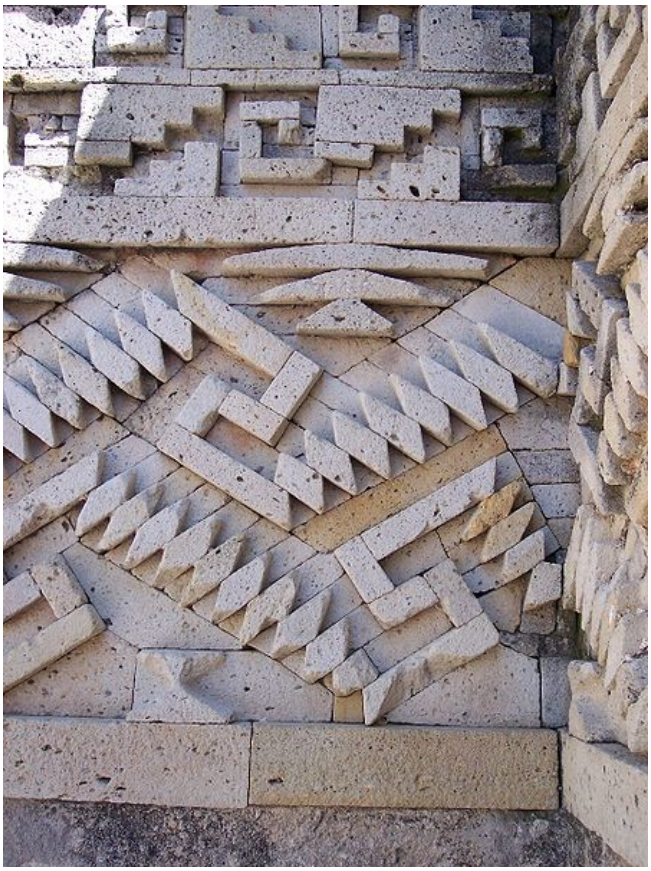
Pyramid of the Niches, El Tajin, Vera Cruz, Mexico dated back to the time of the Jaredites (2000 BC) of The Book of Mormon. How did Joseph know that these people lived here when the whole world did not know and he had never been outside of his home town?





Plastered walls as described in the Book of Mormon discovered in winter of 1960. **Mitla, Oaxaca, Mexico.** Intricate relief patterns as described in the Book of Mormon before they were discovered.

Mitla Oaxaca Ancient and Colonial Site



The feathered serpent or feathered god is part of the culture from ancient Mexico and is explained by translating the texts at these sites as a representation of the bearded white God they called Quatzequatel. The Book said Jesus visited many places here in the Americas and would return.

Feathered serpents

Ships with people – only found in the Book of Mormon

Many other reliefs with horses, elephants, etc. are found everywhere. In the Denver Museum of Natural History there is a Mammoth that was unearthed in Mexico in 1952 which was irrefutable evidence of man and Book of Mormon people living together with these animals. Joseph could not make this up and it become true unless it is a true historic record and Joseph was a prophet.

The Machu Picchu (Peru)

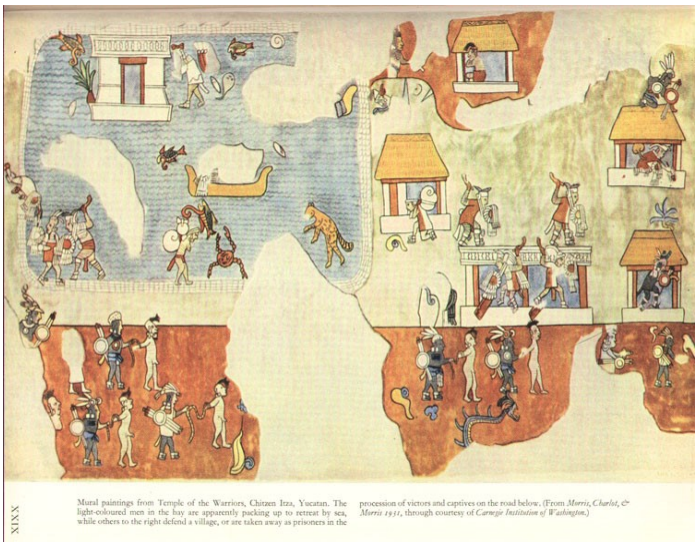
The Izapa Stela 5 – Tree of Life Stone Carving. Izapa Chiapas, Mexico

Joseph Smith, having received the golden plates (on which the Book of Mormon was written), on September 22, 1827, translated them into English and published ***The Book of Mormon***. One significant part of ***The Book of Mormon*** is a dream about a "Tree of Life" that one of the prophets, Lehi, received before leaving Jerusalem and coming to the American continent. Lehi's dream was recorded by his son, Nephi, on the gold plates.

Many people, uniformed, charge that no names or artifacts of any kind that demonstrate the truth of ***The Book of Mormon*** have been found. (Those people must not have the internet) This discovery (along with about 4000 others) in Central Mexico is the Izapa Stela 5 stone carving.

Research by Warren and Ferguson revealed: "In 1943 the Smithsonian Institution of the Bureau of American Ethnology published its Bulletin 138, entitled "Stone Monuments of Southern Mexico," by Matthew W. Stirling, Plate 52 in Bulletin 138 is a photograph of a cast of a large ancient stone monument discovered at the ancient ruin of Izapa near the present town of Tapachula in the state of Chiapas, Mexico. Izapa is near the border of Guatemala and not far from the Pacific Ocean. The interpretation of three of the names on the several ton stone are Lehi,

Nephi, and Sarah along with the understanding that this is a tree of life depiction. They make no claim to relate it to the Book of Mormon or anything else. They just say it exists and show the names.



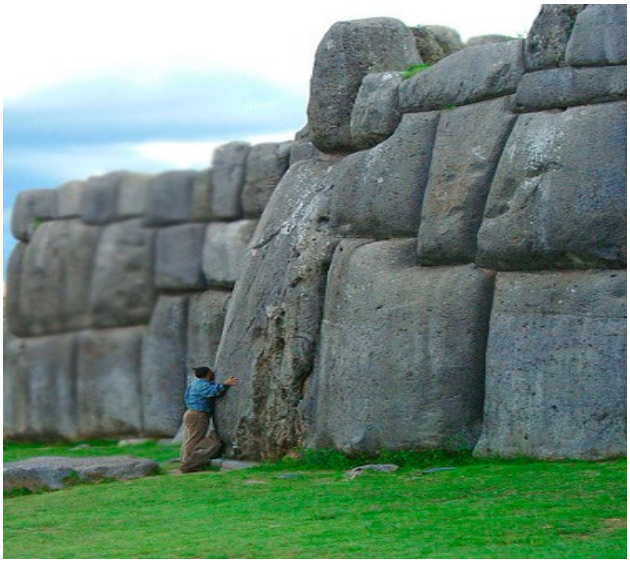
Mural paintings from Temple of the Warriors, Chitzen Itza, Yucatan. The light-coloured men in the bay are apparently packing up to retreat by sea, while others to the right defend a village, or are taken away as prisoners in the procession of victors and captives on the road below. (From *Morris, Charlot, & Morris 1931*, through courtesy of *Carnegie Institution of Washington.*)

XXIX

THREE races of people are depicted on many murals in many places. This is part of what is recorded in the Book of Mormon, that there were three races, the Nephites (Hebrew descent fair skinned), Lamanites (Hebrew descent reddish skinned), and Zoramites, (African descent black skinned). How did Joseph know this would be found?

Cyclopean Ruins of Sacsayhuaman

This fortress, above right, [Sacsayhuaman/Satisfied Falcon] surpasses the constructions known as the seven wonders of the world. In this case, a long broad wall like that of Babylon, or the colossus of Rhodes, or the pyramids of Egypt, or the other monuments, one can see clearly how they were executed...how, by summoning an immense body of workers and accumulating more and more material day by day and year by year, they overcame all difficulties by employing human effort over a long period. But it is indeed beyond the power of imagination to understand how these Indians, unacquainted with devices, engines, and implements, could have cut, dressed, raised, and lowered great rocks, more like lumps of hills than building stones, and set them so exactly in their places that a knife blade does not fit between the cracks. Interestingly, these ruins are more extensive than anything else in the world. The Book of Mormon tells of how walls were built. This is a perfect description of what is said and described. How did Joseph know this would be found and the book proven true?



Tambomachay Fountains
Water has been running from back into the mountains as long as anyone has recorded.

A del DRAGON, Pyramidal Structure near Chan Chan ; PERU Beautifully decorated w geometric designs & mythical figures also called Arco Iris (rainbow representing the heavens) CHIMU Kingdom.

The Book of Mormon records that there are two different groups of people who lived in America separated by over 2000 years. There were divisions among both of these groups of people. The division was north to south, and they also differed in all of their cultural styles. Scientific evidence has proven that from America to Mexico and further south the people had a completely different life style and culture. Everything from how they built their buildings, what material they used, to the time they lived here. The record was written by the people in the north in both time periods. All these things, described in the Book of Mormon, were completely unknown to Joseph and the rest of the world in 1827 when he was given the record of these people. Can a man invent all this and have it all be proven scientifically and this man and not be a prophet?

View of **WILLKAWAIN**, near **Huaras** in the Callejon de Huaylas; **PERU WARI** Empire-**Puma Heads** were inserted in the wall at regular intervals

MAIN PORTAL **Chavin de Huantar**

Temple of the Cross Palenque (Mayan) Mexico These structures are enormous which could only mean there were large major populations at one time, as the Book of Mormon tells. Note how the jungle had covered the edifice above right and below left.

Archeological findings in the USA

Los Lunas Decalogue Stone – most of the Book of Mormon people lived in the USA and they built mostly with wood. In the past 40 years thousands of ruins have been found that match the Book of Mormon.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

From Mississippi, described at the end.

Above left - The **Los Lunas Decalogue Stone** is a large boulder on the side of Hidden Mountain, near Los Lunas, New Mexico, about 35 miles south of Albuquerque, that bears a very regular inscription carved into a flat panel. The stone is also known as the Los Lunas Mystery Stone or Commandment Rock. The inscription is interpreted by some to be an abridged version of the Decalogue or Ten Commandments in a form of Paleo-Hebrew. A letter group resembling the tetragrammaton YHWH, or "Yahweh," makes four appearances. The stone is controversial in that some claim the inscription is Pre-Columbian, and therefore proof of early Semitic contact with the Americas.

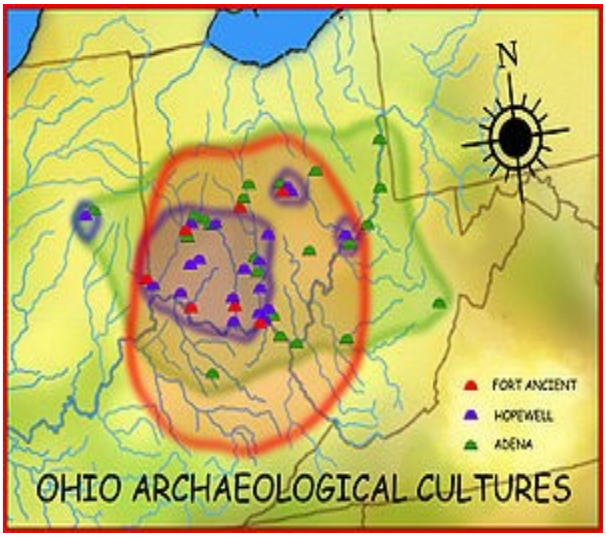
The first recorded mention of the stone is in 1933, when professor Frank Hibben, an archaeologist from the University of New Mexico, saw it. Hibben was led to the stone by an unnamed guide who claimed to have found it as a boy in the 1880s. The 1880s date of discovery is important to those who believe that the stone was inscribed by a lost tribe of Israel. The Paleo-Hebrew script was unknown to scholars in the 1880s, making a forgery at that time impossible, and thus allegedly proving the stone's antiquity.

In November of 1860, David Wyrick of Newark, Ohio found an inscribed stone in a burial mound about 10 miles south of Newark. The stone is inscribed on all sides with a condensed version of the Ten Commandments or Decalogue, in a peculiar form of post-Exilic square Hebrew letters. The robed and bearded figure on the front is identified as Moses in letters fanning over his head.

Encyclopedia

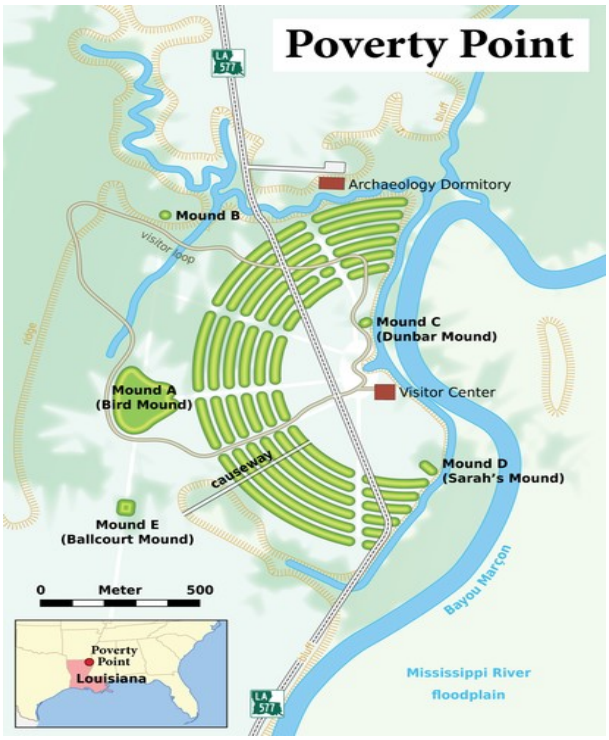
Monk's Mound is the largest Pre-Columbian earthwork in America near Collinsville, Illinois. It is the same size at its base as the Great Pyramid of Giza (13.1 acres).

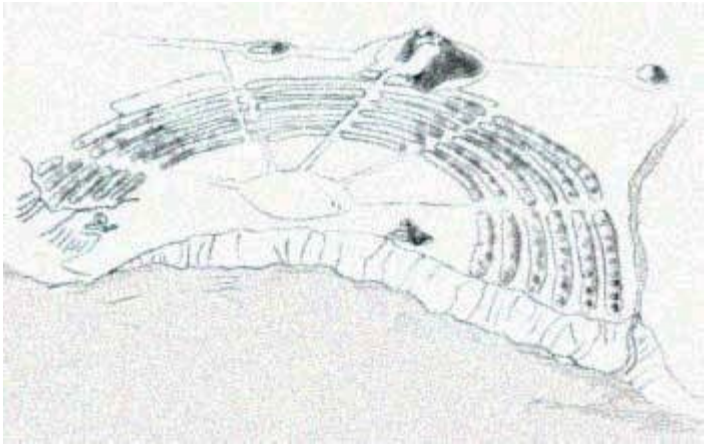
These Pre-Columbian mounds are found all over the USA



The **Adena culture** was a Pre-Columbian Native American culture that existed from 1000 to 200 BCE, in a time known as the early Woodland Period. The Adena culture refers to what were probably a number of related Native American societies sharing a burial complex and ceremonial system. The Adena lived in a variety of locations, including: Ohio, Indiana, West Virginia, Kentucky, and parts of Pennsylvania and New York.

These are a perfect fit to the Jaredites of the Book of Mormon who lived from North America to South America, though we only have a small portion of the record of those who lived in the United State of America. The Nephites also built mounds in the U. S. A.





Poverty Point (French: *Pointe de Pauvreté*) is a prehistoric monument located in the American state of Louisiana, 15.5 miles (24.9 km) from the current Mississippi River.[1] It is situated on the edge of Maçon Ridge, near to the village of Epps in West Carroll Parish. Comprising of several earthworks and mounds, it was built between 1650 and 700 BCE, during the Archaic period by a group of Native Americans adhering to what has been termed the "Poverty Point culture", which itself extended 100 miles across the Mississippi Delta. Despite this, its original purpose has remained unknown to archaeologists, although various possible explanations have been put forward, including that it was a trading post and that it was a religious center.

The site, which has been described as "the largest and most complex Late Archaic earthwork occupation and ceremonial site yet found in North America"[2] is a registered National Monument and tourist attraction. Its name derives from the plantation on which the archaeological site was first rediscovered in 1873.

Remember the people who lived in northern Mexico and the USA are the ones who wrote the book.

Mounds of North America

Mound Builder is a general term referring to the Native North American peoples who constructed various styles of earthen mounds for burial, residential, and ceremonial purposes. These included Archaic, and Woodland period, and Mississippian period Pre-Columbian cultures. Many of the over 10,000 mounds discovered so far have hundreds of skeletal remains. [As the Book of Mormon explains]

The term Mound Builder was also applied to an imaginary race believed to have constructed the great earthworks of the United States, this while Euro American racial ideology of the 16th-19th centuries did not recognize that Native Americans were sophisticated enough to construct such monumental architecture.

The final blow to this myth was dealt by an official appointee of the United States Government, Cyrus Thomas of the Bureau of American Ethnology. His lengthy report (727 pages, published in 1894) concluded finally that it was the opinion of himself and thus the United States Government that the prehistoric earthworks of the eastern United States were the work of Native Americans. Thomas Jefferson was an early proponent of this view after he excavated a mound and ascertained the continuity of burial practices observed in contemporaneous native populations.

Poverty Point in what is now Louisiana is a prominent example of early archaic Mound Builder construction from about 2500 BC. While other and earlier Archaic mound centers existed, Poverty Point remains one of the best recognized centers. Throughout the United States, the Archaic period was followed by the Woodland period, and mound building continued.

Some well understood examples would be the Adena culture of Ohio and nearby states, and the subsequent Hopewell culture known from Illinois to Ohio and renowned for their geometric earthworks. The Adena and Hopewell were not, however, the only mound building peoples during this time period. There were contemporaneous mound building cultures throughout the Eastern United States.

Some mounds took on unusual shapes, such as the outline of cosmologically significant animals. These are considered to be distinct and are known as effigy mounds.

The best known flat-topped pyramidal earthen structure, which is also the largest pre-Columbian earthwork north of Mexico at over 100 feet tall, is Monk's Mound at Cahokia. The most famous effigy mound, Serpent Mound in southern Ohio, is 5 feet tall, 20 wide, over 1330 feet long, and shaped as a serpent.

The most complete reference for these earthworks is Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley, written by Ephraim G. Squier and Edwin H. Davis and published by the Smithsonian Institution in 1848. Since a large number of the features they documented have since been destroyed or diminished by farming and development, their surveys, sketches and descriptions are still used by modern archaeologists. A smaller regional study in 1931 by author and archaeologist Fred Dustin charted and examined the mounds and Ogemaw Earthworks near Saginaw, Michigan.

As scientists learn to search in the right places they will find an unlimited amount of external definitive evidences of the Book of Mormon people. When Joseph and a group of about 500 men traveled from New York to Missouri,

they uncovered many skeletal remains unintentionally, because it was the land where the Nephites and Jaredites of the Book of Mormon lived. The ruins of Mexico and other points south are from the descendents of the people mentioned in the Book of Mormon but they are not the people who wrote the book. Hence many ruins in Mexico and further south do not match perfectly with the written information but are similar. Because the people from four different races co-mingled in those southern places for over a thousand years before the modern invasion of this hemisphere, the DNA evidences from their descendants will never match those people listed in the Book of Mormon. However, it does match the Indians of the United States because this is where the pure descendents lived anciently. It is no coincidence that many Indian holidays align with Jewish holidays.

Supporting archeological evidence that shows the Antilles islands as part of the Nephite Book of Mormon geography.

http://www.bookofmormongeography.net/evidence.htm

Subduction of the Caribbean Plate
Under the Caribbean Sea is the Caribbean tectonic plate that can and has moved between the Pacific and Atlantic plates.
http://www.ugr.es/~agcasco/igcp546/
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caribbean_Plate

Underwater Cuban Discovery
In July 2000, using sophisticated side-scan sonar equipment, researchers detailed clear images of symmetrically organized stone structures that resembled pyramids, roads and buildings. It appeared to be extensive series of structures over several miles. Later, images sent back by a ROV confirmed the presence of large, cut granite-like blocks in perpendicular and circular formations; some in the shape of pyramids, with many blocks stacked one atop another. There is no granite in that region of the Caribbean, only limestone.
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hk6SWtumdK0

The Andros Platform
This discovery is of a gigantic, three-tiered stone platform just off northern Andros Island in the Bahamas. It was found in 2003 by a diving team doing research on underwater features. The platform consists of three tiers with an area measuring about 400 yards long and 150 feet wide. Each tier starts with a row of large blocks, almost square, measuring about 10 by 8 meters.
http://www.altarcheologie.nl/index.html?underwater_ruins/andros/andros_platform_intro_analysis.htm

The Bimini Road
This is a formation of an extensive pavement of flat stones found 500 yards offshore of Bimini Island in the Bahamas. The Binimi Island is 50 miles east of Miami and about 100 miles north of Andros Island. The formation is made by thick, mostly rectangular blocks of stone lying on the sandy bottom.
http://www.altarcheologie.nl/index.html?underwater_ruins/bimini/gallery.htm

Mountain Tops of a Sunken Land
The Caribbean Islands appear to be mountain tops left from a land “sinking into the depths of the sea.” Their elevations are: Dominican Republic - 10,164 ft, Haiti - 8,793 ft, Jamaica - 7,402 ft, Cuba - 6,476 ft, Guadeloupe - France 4,812 ft, Dominica – 4,747 ft, Martinique France - 4,503 ft, Puerto Rico – 4,390 ft, Montserrat UK – 3,001 ft, Saint Lucia - 3,154 ft, St Kitts - 3,793 ft, Saint Vincent - 4,049 ft, Trinidad - 3,084 ft

A section from the September 1972 *Ensign* An official publication of the LDS church
An article by Hugh Nibley quoted here in part

One thing that leads us to suspect that most of the great powerhouses whose traces still remain were never anything more than pompous imitations or replicas is their sheer magnificence. The archaeologist finds virtually nothing of the remains of the primitive Christian church until the fourth century, because the true church was not interested in buildings and deliberately avoided the acquisition of lands and edifices that might bind it and its interests to this world.

The Book of Mormon is a history of a related primitive church, and one may well ask what kind of remains the Nephites would leave us from their more virtuous days. A closer approximation to the Book of Mormon picture of Nephite culture is seen in the earth and palisade structures of the Hopewell and Adena culture areas than in the later stately piles of stone in Mesoamerica.

http://www.believeallthings.com/1601/nibley-book-mormon-geography/

AND FINALLY

As mentioned previously, Lehi, while traveling across the Arabian Peninsula, as The Book of Mormon records, refers to the valleys as being steadfast and unmovable while the mountains were movable. That is the exact opposite of how we refer to these same things. The Book says Lehi was from the deserts of the Arabian Peninsula. There the mountains are sand dunes and they do move where the valleys do not. How could Joseph have known this? Joseph had never seen a sand dune or any desert for that matter. Here mountains are immovable not valleys. Obviously he translated an actual real record.

The sword of Labon is described in the Book as being made of precious steel. The word precious, as used to describe steel, is not found in any literature anywhere during the lifetime of Joseph Smith. Not even for several hundred years before him, yet this is the word he put in the book from the translation. But it is found in the Bible and other literature of the 600 BC era, the period of time that the book says Lehi left from Jerusalem. Is it coincidence that Joseph would use such a word?

Did you know that there are fresh water pearls? The Book of Mormon says that pearls were in abundance. They still are especially in mid America. Most fresh water lakes and rivers have them but like this author and probably you too, Joseph did not know it, yet there it is in the BOOK! (http://www.tennesseeriverpearls.com/index.php)

Much has been said about DNA. The DNA of the people of the American Indians, the Hopewell, Cheyenne, and many other Native American Indians have DNA that includes Hebrew DNA. Even the History channel had an episode about the DNA match to the Jews in New Mexico's Cheyenne Indians. **This can only be possible if they are related**. Only in the Book of Mormon are they accounted for genealogically and now scientifically proven correct. Many detractors of the LDS Church have tried to make the Aztec and other Central and South American peoples DNA match with the Hebrews. It does not. The detractor's site this false assumption (while overlooking all else), about the DNA in the south as a reason the church is false while ignoring the true evidence and all other evidences. It **does** match when you choose the right people from the right place. The Hebrew descendents lived primarily in the United States and Mexico. Other non-Hebrews lived south of there and therefore the DNA does match with the Hebrew's. It will match with the people of the Jaredites of the Book of Mormon. The artifacts and people of this hemisphere are not just descendents of the Hebrews of the Book of Mormon but several other groups, some of which are accounted for in the Book of Mormon. They are a mix of the oldest group of ancient American people from 2000 BC (pre-Hebrew era – tower of Babel times and locations); descendents from a non-Hebrew group from Africa are also mentioned in the Book of Mormon, and maybe others unknown to us. If you look in the right places you find the correct answers and they will point to the Book of Mormon as a true record.

The Opposition

Pick a subject and you will find someone trying to prove something wrong with it. That is the case with the LDS Church. There are many people and books written to try to dissuade others from learning about the "Mormons". Isn't it interesting that there are not volumes of anti "other" religion books but only anti "Mormon" books. It would seem as though they unwillingly are trying to prove us correct. You see, throughout all of history, only Gods chosen people have been persecuted as they are today.

So, whether you choose any of their doctrines or other subjects, you will find opposition to what the LDS church teaches. The only problem is that the LDS church has all the fruits listed of a true church and no one else has any. The next two items have been chosen as samples of some of the items for which others try to make a case.

Of the nearly 100 prophecies of Joseph Smith, many have come to pass and many others have yet to be fulfilled. Again, this is an area many sight as a reason to say Joseph was not a prophet while disregarding everything else noted here. Many of the prophecies from the Bible have not come to pass either yet we do not say the prophets or

the Bible are not true. Is there a double standard? More than 50 prophecies of Joseph Smith have come to pass after he was martyred.

The biggest prophecy the detractors of the LDS church use, like most of the information they use, is partial and incomplete statements and partial quotes of actual facts, hence making it appear that Joseph was not a prophet. The prophecy about when the 2nd coming will take place is the one most miss quoted. Joseph Smith told a few of his friends unofficially, that if he lived to be 84 the Lord would come. He was killed at age 44 and therefore the prophecy could not come to pass. What they say is that at age 84 the year would have been whatever and the Lord did not come in that year. They left out the "if he lived". They do not seem to talk about the leaders of other churches who have made numerous prophecies and have had none of them come to pass such as the case with the Jehovah Witnesses whose leader also said the Lord would come on a specific date and when HE did not the leader said he miss calculated and HE would come in one more month. HE again did not, yet they have a few million followers and no evidence that their church is true. If you apply the same reasoning, standards, and criteria to all churches for their divinity, authenticity, and authority to act in the name of God, as people do to the LDS church, you will find that only one church follows all the scriptures and does not pick and choose, rewrite, modify, or delete scriptures from the Bible. Not one leader of any other church even claims to have a prophet to guide them. All of the Christian churches have man made or man appointed leaders. Even the Pope, head of the largest Christian faith makes no claim to be a prophet. The Catholics do claim that the Pope is infallible in decisions that he makes. But history has proven that wrong so many times you can't keep track of all of them. For instance, if the decision to not be married was true, then why were all priests married before about the year 1000? Why were there several popes in several countries all vying for control during the Dark Ages, (it ended up in Rome by various popes killing off their competition until only one was left – this is history you can verify), etc., etc., etc.?

Another item often sited is that the LDS people wear special secret underwear. Bob Lonsberry, a talk show commentator, made this public statement on the air in reference to this detraction; he is not a Mormon but did his research:

"What is a religious garment?

Well, it depends on the religion. Several faiths have unique bits of clothing that mostly seem to have the same purpose – to remind believers of who they are and what they have promised to God. Thus the headwear of the Sikh, and the beads, prayer feathers, medicine pouches and shamanic robes of various Indian tribes. As well as the yarmulke of some Jewish men and the head coverings of some Jewish women, and the aprons, trailing strings and hats of yet more followers of Judaism. Or the phylacteries and other garments and devices described in particular detail in the Bible.

In that regard, it's quite possible that Jesus, following the Old Testament Law of Moses and being an observant Jew, wore religiously prescribed garments.

Roman Catholic religious have worn sacred garments for 1,700 years. Similarly, religious garments – or "habits" – have been worn by Anglicans and religious of the Eastern Orthodox, Coptic and Greek Orthodox churches. Some of these garments are priestly, and just for ceremonial purposes, while others are worn constantly as a declaration of faith.

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, specialized articles of religious clothing, of one type or another, have been worn for at least 4,000 years. Some of these have been visible, as a sign to the world, and some have been worn under other clothes, as a reminder to the wearer.

In Islam, many women wear religiously prescribed head coverings, as they have since the religion's founding. Some Muslim women also wear a veil.

The notion of a religious head covering and even a veil is a belief also held for centuries by Christians and Jews. The Bible teaches men and women about the propriety of covering or uncovering their heads, particularly during prayer and worship. Some Christian denominations in America today, including some conservative Evangelicals and Mennonites, follow these teachings. Until a couple of generations ago, it was common for women to wear hats or scarves to mainstream American churches, to obey the biblical command to cover their heads.

The "babushkas" of many Eastern European women are worn in obedience to their understanding of their Catholic faith.

The point of all this is that religions around the world have various types of religious garments. If you do the math, most believers on earth belong to a religion that commands its followers or leaders to wear religiously significant clothing. Mormons are part of that majority. [They do] this for the same reason almost all religious clothing is worn – to remind the believer that he is a believer, and as a token of promises the believer has made to God. So, yes, [they wear] a religious garment, beneath [their] outer clothes. [Their promises] which, like the garment that represents them, are sacred, and should not be made fun of, at least not by decent people."

Dare to read the history book titled "**The Book of Mormon**" and find out for yourself if it is true. It is between you and God. Read it and know. Don't ask your friends who know less then you do, or your church leaders who don't want you to know and are as uninformed about these truths as you were, read it for yourself and make your own decisions. Pray about it and decide for yourself.

A word about the translation

Die Boek van Mormon

By John M. Pontius

I was searching through my books in storage a few days ago and came across a first edition of the Book of Mormon in Afrikaans. I served a mission in South African from 1971 to 1973. It was an interesting and challenging experience.

I attended the Stake Conference in Johannesburg on May 14, 1972 when the new translation of the Book of Mormon into Afrikaans (Die Boek van Mormon) was presented. It was an electric moment. People wept. Some had waited all of their lifetimes to read the Book of Mormon in Afrikaans. Many people had learned English for the sole purpose of reading this scripture. The Spirit was strong among us as we rejoiced.

Remembering back more than 50 years, I can still remember Professor Felix Mynhardt [not a member of our church] as he spoke of his experience in translating that sacred book. I will retell it as best I can recall.

Professor Mynhardt was invited to come to the stand and speak about his experience in translating the Book of Mormon. He recounted how he had been given a gift of languages from God from his youth. He said that he was fluent in many languages, including English, Afrikaans, Hebrew and Egyptian, as well as many others. He was presently employed as a language professor. He said he had been praying that the Lord would give him some task, some divinely important task, that would justify his having this gift of language from God.

He said in about 1970 that he had visited with a group of Mormon leaders, who sought to commission him to translate the Book of Mormon from English into Afrikaans. He said that he knew of the Book of Mormon from his religions studies, and his initial reaction was that he did not want to be involved in translating it.

However, that evening, as he prayed upon his knees, as was his habit, he said the Spirit of the Lord convicted him. The message was something on the order of, "You asked me for a great, divinely inspired task of translation, I sent it to you in the form of translating the Book of Mormon, and you declined." Professor Mynhardt said he could not

sleep through the night because he knew that translating the Book of Mormon would get him into trouble with his university, which was owned and operated by the Dutch Reformed Church. When morning came he telephoned Elder Clark to inform him that he would begin the translation immediately.

He stood at the pulpit and described the experience. He said, "I never begin translating a book at the beginning. Writing style usually changes through a book, and becomes more consistent toward the middle. Accordingly, I opened to a random place in the middle of the Book of Mormon, and began translating." He said, "I was startled by the obvious fact that the Book of Mormon was not authored in English. He said, "It became immediately apparent that what I was reading was a translation into English from some other language. The sentence structure was wrong for native English. The word choices were wrong, as were many phrases." He said, "How many times has an Englishman said or written, 'And it came to pass?'" We all laughed, and knew he was right, of course.

He continued, "When I realized this, I knew that I had to find the original language, and translate it back into the original language, or a similar language to the original, and then proceed to translate it into Afrikaans. He listed a half-dozen languages he tried, all of which did not accommodate the strange sentence structure found in the Book of Mormon. He said, "I finally tried Egyptian, and to my complete surprise, I found that the Book of Mormon translated flawlessly into Egyptian, not modern, but ancient Egyptian. I found that some nouns were missing from Egyptian, so I added Hebrew nouns where Egyptian did not provide the word or phrase. I chose Hebrew because both languages existed in the same place anciently."

"I had no idea at that time why the Book of Mormon was once written in Egyptian, but I can tell you without any doubt, that this book was at one point written entirely in Egyptian." I heard him say this over and over. Then, he said, "Imagine my utter astonishment when I turned to chapter one, verse one and began my actual translation and came to verse two, where Nephi describes that he was writing in the language of the Egyptians, with the learning of the Jews!"

He said, "I knew by the second verse, that this was no ordinary book, that it was not the writings of Joseph Smith, but that it was of ancient origin and was in fact scripture. I could have saved myself months of work if I had just begun at the beginning. Nobody but God, working through a prophet of God, in this case Nephi, would have included a statement of the language he was writing in. Consider, how many documents written in English, include the phrase, "we are writing in English!" It is unthinkable and absolute proof of the inspired origins of this book.

He paused, and then noted, "I am one of the few people in the world that is fluent in ancient Egyptian. I am perhaps the only person fluent in ancient Egyptian who is also fluent in Afrikaans and English. And I know for a fact, that I am the only person alive who could have translated this book first into Egyptian, and then into Afrikaans. If your church ever needs an Egyptian translation of the Book of Mormon, it is sitting in my office as we speak." We all laughed.

Professor Mynhardt spoke of many other things regarding the translation of this book, and then said, "I do not know what Joseph Smith was before he translated this book, and I do not know what he was afterward, but while he translated this book, he was a prophet of God! I know he was a prophet! I testify to you that he was a prophet while he brought forth this book! He could have been nothing else! No person in 1827 could have done what he did. The science did not exist. The knowledge of ancient Egyptian did not exist. The knowledge of these ancient times and ancient peoples did not exist. The Book of Mormon is scripture. I hope you realize this.

"I will keep promoting this book as scripture for the remainder of my life – simply because it *is* scripture, and I know it.

I haven't studied your doctrine or your history since Joseph Smith. The only thing I know about the Mormon religion is that you have authentic, ancient scripture in the Book of Mormon, that your church was begun by a

living and true prophet of God, and that all of the world should embrace the Book of Mormon as scripture. It simply can't be denied."

Conclusion

If all this was a figment of Joseph Smith's imagination, a fabrication and not revelation, as many accuse, how did everything he translated and write end up to be proven true? Even his translation of some ancient scrolls found in Egypt and given to him have been available to the world for analysis and retranslation and yet not one scholar has changed one word in the translation. I remind you that Joseph had no schooling in ancient Egyptian.

Some may say it was all revealed to him by a messenger other than from God. After all we know Satan can appear as an angle of light to deceive man. The only problem with that scenario is that The Book of Mormon testifies that Jesus is the Christ, the Savoir of the world and all mankind. Would Satan try to defeat himself with this book? It would be incongruent with his plan.

Therefore, this must be a true record of a real people who did live here as the book and science have revealed. Being a true record means Joseph really did see the Father and the Son. Which means Jesus is the Son of God as Joseph proclaimed and therefore this would make **The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints** the only true church on earth. The only church that teaches and knows the true character and nature of Christ as a separate person in the express image of His Father as He has said that they are two separate resurrected beings, one in purpose not substance – who else teaches this truth? Do you pray to an intangible entity, spirit mater that fills the universe and yet dwells in you, unexplainable, incomprehensible, a mystery (as it is expressed in sermons in many churches that I have personally visited)? Then are you any different than pharaoh of old who prayed to Idles that they could not understand. If you cannot comprehend to whom you are praying, how can you have sufficient faith to follow His teachings which is the only way back to His presence?

Whether you are Jew or gentile, agnostic or heathen, or belong to one of the other 500 plus Christian churches, these truths shown here can not be disputed. The truth and evidence is before you if you want to know it. The evidence is overwhelming and this is the smallest fraction of what is known and available. The true church cannot teach false doctrines, read the book and learn of Christ.

If all we needed was the Bible, everyone would be of the same faith. We are not. Therefore, we could use some additional enlightenment. The Book of Mormon and living Apostles and Prophets are what the Lord has established, not to take away the truths you already know but to expound on them and to bring you more knowledge of our Savoir.

There are many additional evidences both internal and external that demonstrate the divine origins of these two records, but only through sincere prayer can you know The Book of Mormon is true and Joseph was truly a prophet who restored the true Gospel. It is also true that only through prayer can you know the Bible is the word of God. Physical and scientific evidences prove the existence and truthfulness of these people and their two records. We all have free agency to choose to follow or believe in a heavenly Father and in His Son, but if you are going to believe, there is only one intelligently factual logical choice. If your life style is not in conformity with the teachings of Christ, as is taught by the true church that does not make the church false. You can choose to follow or not, you have that freedom and will reap its rewards.

You may obtain a free Book of Mormon from any Mormon you contact or by contacting the web site listed below.

Parts of the above material are from the appendixes of the book "In Defense of Truth" and "A Promised Land, The Land of Promise"

© 2010 Alpha Publishing www.LDSMusicAndBooks.com