

Highlights from Hannah & James Stoddard's  
**Seer Stone v. Urim & Thummim**

The Book of Mormon Translation on Trial

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**Introductory Quote:** President George Albert Smith: Those who belittle Joseph Smith will have eternal infamy, those who uphold him will have eternal glory and honor. "We have no apologies to make."

**Abbreviated Contents:**

*Narratives in Conflict*

Two Conflicting Narratives  
Has the Church Been Deceptive?

*Eyewitnesses to the Translation:*

The Lord  
Joseph Smith: Translation Instruments  
Joseph Smith: Translator or Reader?  
Joseph Smith: Book of Mormon Historicity  
Ancient Prophets  
Oliver Cowdrey

*The "New Narrative"*

Mormonism Unveiled: Hurlbut on Trial  
Mormonism Unveiled: Hurlbut's Affidavits  
Mormonism Unveiled: Reaction to Publication  
Mormonism Unveiled: Demise & Rebirth  
David Whitmer: Friend or Foe?  
David Whitmer vs. David Whitmer  
Joseph Smith: "Village Seer"? Magic?

*Conclusion:*

No One Was Betrayed (The Church narrative for the past 200 years which progressives are trying to change is correct.)

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## HOW DID JOSEPH TRANSLATE THE PLATES?



(image: [bookofmormonevidence.org](http://bookofmormonevidence.org))

## Ch. 1: Two Conflicting Narratives

-Characters were reformed Egyptian (Mormon 9:32)

-Urim & Thummim were the Nephite interpreters

-The Smith family were God-devoted New England stock. Honest, hard working. They wouldn't have been involved in treasure seeking, folk and ritual magic, and alcoholism.

-Detractors often claim that there were no plates, or that plates were rarely if ever used in translation.

-Detractors often claim that Joseph Smith Sr. was unmoored, indolent, etc. They say Joseph Smith Jr. was a "village seer" doing magic which was his "pathway to prophethood"

-Detractors often claim an occultic seer stone rather than a Urim & Thummim was used in the translation. But Smith's seer stones were distinctly different from occultic stones.

### A Major Shift

-There are no new sources as they claim; just a return to different interpretations of the same data which detractors used in the past.

### Does It Really Matter?

-Words didn't magically appear on a stone. **Why would the Lord painstakingly preserve the Urim & Thummim** if some stone (from some local guy's field) was to be used instead?

-“Seer stone in a hat” contradicts legitimate eyewitnesses

### JS And The Occult

-Richard Bushman pushes the seer stone narrative. Says “remnants of the magic culture stayed with him to the end”. Says he “gazed into stones and saw treasure”. Says magic was his “preparatory gospel”. Calls Joseph greedy, self-centered, and superstitious.

-Bushman is never clear as to whether Lucifer really exists, perhaps he sees spiritualism & magic as simply unknowns.

-Others joined Bushman in saying Joseph was a treasure seeker by reputation, saying a village seer became the translator. A fortune telling **peep stone using occultic skills. These things were traditionally considered anti-Christian.** They say God used these **Satanic skills to bring about God's work.** P7

## Ch. 2 Has The Church Been Deceptive?

-The Church has taught that the Urim & Thummim was used on the translation for some **200 years** now. But **people are trying to change that** narrative.

-Religious art in the Ensign etc. have showed the Urim & Thummim. No where was seer stone narrative. **Bushman called for this art to change.** P10

## "No Authentic Statement" (Supporting Seer Stone For Translation)

-Joseph Fielding Smith was one of the most prominent Church historians in our history and a long time Apostle and President of the Church. He said there is no authentic statement for the seer stone hypothesis, that such is hearsay. He doesn't believe the stone was used in the translation. P11

**-JFiS lived church history. He affirms that Joseph had a seer stone or seer stones, but that any claim that such was used in the Book of Mormon translation is hearsay.**



## Is President Joseph Fielding Smith's Research Outdated?

-There are **no new sources** discovered in the past several decades, yet progressive historians call for a “new narrative”. It's a **new INTERPRETATION of existing sources**.

### How To Approach Bofm Translation

-those who claim the seer stone in hat narrative are those who do not believe Joseph was a prophet and who are trying to take him down. P14

-plates were present during the entire translation p15

-Joseph said he used the U&T not a stone, if we don't believe him, why would we believe the book he translated to be scripture? P16

### Ch. 3 Witness #1: The Lord

#### Did Js Translate The Entire B of M Using The Nephite U&T? Or Only A Part?

-The **Lord says the U&T was used to translate the entire BfM**, and never a hat and stone. P17-18

-Joseph used U&T for the Lehi lost pages, and he was to do the remainder of the translation by the same means say the D&C 36:1 1844 ed. P18

#### Was The U&T Used By Js His Personal Seer Stone? Or Was It A Jaredite Artifact That Passed Through Nephite Hands To JS?

-angel returned U&T to JS (says Times & Seasons). p19

-D&C 42:1-2 1844ed says JS used U&T of the Jaredites to translate BfM p20

-JS, Moroni, and others described U&T as 2 stones **transparent** (**NOT OPAQUE**) fastened to a bow & breastplate p20, 21

## Did The Lord Command The Three Witnesses To Bear Testimony Of The U&T?

-D&C 42:2 8144 ed. says the witnesses should testify not only of the plates but of the U&T p20

-Jared, Mosiah, and Moroni had used the U&T p21

## Translate The Engravings

-Christ describes Book of Mormon “TRANSLATION” (not just revelation) 30+ times. In part see D&C 5:4, 30; 10:1-45; 6:25; 11:19, 22 see pg22-3

-D&C 36:9 1844ed the Lord tells Joseph to “TRANSLATE” not to read words off of a stone. P23

-Christ says “translate” these “engravings” of Nephi

-Christ uses term “engravings” or “engraven” 5 times in one revelation p24

## Ch. 4 Witness #2: Joseph Smith: Translation Instruments

-JS was the only successful translator, we should give his testimony precedence. P24

## Did The Prophet JS Comment On The Translation Of The BofM?

-Progressives say over and over that JS “said very little” about the translation process or that JS “never gave any details”. These same people are those who claim he did it with a seer stone in a hat. P26

-No, “by the gift and power of God” are NOT the only words used by JS to describe the translation. P27

-JS’s written testimonies tell that he used ancient physical Nephite plates to translate the BfM,

- JS’s written testimonies tell that he didn’t leave them covered or hiding during translation.

- JS’s written testimonies tell that he used U&T not a seer stone in translation.

- JS’s written testimonies tell that the U&T was temporarily lost but was returned to him. P27

-JS’s written testimonies tell that the BfM was of real people who once lived, and that descendants of those nations are alive today.

- JS’s written testimonies tell that he “translated” the record in the truest sense of the word.

- JS’s written testimonies tell that many false reports were spread concerning the translation in his day (many of these false reports still circulate to this day and are part of the “new narrative”). P28

## Did Js Use The Nephite Plates To Translate The BofM?

-Joseph said he didn’t compose the title page of the BfM, but used the last leaf of the Nephite plates, that it was “a genuine and literal translation” p28

-Joseph said all of the writing of the title page ran the “same as all Hebrew writing in general.”

-Joseph spent at least 3 months studying hieroglyphics taken from the plates before he began translating the record (JS Hist) p29

-Joseph reportedly showed some of the Nephite characters to George Moore in Nauvoo. P29

-Joseph described the physical appearance of the plates in the Wentworth Letter: 6” wide, 8” long, thinner than common tin, Egyptian characters, 3 rings, part of it sealed. Unsealed portion characters were small & beautifully engraved, the whole book exhibited antiquity in its construction, and much skill in the art of engraving. P30

## Did Js Translate Using The U&T Or A Dark Seer Stone?

-Joseph said he got the plates and U&T, and he used the U&T to translate the plates p30

-Joseph said the U&T had “two transparent stones set in the rim of a bow fastened to a breastplate. Through the medium of the U&T I translated the record” p31

-There is no mention of a seer stone in translation in the Wentworth Letter, but specific mention of U&T p31

-Joseph said the U&T were hid with the plates for the purpose of translating them! (JS to Robert Matthews, JS Journal) p32

## Did Joseph Smith Lose The U&T Permanently After The 116 Pages Were Lost?

-David Whitmer says JS began as a true prophet but fell and lost the translators, and then used a “seer stone” “in a hat into which he buried his face” and that “the plates, however, were not returned...”. He goes on to speak of a flat chocolate colored egg stone used to translate. William E. McLellin also fell and promoted this false narrative. P33

-Actually JS did lose the U&T but shortly thereafter “they were returned to me” he said (JS Hist) p34

-Some time after the loss of the 116 pages, Joseph’s mother speaks of the trunk which had both the plates & the U&T (L.M. Smith Hist) p34

-“I had the joy and satisfaction of again receiving the U&T; and have commenced translating again” p35

-Christ speaks of the plates being preserved so the record of the people could come about (why preserve the plates if they weren’t even used!?) p35

-Whitmer speaks of the seer stone as an icon of Joseph’s alleged disobedience and pride. P36

## Ch. 5 Witness #2: Joseph Smith: Translator Or Reader?

-Progressive historians insist Joseph didn’t translate, but just read. Bushman admits this is “weird”, and wonders “what in the world were the plates for?” p37-38

-The Lord uses the term “translation” whenever referring to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. P38

### Term “Translate”

-Webster 1828 dictionary of translate: “to interpret; to render into another language; to express the sense of the language in the words of another.” P39

-Brigham taught that scripture translations are given as which suits the capacities of the readers, and that if it were translated again at a later time, it would be different from the present translation. P40 for the quote

**-Joseph chose which words to use for the translation p40**

-How one views the character of the prophet Joseph leads them to either support or reject his translation. Some say he was occultic and racist, that we should reject his translation. It is true that if Joseph was a wicked man, the book would be questionable. That’s why attackers of the book attack Joseph’s character. P40-41

-The reason the BofM was the “most correct book” is that the writers of it, and the translator of it, were holy men. Joseph was the greatest prophet next to Christ (as stated in D&C). P41

### Familiarity With Nephite Culture

-The Lord doesn’t just give us things, he requires effort. The Lord allowed and required Joseph to do everything he could before intervening to help. P42

-Joseph knew Nephite culture. The Smith family gathered each evening to hear Joseph, still a boy, tell them of Nephite culture. (He had seen it in vision and learned of it from Nephite prophets in person). Joseph was tutored for 4 years before receiving the plates. He learned of “the ancient inhabitants of this continent” [North America]; **dress, mode of traveling, and the animals upon which they rode; their cities, and their buildings, with every particular; he would describe their mode of warfare, as also their religious worship.** This he would do with as much ease, seemingly, as if he had spent his while life with them.” (LM Hist) p42-43

-Joseph learned of the ancient legal systems of “this country”; of “their origin, progress, civilization, laws, governments” etc. (letter to John Wentworth; JS Hist) p43

### Angelic Nephite Tutors

-Joseph said if you “gaze in heaven 5 minute[s] you would know more – than you would be [reading] all that ever was written [sic] on the subject” (JS discourse reported by Willard Richards) p44

-John Taylor related that Joseph was visited by Mormon, Moroni, Nephi, other ancient prophets who lived on this continent [North America], and Peter John and others from the Asiatic Continent. P44

-Clearly Joseph didn’t begin the translation as unlearned. He wasn’t learned in the philosophies of men, but he was well-versed in divine doctrine, true history, and spiritual gifts. P45

-John Taylor said Joseph “seemed to be just as familiar with the Spirit World, and as well acquainted with the other side, as he was here.” P45

-Orson Pratt taught that Joseph received visits from Nephi, Moroni, “the three Nephites”, Peter, James, John (the Beloved), John (the Baptist), Elijah, Moses, etc. p45, footnote 19

-John Taylor also spoke of Joseph being visited and taught by Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Noah, Adam, Seth, Enoch, Jesus, and the Father. P45 footnote 16

-George Q Cannon spoke of Moroni, who held the keys of the record of the stick of Ephraim, visiting Joseph. P45

### Studying The Characters

-Joseph was the pupil of Moroni, who tutored him for years before giving him the record. P46

-Nephite language was valued, fragments were preserved and studied. Joseph **spent 3 months copying and translating “characters of the plates”**. **“by means of the U&T”** p47 for the full quote, JS Hist

-Joseph **spent more time studying he characters than he spent translating and dictating the book to his principal scribe** Oliver Cowdry (this was a translation, not a reading!) p48

-Joseph time between 1827-1829 when Joseph had the plates which he could have used to further study the language. P48

-Joseph’s “1<sup>st</sup> step” in translation was that he was instructed “to take a Fac-Simile of the characters composing the alphabet: which characters were called reformed Egyptian...” (LM Smith Hist) This could have functioned as a “Rosetta Stone” p48-49

-Joseph knew the plates and characters well. He was able to say “Mormon” wasn’t from the Greek word “mormo”. He said there were no Greek or Latin upon the plates. P50

-Joseph gave the word “good” in 9 languages, then gave a rendering of “Mormon” as a stem from the Egyptian “mon” meaning “good”, and

spoke of “Mor mon” meaning “more good”. This is an obvious example of Joseph translating. P51

(Note: Joseph studied many languages; as one who learned a mission language then hungered for others, it would seem likely that after learning reformed Egyptian, Joseph caught the fire of language learning, and went on to study others as well. All of this, his learning in other languages etc., supports the idea that Joseph translated, not just read, the BofM.)

-Joseph said “I translated the BofM from hieroglyphics; the knowledge of which was lost to the world; in which wonderful even I stood alone, an unlearned youth, to combat the worldly wisdom, and multiplied ignorance of eighteen centuries, with a new revelation; which (if they would receive the everlasting gospel,) would open the eyes of more than eight hundred millions of people, and make “plain the old paths”... (JS Hist) p51

**-Joseph mastered the language, then translated!** Unlearned Joseph doing this matches what we see in other scriptures: Nephi was instructed of the Lord how to build a boat and did so, the Brother of Jared building barges, Noah building an ark, Brigham Young settling the barren and hostile Rocky Mountains and nearly every western state, etc. People gain remarkable skills when they partner with the Lord! In the MTC today, missionaries learn languages remarkably fast, the military was shocked at how even the instructors were young, they couldn’t understand how this all happened. p51-52

### How Did Js Translate The Characters?

-Joseph said he got the U&T along with the plates. He said “they remained safe in my hands, until I had accomplished **by them** what was required at my hand.” (JS Hist) Therefore it was by the U&T that the translation took place! P53

-Joseph speaks of translating “characters” by the U&T, and “translating” them by that means. (JS Hist & JS Church Hist) p53



-Joseph said “all the particulars” weren’t for the world to know (Minute book, JS Papers). Isn’t it strange that when people apostatized, they suddenly felt a need to divulge translation process details? P54

-President Hinckley emphasized Joseph as the seer of this dispensation. He said “**we have a great body of revelation, the vast majority of which came from the prophet Joseph Smith. We don’t need much revelation. We need to pay more attention to the revelation we’ve already received**...we have a great, basic reservoir of revelation” p55 footnote 42

-Hickley went on, “I look to [JS]. I love him. I seek to follow him. I read his words, and they become the standards to be observed in the guiding this great Church as it moves forward in fulfilling its eternal destiny.” P55 footnotes

-Elder McConkie said “[JS] **was as near perfection as mortals can get without being translated**. He was a man of such spiritual stature that he reflected the image of the Lord Jesus to the people. His voice was the voice of the Lord...The test of discipleship is how totally and completely and fully we believe the word that was revealed through JS, and how effectively we echo or proclaim that word to the world...JS had, as no other man in our dispensation, the ability to be in tune with the Comforter and to speak forth things that were the mind and voice of the Lord, including things that are not in the standard works” he goes on to say that other revelations which have come in this dispensation are an outgrowth from what JS received. (see talk “This Generation Shall Have My Word through You”) p55 footnote

-BY and John Taylor spoke of Joseph being a natural born prophet & seer. P55 footnote

## Ch. 6 Witness #2 Joseph Smith: Book Of Mormon Historicity

-BofM is called the “history of ancient America” and the “record of the forefathers of our western Tribes of Indians”

-Joseph multiple times spoke of being **visited by Moroni**; Christ spoke of returning to drink of the **fruit of the vine “with you on the earth, and with Moroni**, whom I have sent unto you to reveal the book of Mormon”. Joseph spoke of Moroni appearing and directing him to the plates, etc. p57

-JS prophesied in Nauvoo that the Saints would “go into the Rocky Mountains, right in the midst of the Lamanites.” (Huntington, YW Journal) p58

-JS identified the **“Hill Cumorah” in Manchester NY as the same** which Nephites called Cumorah and Jaredites called Ramah. (JS Editorial, Elders Journal) p58

-JS spoke of a Nephite altar in Adam-Ondi-Ahman p58

-Those who say JS never used the plates wonder if the BofM people were really a historical people at all! **They wonder if the plates had any correlation with our translated text!** Bushman speaks of not knowing how the plates correlate with what JS’s oral dictations to his secretaries! True, if the plates weren’t used, people wonder if they even matter! Well, the plates were used, contrary to what progressive historians say. P58-9

-Those who promote the seer stone narrative either say 1. Joseph saw words, 2. Joseph thought he saw words, and 3. Joseph claimed to see words but didn’t. Scholars argue about these things. P59-60

-Progressive scholars wonder if this “magical” literary text from a stone was an ancient record, just literature, or even just “commentary of his own” with “19<sup>th</sup> century content”

(Note: amazing! **The fox is guarding the hen house!** The detractors are now among the church historians! This is **surely part of the prophesied test which Heber C Kimbal spoke of** which would try the faith of many of the saints in the last days!)

-If the words came from an treasure-digging seer stone originally used for occultic purposes, did the adversary taint the words that came from it? This is why the stone narrative doesn’t make sense. P61

-Now we have scholars saying the text isn't "based on a true story" and that it's just the random ideas of JS. They then say they don't need to believe it is the word of God as they don't know the true origin of it. (You see where this stone business leads?) p61

-Joseph made some changes later, such as adding "or out of the waters of baptism" to clarify the phrase "come forth out of the waters of Judah", and "son of" to references of God. If Joseph was just reading words off of a stone, why would he make changes? However, **if he was the TRANSLATOR, it would be fully within his right to make clarifications** to illustrate the concept of the original more plainly. (This resolves many anti-Mormon claims against the text!) p61

-Progressive scholars insist that 'science' has shown that the BofM is not historical! They say "there are many who are willing to die on the hill of ancient historicity. The them I say, 'grow up!'" p64

-BY reported that Oliver said he and Joseph went to a **cave near Cumorah where there were wagonloads of other plates**. This likely included **Mormon's source material**. P64

-a survey showed that **51% of 'non-Utah Mormons' renounce the historicity of the BofM and 31% of 'Utah Mormons' say its not a 'literal historical account'** (Religion News, 2019) p65

-Joseph identified a "white Lamanite" named "Zelph" who "was a warrior and chieftain under the great prophet Onandagus who was known from the Hill Cumorah or eastern sea to the Rocky Mountains." (JS Hist) p66

### "History Of Ancient America"

-Joseph called the BfM the "**history of ancient America**" and of "two distinct races of people" including Jaredites from the tower of Babel, the 2<sup>nd</sup> from Jerusalem around 600BC, that these were principally Israelites of Joseph, that the principle nation of these fell around the 4<sup>th</sup> century (AD), and that "**the remnant are the Indians that now inhabit this country [USA].**" (JS Hist) p67

-Joseph said the BofM tells “that our Saviour made his appearance **upon this continent** [North America]. (JS Hist) p67

-Joseph spoke of Moroni teaching him of the people here, “I was also informed [by Moroni] **concerning the aboriginal inhabitants of this country, and shown who they were, and from whence they came; a brief sketch of their origin, progress, civilization, laws, governments,** of their righteousness and iniquity, and the blessings of God being finally withdrawn from them as a people was made known unto me: I was also told where there was deposited some plates on which were engraven an abridgement of the records of the **ancient prophets that had existed on this continent**. The angel appeared to me three times the same night and unfolded the same things. After having received **many visits from the angels of God** unfolding the majesty, and glory of the events that should transpire in the last days, on the morning of the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September A.D. 1827, the angel of the Lord delivered the records into my hands.” (JS Hist) p68

-Joseph said the BofM is “a record of the forefathers of our western Tribes of Indians, having been found through the ministration of an holy Angel translated into our own Language by the gift and power of God...” (JS to N.C. Saxton) p68

## Ch. 7: Witnesses #3-5: Ancient Prophets

### Moroni

-Moroni told JS of the 2 stones fastened to a breastplate which were the U&T “for the purpose of translating the book” (JS Hist) p70

-There is no evidence that any of Joseph Smith’s seer stones were ever found with the plates in the stone box in Cumorah, leaving no doubt that the U&T described by Moroni and any of the seer stones the Prophet may have had were different objects entirely. P71

-Ether 4:5 Mormon was commanded to seal up the interpreters with the book for the interpretation thereof. Progressives don’t like this verse.

-The **stones of the U&T were TRANSPARENT.**

-Moroni had “the keys of the record of the stick of Ephraim [BofM], he oversaw the translation, it was under his authority and supervision. P72

-Orson Hyde taught that **Moroni is the “guardian angel of these United States”**, that he gave “deep impressions”, “dreams”, and “visions” to Columbus, that he “was in the camp with Washington”, and that he will YET fulfill important missions in saving the Constitution of the United States. (Journal of Discourses) p72

-We have yet to receive a large portion of the Brother of Jared’s vision and the writings of Moroni. Elder McConkie says we will get these records, and a full correct translation of the bible, in the millennium. He laments that “we do not even treasure up and live by what he has already given us.” P73 including footnote.

### The Brother Of Jared

-Ether 3:22-24 “...two stones will I give unto thee, and ye shall seal them up also with the things which ye shall write. For behold, the language which ye shall write I have confounded; wherefore I will cause in my own due time that these stones shall magnify to the eyes of men these things which ye shall write.”

-Joseph Fielding Smith taught that the Jaredites spoke the language of Adam. P74 footnote

-the **Lord works in patterns, we see the U&T being used in our day as it was in day of old.**

### Mosiah And The U&T

-Mosiah 28:13 “two stones” aided the translation of plates unknown to Nephites

-Mosiah 8: King Mosiah translating gold plates by the gift and power of God

-Nephites were given Jaredite record as a warning to them of what would happen if they rejected the prophets. They rejected this and their history was left to us in the same manner! P77

-Ether 15:11 shows where the Jaredite and Nephite civilizations ended: "...the hill Ramah...[which] was that same hill where my father Mormon did hide up the records unto the Lord, which were sacred." Thus we see, in connection with earlier statements, that these civilizations ended at the Great Lakes region of the US

-Heber C. Kimball's son remembered, "Heber C. Kimball said it was revealed to him that the last great destruction of the wicked would be on the lakes near the Hill Cumorah." (Lundwall, Inspired Prophetic Warnings to All Inhabitants of the Earth) p78

-Early colonizers of the US in the 19<sup>th</sup> century found ruins which belonged to Nephite civilization. This repeats how Nephites found ruins of Jaredite civilization (Mosiah 8:8), who also found gold plates! Heber C. Kimball spoke of finds of axes, abundance of iron, entrenchments and fortifications, human bones axes tomahawks points of arrows, beads, pipes, frequently found, an appearance of a fortification around the Hill Cumorah area, and similar fortifications all about the US. P79

-Mosiah 8:13-14 shows that those with the U&T can translate languages which are unknown. That those who use these "interpreters" are a "seer" having a "high gift from God"

-The Nephites discovering the Jaredites was included in this "most correct book" for a reason, it is critical to show a parallel for our day. P82

-Mosiah 28:12-13 describes the interpreters: **"two stones which were fastened into the two rims of a bow."**

-Joseph Fielding Smith spoke of Joseph receiving the Jaredite U&T, that such was to be the means for the translation of the ancient record. p84 quote

-Mosiah 28:14-16 "Now these things [the U&T] were **prepared from the beginning, and were handed down from generation to**

**generation, for the purpose of interpreting languages;** and they have been kept and preserved by the hand of the Lord, that he should discover to every creature who should possess the land the iniquities and abominations of his people; and whosoever has these things is called **seer**, after the manner of old times.”

-J Fielding Smith said “U&T which were given to the Brother of Jared, were preserved for this very purpose of translating the record, both of the Jaredites and the Nephites. Then again the Prophet was impressed by Moroni with the fact that these stones were given for that very purpose. It hardly seems reasonable to suppose that the Prophet would substitute something evidently inferior under these circumstances.” (Doctrines of Salvation v3 1956 p226) p86

**-J Fielding Smith points out that**

- 1. Nephites and Jaredites used the same U&T and**
- 2. U&T was specifically prepared for translating the BofM and Jaredite records, and**
- 3. U&T was superior to any seer stone the prophet may have possessed, that**

**THEREFORE, JS used the U&T to translate the BofM.**

**-J Fielding Smith concluded that there is no credible historical statement claiming JS used a seer stone to translate the BofM.**

## **Ch. 8 Witness #6: Oliver Cowdery**

-Cowdry was the scribe for almost the entire book

### **Meeting The Prophet JS**

-The Lord called Oliver to the translation, including showing him a vision of the plates beforehand, etc. Joseph prayed 3 days before Oliver’s arrival.

## Translating With The U&T

-Oliver said the “translation” was “with the U&T” “Interpreters” p90

-Oliver never mentions the stone as part of the translation p90

-Oliver said in Letter VII that the hill **Cumorah in NY is the same geographical hill the Nephites called Cumorah and Jaredites called Ramah.** P91

-Oliver said in the Letter VII that Moroni said to JS: that the BofM was the “history of the aborigines of this country” [USA], and said they were “literal descendants of Abraham.” That they were “once being an enlightened and intelligent people, possessing a correct knowledge of the gospel, and the plan of restoration and redemption.” He told JS that the U&T were the means to “translate” the record. P91

## Mission To The Lamanites

-BofM is for both Nephite & Lamanite remnants in the latter-days (D&C 3:17-18).

-“**Go unto the Lamanites**” D&C 28:8

-“into the wilderness among the Lamanites” D&C 32:2-3

The Lord clearly identifies multiple times in the revelations that those of the western North America were Lamanites!

-Parley P. Pratt said “we preached the gospel in its fullness, and distributed the **record of their forefathers** among three tribes, viz: the Cattaraugus **Indians**, near Buffalo, N. Y., the Wyandots of Ohio, and the Delawares west of Missouri.” (PPP Autobiography p61) p93

-Oliver spoke of his own mission to go to preach to the Lamanites p93

-Preaching to the Indians, they became interested once they knew the nature of the book, it relating to them in particular. A history of their people, their ancestors, their bloodlines, not just some religious book. P94



-Oliver spoke of the book as the “red men’s forefathers”, “they wrote in a book” “their history” “handed down from father to son”; taught them of JS who prayed much to the Great Spirit etc. p94

-Oliver taught of the book being “interpreted [into] the language of the pale faces” p95

**-The whole approach of Oliver to the Indians was that of the historicity of the book!**

-Oliver said that Moroni “gave him (Joseph) knowledge of the language.” P96

### Was Js A Treasure Digger?

-Joseph said there were rumor of **falsehoods about himself** and his family which could “**fill volumes**” (JS Hist) p96

-Oliver refuted the idea of JS as a treasure digger: he says that at one point Joseph was required to labor a few months with some others in excavating the earth in pursuit of treasure as his employer Stowell said to do, that Joseph was a common laborer employed.

-Joseph eventually succeeded in convincing Stowell to give up the venture. Joseph said of his employ to one who was looking for a silver mine BEFORE HIRING JOSEPH, that “**finally I prevailed with the old gentleman to cease digging** after it. Hence arose the very prevalent story of my having been a money-digger.” (JS Hist) p98

-Joseph and Oliver refute that Joseph ever lead treasure digging expeditions, or that Joseph ever used his seer stone in search of “lost objects” and “lost treasure”, that these were nothing more than “false and slanderous reports.” (O Cowdry, Letter VIII) p98

### Oliver Cowdery’s Testimony In 1848

-Oliver saw the plates and interpreters, and testified that Joseph translated the record by the U&T “or as it is called by that book holy interpreters.”

-Oliver's testimony has been verified in the Miller journal as matching official records of Cowdery speeches, and "it is clearly accurate. Thus the above words are likely to be Cowdery verbatim." (Anderson Ensign Sept. 1977)

## Ch. 9: Mormonism Unvailed: Hurlbut on Trial

-this one book "Mormonism Unvailed [sic]" appears repeatedly as a "source" of the new narrative of 1834 by E. D. Howe. Progressive historians like Richard Bushman (author of JS: Rough Stone Rolling) and Michael Hubbard MacKay and Mark Ashurst-McGee use this as a key source.

**(Howe got the material for it from Hurlbut, who you'll see was a scoundrel just trying to destroy Joseph)**

-Strange claims were made such as using a peep stone to translate while the plates were hid in the woods, that the plates weren't really used, that a stone used for money digging was used to translate, that the stone was put in the hat, etc. p102

## Doctor Philastus Hurlbut: Membership & Excommunication

-Mormonism Unvailed was among one of the first known "anti-Mormon" publications and represents the first significant published opposition to JS and the restoration.

-M.U. was a collection of affidavits and research collected by LDS dissenter D.P. Hurlbut. (Doctor was his first name, not a title). Joseph called him "not so much a doctor of physic, as of falsehood, or by name." p103

-Hurlbut was a member only 2 months, and "was accused of unchristian conduct with the female sex while on a mission to the east." He was excommunicated. P103

-Hurlbut was reinstated upon confession. Joseph said however right after this counsel reinstated him that “he is not honest, and what he has promised he will not fulfil; what he has confessed are not the thoughts and intents of his heart, and time will prove it.” P104

-Hurlbut then went about boasting that he had deceived JS and the counsel.

-Hurlbut did not repent of his immoral conduct.

**-Hurlbut swore to have revenge on the church p105**

### Hurlbut Incites Persecution Against JS

-Hurlbut ran around collecting money to lie about JS, collecting affidavits showing the bad character of the Mormon Smith family. P106-7

-Hurlbut and others **threatened the life of JS.** P106

-Hurlbut was a leader of those who hunted the life of JS. P107

-Hurlbut swore that “**he would wash his hands in Joseph Smith’s blood.**” (G A Smith, Historical Discourse in JD) p107

### Ch. 10: Mormonism Unvaild: Hurlbut’s Affidavits

-This was not unbiased and honest research.

-Hurlbut went to others when some would not tell him what he wanted to hear (see Benjamin Saunders, etc.) p108

-Oliver C. also interviewed many who knew the Smith family, who attested to Joseph being “honest, upright, virtuous, and faithfully industrious young man.” And that “I have been told by those for whom he has labored, that he was a young man of truth and industrious habits.” P109

-Stafford falsely told Hurlbut that JS attacked him after heavily drinking. In reality, Stafford’s hog entered the Smith field, the Smith dog bit off

the hog's ear, then Stafford killed the Smith dog, and when a mob of Stafford and his 5 friends came to attack JS, JS defended himself beating all of them. P109-110

-Jonathan H Hale visited NY and recorded that the people of Palmyra attested to the good character of JS. P111

-John S Carter reported that those of NY said of the Smiths, that many who hated the church were still unable to make out anything against Joseph. He made this trip shortly before Hurlbut came and gathered stories. p111

-Hyrum Andrus book "They Knew the Prophet" reports of many who knew the Smith family before the restoration, who reported that they were known by many to be honest, religious, and industrious, but poor. That the family was one of the best in that locality, that the father (JS Sr.) was "above the average in intelligence". It was said that Joseph was the best hired hand ever found. That Joseph had an influence over the boys that he could break up fights, that when Joseph was there less time would be spent quarreling, and that work went on steady forward. That Joseph was the truest noblest purest boy known. P111-2 (this is also from the Martha Cox notebook, where she speaks of her father as an employer of JS who spoke so highly of him)

-A Thomas H. Taylor who knew the Smiths reported that some people didn't like the Smith's because they knew something the others didn't; that they were ahead of people, and that the Smiths had the manhood to stand for their convictions, which upset folks. That many of the stories circulating about the Smiths were pure lies. **"Oh! They are a set of d---d liars." He knew the people there well, that "they make these lies on Smith, because they love a lie better than the truth. I can take you to a great many old settlers here who will substantiate what I say."** That when you put those men down to it, "They never could sustain anything against Smith." P113-4

## [Violence Against The Latter-Day Saints](#)

-speaks of various death threats and armed mobs as a result of Hurlbut

## Hurlbut On Trial

-Leman Copley spoke in defense of Hurlbut at trial, but years after the trial, visited JS and confessed he had lied and borne “false testimony” against JS. This confession was given in writing also. P115-6

-Joseph, Rigdon, and FG Williams told how Hurlbut had gathered many ridiculous stories for his affidavits. He made harsh death threats against JS. He fired up the people against JS. P116

-The court determined that JS had “reason to fear that DP Hurlbut would beat wound or kill him or injure his property” etc. The court ruling against Hurlbut brought some peace in the church. P116

## Ch. 11 Mormonism Unveiled: Reaction To Publication

### Impact Of Mormonism Unveiled

-the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of M.U. speaks of JS as lazy, indolent, ignorant, superstitious, a believer in witches and ghosts, fortune telling, hidden treasures, necromancy, juggling [sic], using a peep stone, placing a stone in a hat, etc. p121

-Bushman says in essence, referring to things said about JS in M.U., don't worry about JS doing ritual magic, everyone was doing it back then. But not so, the serious Christians wanted nothing to do with occultic things such as magic. This narrative leads many stalwart Christians to not be interested in the restoration! P122

### Latter-Day Saints Respond To Hurlbut

**-Hurlbut couldn't publish his own work due to his bad reputation,** his wife's affair, etc. So he used E.D. Howe to publish. P123

-But Howe wasn't of the best reputation either. His brother robbed a post office. The Hurlbut's and Howe's had bad reputations. P124

**-Joseph warned Oliver that many claimed to know him who never did,** and that they made up false stories about him. P124

**-Hurlbut was immoral, deceptive, and likely a murderer who aspired to become the prophet Joseph's judge.** P125

-Joseph said the falsehoods being spread about him could fill volumes.  
P126-7

-Why are church historians embracing the testimony of modern day Judas Iscariots, scribes, and pharisees? p127

## Ch. 12 Mormonism Unvaild: Demise & Rebirth

-Fawn Brodie detractor and author of "No Man Knows My History" uses these Hurlbut affidavits too.

-Many are the accusations against Hurlbut which progressive historians have ignored.

-Matthew Roper of BYU and other progressives insist that Hurlbut shouldn't be ignored when writing about Joseph's character, translation methods, etc.

-Hurlbut was kicked out of the Methodist Church "for immoralities." Hurlbut was kicked out of the United Brethren Church later for similar reasons. The UBC wrote to Joseph about Hurlbut, that Hurlbut was a liar, intemperate, on trial on charges for "gross improprieties toward the opposite sex", and was generally growing "from bad to worse" P133

## What Happened to Eber D. Howe?

**-Howe was into spiritualism.** Claimed to have spirit guides p134 (like serious yoga students Reki)

-Brigham rebuked the spiritualism movement. He acknowledged they could make items move, etc., and taught that a person needs revelations of Jesus Christ to be able to tell whether something is from God or the Devil. P135

-Joseph Smith said **“false prophets always arise to oppose the true prophets, and they will prophesy so very near the truth that they will deceive almost the very chosen ones...in relation to the Kingdom of God – the devil always sets up his Kingdom at the very same time in opposition to God...”** (JS Discourse reported by Thomas Bullock, in JS Papers) p135

**-Spiritualism was established less than 15 miles from where Joseph Smith received the Nephite plates.** P135

-Brigham taught that **“if the people did not receive the spirit of revelation that God had sent for the salvation of the world, they would receive false spirits,** and would have revelation...enough to damn the whole nation” (BY Words of Wisdom – Spiritualism, JD vol. 13 (London, 1871), 280-281. Discourse given on October 30, 1870) p136

-Brigham spoke of the spiritualists who receive revelations from “every foul spirit that has departed this life” which “float around here” which are “seeking whom they can destroy; for they are the servants of the devil, and they are permitted to come now to reveal to the people.” (BY Words of Wisdom – Spiritualism, JD vol. 13 (London, 1871), 280-281. Discourse given on October 30, 1870) p136

-Brigham taught “God has spoken now, and so has the devil; Jesus has revealed his priesthood, so has the devil revealed his” He said the one is perfect organization, the other is confusion, and that “everybody [is] receiving revelation to suit himself.” (BY Words of Wisdom – Spiritualism, JD vol. 13 (London, 1871), 280-281. Discourse given on October 30, 1870)

**-Howe accused Joseph Smith of witchcraft and other occultic practices, but he himself was involved in those things.** Spiritualism is Satanism. Howe celebrated that the spiritualism religion was growing, that “ther are now more believers in this new dispensation, after an exhibition of thirty years, than there were in the Christian religion for the first five hundred after its advent.” P137

-Howe believed in godless Darwinian Evolution. P137

**-Howe admitted that his beliefs changed from day to day.** P138

## The Resurrection of Mormonism Unveiled

-Joseph Smith himself refuted the work of Howe and Hurlbut. Why do church historians now disagree with Joseph himself? P138

-Howe boasted that his book (MU) was the basis of all the other histories of the saints from that time forward. P138 footnote

**-Bushman said “the first thing I decided was that I could not dismiss all of Hurlbut’s affidavits” p139**

-Bushman’s contribution in his book “Rough Stone Rolling” was to take Hurlbut seriously. (The whole point was to belittle Joseph’s character and methods) p140

-Bushman celebrated his brainwashing, “Even highly orthodox Latter-day Saints are not offended by treasure seeking and seer stones.” P140

-Bushman has won the praise of academics by betraying the prophet. He has embraced the testimony of traitors.

-D&C 122:1-3 “The ends of the earth shall inquire after thy name, and fools shall have thee in derision, and hell shall rage against thee while the pure in heart, the wise, and the noble, and the virtuous, shall seek counsel, and authority, and blessings constantly from under thy hand. And thy people shall never be turned against thee by the testimony of traitors.”

## Ch. 13 David Whitmer: Friend or Foe?

-David became hostile & disaffected from the church. Why do we take his accounts seriously?

### David Whitmer Contradicts Joseph Smith

-Whitmer denounced the church, claiming JS was a fallen prophet. P143

-Whitmer’s account of the translation includes the seer stone in the hat, writing appearing and disappearing, etc. p143

-Whitmer says the plates were not used in translation. P144

-Whitmer’s claims were similar to those of Mormonism Unveiled about a peer stone in a hat formerly used in money digging, placed in a hat where 1 word appeared at a time.



## David Whitmer's Excommunication

-8 years after the organization of the church Whitmer betrayed the prophet and became his sworn enemy. He became an antagonist toward the saints.

## David Whitmer: the "Dumb Ass"

-Joseph called Whitmer the dumb ass upon which WW Phelps the professed prophet rode, who breys out cursings.

-This was a reference to Balaam and his donkey in the old testament. Balaam practiced witchcraft and magic. He was commissioned by the king of Moab to curse Israel. Balaam was intercepted by an angel.

## Korah, Dathan, and Abiram

-Joseph indicated that Phelps and Whitmer would be destroyed like those who rebelled against Moses, that they would have the same fate as Korah.

-Korah Dathan and Abiram were Israelites who led a revolt against Moses while the children of Israel wandered in the desert. They wanted to take down Moses and they coveted authority and office.

-The parallels with Whitmer and the Kirtland apostacy are strikingly similar to the rebellion against Moses, and to what is going on today by progressive historians against Joseph.

## Joseph Smith as the Latter-day Moses

-Joseph was given a blessing in Kirtland to lead Israel as Moses. Shortly after this blessing, Moses conferred keys on Joseph in 1836.

-Woodruff and others called Joseph their Moses. P147

-The Lord spoke of JS as having a similar calling as Moses (D&C 28:2; 101; 103)

-D&C 103:16 "I will raise up unto my people a man, who **shall lead them like as Moses led the children of Israel.**"

**Then in verse 15 he identifies this man as JS.**

**-JST of Gen. 50 has ancient prophecies of Joseph of Egypt wherein he paralleled the life and mission of Moses and Joseph Smith** (as documented in

history and foretold in patriarchal blessings (Joseph's work will continue when he returns to prepare us for Christ's return)).

-Joseph has a future mission in overseeing and **enacting latter-day destructions** (ref in text)

(Note: this supports a theory that JS is one of the archangels, and that they are those who pour out the apocalyptic vials/bowls/plagues...)

## David Whitmer Covets Joseph Smith's Priesthood Office as Korah Coveted Moses' Office

-Whitmer lamented that members put too much trust in Joseph; that "they believed his words as if they were from God's own mouth." (ref in text p149)

-During the Kirtland apostasy a conspiracy surged with the intent to denounce Joseph and sustain David as church president. P149

-The Lord told us to heed "all his [Joseph's] words and commandments" (D&C 21:4)

-The Lord said we can survive the latter-days by listening to Joseph: "for his [Joseph's] word ye shall receive, **as if from mine own mouth**, in all patience and faith. For by doing these things the gates of hell shall not prevail against you..." (D&C 21:5-6)

-Concerning Joseph, "this generation shall have my word through you [Joseph Smith]." (D&C 5:10). Elder Bruce R McConkie commented on this passage, **that "the generation of which we speak is this era or period of time. It is the dispensation in which we live; it is the time from the opening of our dispensation down to the second coming of the Son of Man**; and for that allotted period of the earth's history, the word of the Lord, the word of salvation, the word of light and truth are going to the world **through Joseph Smith, and in no other way and through no one else.**" (BRM, "This Generation Shall Have My World Through You" Ensign June 1980)

-Whitmer said the revelations to hear Joseph as we would God were uninspired and false. P150

-Whitmer was a leader like Korah the Levite. He was President of the High Council in Zion. Like Korah, his position gave him influence.

-The earth swallowed Korah and Korah's followers (Num. 16:32)

-249 of Korah's supporters died for the insurrection against Moses. Israel complained of this, and a plague then killed 14,700 of them (Num. 16:41-50)

-Some modernists accuse Joseph Smith of "defensiveness" or alienating those around him, or letting his temper get the best of him. In liberty jail Joseph wrote, perhaps our brethren may say because we thus write that **we are offended at those characters, if we are, it is... because they have been the means of shedding innocent blood.** Are they not murderers at heart? Are not their consciences seared as with a hot iron? We confess that we are offended but...the **saviour said that offences must come** but woe unto them by whom they come, and again blessed are ye when all men shall revile you and speak all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake, rejoice and be exceeding glad for great is your reward in heaven for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." (ref pg151)

-Whitmer and others played a major role in the genocide-like violence inflicted on the saints during the Missouri persecutions of the 1830's.

-Joseph described their crimes as "dark and blackening deeds...enough to make hell itself shudder." (D&C 123:10)

-p152-4 many citations given recounting the atrocities

-Joseph wasn't overreacting to these apostates, he was declaring righteous judgement. P155

-Joseph spoke of hell for the biblical David for the murder of Uriah. That those who "shed innocent blood...cannot be forgiven, until they have paid the last farthing" and that "...The prayers of all the ministers in the world could never close the gates of hell against a murderer." (Times and Seasons 2:430) p156

-In the same letter Joseph spoke of Whitmer as being "too mean to mention". The 1828 Webster's Dictionary defines mean as "wanting dignity", "low minded; base; destitute of honor", "contemptable; despicable" p156

**-Modern historians now choose Whitmer's words over Joseph's.**

-It's common now to describe Joseph as "an ordinary man with an extraordinary calling". **Joseph wasn't an ordinary man.** As early as 1831, the Lord trusted Joseph with the power to curse, the power to bless, and even the power to retain or remit sin. (D&C 132:46-7) D&C 132 may have been received when Joseph

was as young as 25 or 26 years old. Never since has the Lord trusted someone so young with this power of Godlike responsibility. P157

-Joseph said he was told by the Lord that what he asked for he would have. He said "I have been afraid to ask God to kill my enemies, lest some of them should, peradventure, repent." He asked for a time to be delivered from the governor of Missouri, for the Lord to take him away, the next news he heard that governor shot himself. (ref p157)

-in Kirtland, Whitmer became deeply involved in the occult.

-A woman at the Whitmer home made a prophecy using a dark stone. P158

-side note: footnote on p158 of Joseph in chains was to be flogged, Joseph was allowed to fight back. The man to fight him, McLellin, was a large and active man, said he wanted a club to use in the fight. Joseph consented to this, but the sheriff wouldn't allow the fight as it was so unfair.

**-Whitmer organized his own church and denounced Joseph.** Whitmer is where we get the "seer stone in a hat" narrative. Whitmer received revelations for his own church through the use of a dark occultic seer stone. P159

-Whitmer's church had strange spiritualist activities, secret meetings, jumping out of chairs and dancing over the floor, exhausting themselves, and proclaiming that they were going to get mighty power. P159

-The stone in the research library and archives of the Community of Christ (formerly the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints) is believed to have belonged to Whitmer and others in his disaffected church for occultic purposes. David Whitmer's brother John may have also had and used an occultic stone. P160

-Whitmer had charges in the church against him such as being unfavorable to the cause, defaming the character of Joseph, neglecting his duties, signing himself president of the church, etc. p161

-Whitmer accused Joseph of promoting false doctrine, of showing the plates to unauthorized people, to translated the Book of Mormon with magic seer stones, of giving false revelations from the devil, and of speaking of the translation with unauthorized people. P161

-Joseph said he and his family were victims of most severe persecution. That the account of such could fill volumes. P162

**-Progressive historians point to Whitmer and McLellin as whistleblowers revealing the truth.**

-Whitmer said the church is going astray by giving heed to the revelations of Joseph.

-Whitmer never returned to the church.

**-Whitmer is like Judas Iscariot. Should we give the same merit, or even priority, to the witness of Iscariot compared to the witness of Peter and the other loyal apostles?**

-The Book of Mormon shows the consequences of listening to false witnesses. **Generations of Lamanites were bitter toward the Nephites based on lies.** When the Lamanites became converted to the truth, they recognized the false tradition of their fathers in defaming the Nephites.

**-History is not neutral! We can't give equal credence to all testimony!**

-Brigham spoke of those who rebelled against Joseph, that they would be cutting the thread which binds them to the prophet, and thereby sink themselves to hell. P165

## Ch. 14: David Whitmer vs. David Whitmer

-Whitmer's accounts often contradict.

### David Whitmer Interviews

-Thomas Wood Smith said "I personally heard him [D. Whitmer] state...that he saw Joseph translate, by the aid if the U & T, time and again." P168

**-David Whitmer did not meet Joseph until after the 116 pages were stolen. Why did David Whitmer claim in 1876 that "he saw Joseph translate, by the aid of the U &T, time and again" if in 1881 he claimed that the U & T was taken permanently from the Prophet before he ever met him?**

-Later Traugher said that with the sanction of D. Whitmer, he says that D. Whitmer says JS never used the U &T, but always a dark colored, opaque stone, called a "seer stone". Traugher seems to omit many statements by Joseph and just favor Whitmer. P170

## The Seer Stone in a Hat

-Thomas Wood Smith was told by Whitmer that JS used the U & T. But as Whitmer changed his narrative to be away with the U & T and to use the seer stone in a hat, he told TWSmith to retract his statement. TWSmith said he thought this most strange, that Whitmer earlier had told him in plain English that JS used the U & T. Later the TWSmith story changed yet again with saying the U & T was used as spectacles with a hat. P171-2

-The Whitmer story keeps changing. Whitmer wrote to Kansas City Journal that 1, not 2, stones were used. That it was now called a sun stone. P173

-Whitmer told the Chicago Time that there was a small kidney shaped stone called the U & T. p173

-Whitmer uses “interpreters” synonymously with “the U & T”. He usually said the U & T had 2 stones. Sometimes he said 1 stone. Sometimes he said they were small kidney shaped stones. Sometimes he said U & T had “two white stones” Other times he said “two small stones of chocolate color” or “two transparent pebbles”. Sometimes he said “stone spectacles”, “the magical stone” and “strange oval-shaped chocolate-colored stone”. P173

-Later in life, Whitmer changed his story again, and used “chocolate stone” and “U & T” interchangeably. P174

-The dates overlap in which Whitmer claims one way and the other. P174

## Who Saw the Translation Process?

-Whitmer claims that JS openly translated before many people. Whitmer says the translation was “at no time hidden”, and was in front of the entire Whitmer family. P175

(Why would sister Whitmer beg to see the translation and plates if they were displayed openly to “the whole Whitmer family”?)

- This open translation claim of Whitmer contradicts Moroni’s strict charge to only show it to the few authorized individuals. Joseph would “be destroyed” if he showed them to unauthorized people. He was under “covenant” to “not show them except to those persons to whom I commanded you” p176

-There are no credible statements indicating that Joseph openly translated. We have the 3 and 8 witnesses who saw the plates.

-President Heber J Grant spoke of those who could accept the church if we just **eliminate Joseph Smith from it. But says he, “The day can never come when we will do that. As well might we undertake to leave out Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God.”** And that “the whole foundation of this Church resets firmly upon the inspiration of the living God through Joseph Smith the Prophet.” P178

-President Gordon B Hinckley taught of Joseph Smith, saying “I love him. I seek to follow him. I read his words, and they become the standards to be observed in guiding this great Church” p178

-It is said that if the history is changed, the doctrine will change. Whitmer attempted to change the history in order to change the doctrine rather than writing books on theology.

## Other Inconsistencies

-Whitmer said the translation process in his fathers home took 2 months. Later he said it took 6 months. Later he said it took 8 months. P179

## Was David Whitmer an Eyewitness?

**-Why would 3 and 8 witnesses to the book be needed if Joseph openly translated?**

-If Whitmer and his family saw the translation, why did Whitmer specifically request permission from the Lord to be a special witness of what had previously been withheld from his view, specifically the plates and the U & T? p180

-Joseph spoke of his relief when the record had been shown to 3 others beside himself, that he was “not any longer to be entirely alone in the world” p180

-Clearly, Whitmer did not see all he had claimed to have seen.

-Joseph said, “It was not intended to tell the world all the particulars of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.” P181

## Table Documenting Whitmer's Contradictory Statements (Not included in these notes)

-The tables aren't included in these notes, but show various recounted statements, variations in descriptions of the translation instruments, method of translation, etc.

### Conclusion

-Whitmer frequently contradicted historically known facts.

-Joseph Smith III confirmed that Whitmer's statements contain many "plain **contradictions of the accepted facts of history**"; that he was a witness who "cross[es] himself, thereby impeaching his own evidence" p191

-the seer stone in a hat narrative of Whitmer continued to change, and is one demonstration of the shaky character of Whitmer.

## Ch. 15: Joseph Smith: "Village Seer"? Magic?

-Bushman speaks of Joseph being involved with magic, that magic was his preparatory gospel. That the Smiths had treasure-seeking greed, and that the magic culture remained with Joseph to the end. P192-3

### Folk Magic?

-FairMormon says the Smith family was involved in folk magic, using stones to locate lost objects. P193

-Bushman says the Smiths subscribed to a folk religion, that magic and Christianity weren't at odds, that folk tradition and religious tradition blended. P193

-Today there is a global epidemic of mischaracterizing Christian colonists of early American history. **Magic and Satanism were not countenanced by righteous Puritans, Pilgrims, Huguenots, Quakers, Covenanters**, and other reformed Christians, neither was it countenanced by their "humble" descendants.

-The BofM says those who founded America were "saints of God" who had the power of God (1 Ne. 13:15-18)



-In 1841 George A. Smith (Joseph Smith Jr.'s cousin) and Wilford Woodruff **excommunicated a member for “fortune telling” and “magic”**. They said there should be “no such custom or practice in the Church, & that we **should not fellowship any individual who Practiced Magic** fortune Telling, Black art &c for it was not of God.” (Wilford Woodruff journals and papers, 1828-1898; 1841 Jan. – 1842 Dec.) p195

-Joseph F. Smith said don't believe in superstitious notions, that these will result in loss of the Spirit of God and the Priesthood, and that those who subscribe to these things will be “subject to the witchery of Satan”. That it is a “trick of Satan” to deceive; that these “peepstone-men and women are inspired by the devil, and are the real witches, if any such there be. Witchcraft, and all kindred evils, are solely the creations of the superstitious imaginations of men and women who are steeped in ignorance, and derive their power over people from the devil, and those who submit to this influence are deceived by him. Unless they repent, they will be destroyed. There is absolutely no possibility for a person who enjoys the Holy Spirit of God even to believe that such influences can have any effect upon him.” That “you can never obtain that [Holy] Spirit by seeking diviners, and men and women who peep and mutter” who are “emissaries of Satan” which “lead you down to darkness and death” and that “it is impossible for anyone possessing the spirit of the gospel and having the power of the priesthood to believe in or be influenced by any power of necromancy.” (Improvement Era 5 (Sept. 1902): 896-899) p195

-These ritualistic magics which blaspheme sacred names, pervert sacred acts, and seek to obtain favor of an unknown force (the devil) is by no means a benign tradition.

-Gordon B. Hinckley said “the fact that there were superstitions among the people in the days of Joseph Smith is no evidence whatever that the Church came of such superstition.” (GBHinckley, “Lord, Increase Our Faith” Ensign Nov. 1987)

## What is “Magic”?

-Webster's 1828 Dictionary, contemporary with Joseph Smith's era, defines magic as “the art or science of **putting into action the power of spirits**; or the science of producing wonderful effects by the aid of superhuman beings, or of departed spirits; sorcery; enchantment. Superstitious or geotic magic consists in

the **invocation of devils or demons, and supposes some tacit or express agreement between them and human beings.**”

-Today’s Encyclopedia Britannica has a similar entry on “Magic”: “Practices classified as magic include **divination, astrology, incantations, alchemy, sorcery, spirit meditation, and necromancy**.... The purpose of magic is to acquire knowledge, power, love, or wealth; to heal or ward off illness or danger; to guarantee productivity or success in an endeavour; to cause harm to an enemy; to reveal information; **to induce spiritual transformation; to trick; or to entertain**. The effectiveness of magic is often determined by the condition and performance of the magician, who is thought to have **access to unseen forces and special knowledge of the appropriate words and actions to manipulate those forces.**” (accessed Jan. 6 2017)

## Joseph Smith and the Occult

-Bushman mocks Joseph’s instructions from Moroni, saying “exact compliance with prescribed rituals was required” and calls him “a boy who gazed into stones” who did “stone divining” and suggests that the Smiths likely believed in “rudimentary astrology found in the ubiquitous almanacs” and of “magical parchments” in the Smith family, and that Cowdrey was a magical person too. He says Joseph’s language evolved from occultic to biblical. This is all nonsense.

## “Not Suffer a Witch to Live”

-“Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.” (Exo. 22:18)

-“A man also or woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them.” (Lev. 20:27)

-It is obvious that toying with the dark arts is an abomination to the Lord. He does not celebrate or tolerate this serious sin.

-“When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a

necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee.” (Deut. 18:9-12)

-The Lord is “the same yesterday today and forever”. (1 Ne. 10:18; Mormon 9:9; Heb. 13:8) If he condemned these things before, they are still evil today, despite a tolerance of them in media literature etc. being politically correct.

-The Lord told Micah he would “...cut off witchcrafts out of thine hand; and thou shalt have no more soothsayers...” (Micah 5:12)

-Jesus told the Lehites in the new world: “And I [Jesus Christ] will cut off witchcrafts out of thy land, and thou shalt have no more soothsayers...And I will pluck up thy groves out of the midst of thee...” (3 Ne. 21:16-18)

## Magic is Satanism

-Elder McConkie spoke of the many things in the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon which the world is not ready to receive, which they would not receive until the Millennium. (quote and ref p201). Mormon who authored the sealed portion and knew of these truths had harsh words to say about magic.

-“And it came to pass that there were sorceries, and witchcrafts, and magics; and the power of the evil one was wrought upon all the face of the land, even unto the fulfilling of all the words of Abinadi, and also Sanuel the Lamanite.” (Mormon 1:19)

-“For those who did not belong to their church did indulge themselves in sorceries, and in idolatry...” (Alma 1:32)

-“And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.” (Acts 16:16-18)

-It is not reasonable that the Lord would call a man delving into spiritualism, divination, and possession, even if by so-called “folk magic” to bring forth His everlasting Gospel.

## Joseph Smith's "Sins"

-Joseph said he was not guilty of malignant sins, that such was never his nature.

-Joseph confessed he was guilty of "levity, and ... sometimes associated with jovial company."

-Joseph clarified that when he said he had afore fallen into "vices and follies" that the worst transgression he had ever committed in his life "was light, and too often, vain mind, exhibiting a foolish and trifling conversation" p203

-Joseph said "I have not, neither can it be sustained, in truth, been guilty of wronging or injuring any man or society of men" p204

-Joseph was raised in Puritan New England. Back then "trifling" and "vain" were not the same as they are today. Their society was generally more sober-minded, and far more devoted to God. Teenage attitudes and behaviors as we know them today would have been essentially unknown. (See Ezra Taft Benson Teachings p406)

-Joseph made it very clear he was never involved in any gross sins such as witchcraft or the occult.

## Magic: "A Preparatory Gospel"

-Bushman accuses Joseph of using magic as a preparatory gospel. P205

-Bushman accuses Joseph of continuing to be involved in magic throughout his ministry.

-Bushman pushes the magic narrative, that Joseph learned to obey exact ritual for money-digging, and makes a tricky plug, saying "good Joseph learned those skills which he used later". P205

-Bushman blamed magic for being what prepared Joseph to meet Moroni.

-Bushman calls "spiritual knowledge" a "simple faith", and downplays the importance of faith.

-The authors summarize, "**Magic is an inversion, a blatant mockery** of the Kingdom of God. The Lord's Kingdom and the devil's kingdom are not

conjoined playgrounds upon which one can simply alternate between depending upon one's mood...magic is **not a tool of the Lord, nor is it neutral ground.**" P206-7

-Brigham taught "It is impossible to unit Christ and Baal – their spirits cannot unite, their objects and purposes are entirely different; the one leads to eternal life and exaltation, the other to death and final destruction." (JD vol. 11; "Union. Persecution. The Nature of the Kingdom of God.)

-Magicians and sorcerers and wise men (philosophers?) threw down their staffs and they too turned into serpents. Yes, they have power (from the devil). But Moses' swallowed theirs, showing that the power of God is always superior. (Exo. 7:8-12)

### Magic Culture Stayed to the End?

-Bushman claims the Joseph was and remained magical: "remnants of the magical culture stayed with him to the end" p208

-Why are progressive historians insisting that we trust a man who could not decipher between the Lord and the devil, and man who supposedly "melded" magic and religion throughout his life?

-2 Ne. 28:14 Nephi taught that many in our day would be lead away by false philosophies because we turn to the learning of men for our understanding as opposed to relying upon the arm of the Lord.

-A church historian and recorder commented during a Nov. 2011 fireside: **"...the fifteen men that are above me in the hierarchy of the Church...realize that, maybe, since Kirtland we've never had a period of – I'll call it apostasy – like we're having right now, largely over these issues."** (Peter Henderson and Kristina Cooke, "Special Report: Mormonism Besieged by the Modern Age" Reuters, Jan 31 2012) (link to article in the text)

(Naturally the issues to which he is referring are those of progressives in the church who downplay the Book of Mormon, the sacred Book of Mormon, and the general conservative principles which have always been taught in the church)

-2 Ne. 27:5 tells of a time (our time) when the seers are covered due to our wickedness: "For behold, the Lord hath poured out upon you the spirit of deep

sleep. For behold, ye have closed your eyes, and ye have rejected the prophets; and your rulers, and the seers hath he covered because of your iniquity.”

Joseph Smith said he knew much more than he taught, and could have taught MUCH more than he did, but was held back due to the unrighteousness of the saints.

-Joseph Smith: “It is my meditation all the day, and more than my meat and drink, to know how I shall make the Saints of God comprehend the visions that roll like an overflowing surge before my mind. Oh! How I would delight to bring before you things which you never thought of!” (Joseph Smith, JS Hist vol D-1, 16 April 1843, 1556, The Joseph Smith Papers)

-Joseph Smith: “I could explain a hundred fold more than I ever have, of the glories of the Kingdoms manifested to me in the vision, were I permitted, and were the people prepared to receive it, the Lord deals with this people as a tender parent with a child, communicating light and intelligence and the knowledge of his ways, as they can hear it.” (Joseph Smith, JS Hist vol D-1, 16 April 1843, 1556, The Joseph Smith Papers)

-Joseph Smith: “Brother Brigham, **if I was to reveal to this people what the Lord has revealed to me, there is not a man or woman would stay with me.**” (Joseph Smith; JD vol 9, discourse given May 25 1862, Brigham Young “Endless Variety of Organizations – Blessings that Await the Faithful”) p209

-Wilford Woodruff: “The fact is, there are a great many things taught in the building up of this kingdom which seem strange to us, being contrary to our traditions, and are calculated to try men. Brother Joseph used a great many methods of testing the integrity of men; and he taught a great many things which, in consequence of tradition, required prayer, faith, and a testimony from the Lord, before they could be believed by many of the Saints. His mind was opened by the visions of the Almighty, and the **Lord taught him many things by vision and revelation that were never taught publicly in his days**; for the **people could not bear the flood of intelligence** which God poured into his mind.” (Wilford Woodruff, “Necessity of Adhering to the Priesthood in Preference to Science and Art” JD vol. 5 April 9, 1857

-Brigham Young: “In the due time of the Lord, the Saints and the world will be privileged with the revelations that are due to them. They now have many more than they are worthy of, for they do not observe them. The Gentile nations have had more of the revelations of God than is their just due. And I will say, as I have before said, if guilt before my God and my brethren rests upon me in the least, it is in this one thing – that I have revealed too much concerning God and

his kingdom, and the designs of our Father in heaven. If my skirts are stained in the least with wrong, it is because I have been too free in telling what God is, how he lives, the nature of his Providences and designs in creating the world, in bringing forth the human family on the earth, his designs concerning them, &c. If I had, like Paul, said – “But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant,” perhaps it would have been better for the people.” (BY, “Privileges of the Sabbath – Duty of Living Our Religion – Human Longevity, &c,” in JD vol.8:58)

-Joseph was “a disturber and an annoyer of [the devils] kingdom” p201

## Claims Involving Joseph Smith and Magic

-The typical claims on Joseph Smith and magic are usually one of these types:

1. Dishonest, questionable or even nonexistent sources.
2. Counterfeits of the Priesthood.

## Joseph Smith & Jesus Christ

-They said Christ by the devil casts out devils. Jesus said such a kingdom would not stand. So it is with Joseph Smith.

-Joseph Smith said “**false prophets always arise to oppose the true prophets**, and they will prophesy so very near the truth that they will deceive almost the very chosen ones...in relation to the Kingdom of God – the devil always sets up his Kingdom at the very same time in opposition to God...” (JS Discourse reported by Thomas Bullock, in JS Papers)

-D&C 121:16-17: “Cursed are all those that shall lift up the heel against mine anointed, saith the Lord, and cry they have sinned when they have not sinned before me, saith the Lord, but have done that which was meet in mine eyes, and which I commanded them.

17 But those who cry transgression do it because they are the servants of sin, and are the children of disobedience themselves.”

-Progressive scholars claim our history is in a transitional period. P213

-Gordon B. Hinckley: “The **present effort of trying to find some other explanation for the organization of the Church, for the origin of the Book of Mormon, and for the priesthood with its keys and powers will be similar to other anti-Mormon fads which have come and blossomed and faded.** Truth will prevail. A knowledge of that truth comes by effort and study, yes. But it comes primarily as a gift from God to those who seek in faith.” (GBH “Lord, Increase Our Faith” (link to address in the text))

## Ch. 16: No One Was Betrayed

-in a 2016 survey on why members leave the church, it was shown that the 3<sup>rd</sup> most common reason was members **not trusting leaders “to tell the truth about controversial issues” a “trust gap”** p215

-This issue of the method of translation is disturbing to many. The new “seer stone narrative” is one of these trust gap issues.

-Many are very upset about the church portraying Joseph translating from plates when now historians are coming out saying he didn’t, but that he used a peep stone in a hat instead. This has been compared to being a veritable “magic device or “Ouija Board” that he used in his treasure hunting days.” P216

-**Children have grown up since Primary with the teaching that Joseph translated the Book of Mormon by studying the characters directly, translating them into English using the U & T,** that there was no stone or peep stone in a hat. Quote of Primary Manual from 1997 in the text speaking of this: “At first Joseph spent a lot of time becoming familiar with the plates and the language in which they were written. As he studied and prayed, the Urim and Thummim helped him understand the characters on the plates. Joseph learned that the process of translation requires faith, hard work, worthiness, patience, and obedience.” (ref in text p217)

-Bushman says “**The dominant narrative is not true;** it can’t be sustained. The Church has to absorb all this new information or it will be on very shaky grounds and that’s what it is trying to do and **it will be a strain for a lot of people,** older people especially. But I think it has to change.” (ref on p218)



-Bushman said “I consider Rough Stone Rolling a reconstructed narrative. It was shocking to some people.” He goes on to say that **“The whole church, from top to bottom, has had to adjust to the findings of our historians.** We are all having to reconstruct.” (ref on p219)

-Many like Jeremy Runnels feel betrayed by this magic Joseph narrative.

**-Progressive church historians are trying to change what was taught for 200 years, trying to say that the church isn’t so “true” after all.**

-What was done to American history is now being done to the history of the Restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The revisionists have written a “new narrative” defaming key individuals and historical events. The Constitution hangs by a thread now as a consequence, (and now so does the church).

-President Benson spoke of the trend to defame and criticize the founders of this country who claim to “debunk” and practice **“historical realism.”** However, Benson says those who practice these things and are guilty of it in their writing **“will answer to a higher tribunal....This humanistic emphasis on history is not confined only to secular history; there have been and continue to be attempts made to bring this philosophy into our own Church history.”** Benson goes on to rebuke those who imply that the Church has been lying about its history, and says “Unfortunately, too many of those who have been intellectually gifted become so imbued with criticism that they become disaffected spiritually.” He goes on to warn that those who paint Joseph in a “humanistic emphasis [would] tarnish our own Church history and its leaders.” (P221 footnote)

-The progressives are changing Joseph from a holy prophet into a bumbling village magician.

-Many **thousands are losing their faith** and testimonies of the church over **these issues.**

## [Testify That Joseph Smith is a Prophet of God](#)

-President David O McKay’s father was on a mission and found his audience was bitter. He resolved to not teach about the restoration, but just of general gospel principles. He found that he soon became gloomy, depressed, and “could not enter into the spirit of his work” being so hampered and obstructed. He prayed to God of how to go on in the work, feeling that he simply could not do

it. He then heard a distinct voice say, “Testify that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God.” He then remembered that **6 weeks prior he had made the decision to not teach of the restoration. He now knew that “he had not given that special mission the attention it deserved.”** He was then able to go forth from the cave in which he was praying and effectively preach the gospel.

**-Don’t “just focus on Christ and The Book of Mormon.” You need to testify of Joseph Smith!** Learn his true character, then testify of him!

-“Joseph Smith holds the keys of this last dispensation, and is now engaged behind the veil in the great work of the last days....It is his mission to see that all the children of men in this last dispensation are saved, that can be...” (Brigham Young “Intelligence Etc,” in JD vol. 7:289)

**-“The greatest activity in this world or in the world to come is directly related to the work and mission of Joseph Smith** – man of destiny, prophet of God....The Prophet Joseph Smith was not only “one of the noble and great ones,” but he gave and continues to give attention to important matters here on the earth even today from the realms above.” (Ezra Taft Benson, God Family Country: Our Three Great Loyalties 1974 p30-31)

**-“The measure of a person’s spiritual maturity is found in his or her loyalty to the Prophet Joseph Smith.”** (Bruce R. McConkie; “The Bruce R McConkie Story” p6) ‘

-Progressive Margaret Young an adjunct faculty member at BYU-Provo made an honest and clear statement on the aims of the progressive ‘new narrative’. She said, “the future of Mormonism is bright. We are on a **bridge**....Change comes slowly in the Church, but to those seeking to find miracles, the changes over the past fifty years have been monumental....**We will become a church known for exactly the opposite reasons it was known for in the nineteenth century.**” (ref p224)

-Heber C. Kimball said we will have plenty of opportunities to “show that you are true to God and his work. **This Church has before it many close places through which it will have to pass** before the work of God is crowned with victory. To meet the difficulties that are coming, **it will be necessary for you to have a knowledge of the truth of this work for yourselves.** The difficulties will be of such character that the man or woman who does not possess this personal knowledge or witness will fall. If you have not got the testimony, live right and call upon the Lord and cease not till you obtain it. If you do not you will not stand....The time will come when no man nor woman will be able to endure on borrowed light. Each will have to be guided by the light within

himself. If you do not have it, how can you stand? Do you believe it?" (Heber C Kimball, "Life of Heber C Kimball p461) p226

-Heber C Kimball prophesied of the Prophet Joseph's "boys" who are asleep, who will rise and bear testimony of Joseph: **"At present the Prophet Joseph's boys lay apparently in a state of slumber, everything seems to be perfectly calm with them, but by and by God will wake them up, and they will roar like the thunders of Mount Sinai. There is much work to be done:** God is not asleep and He will wake up our children and they will bear off this kingdom to the nations of the earth, and will bear testimony to the truth of this work, and of the integrity and true character of Joseph..." (Heber C Kimball, "The Saints Should Prepare for Future Emergencies" JD vol. 4 p6, discourse given June 29, 1857)

## 20 Parallels: Book Of Mormon Prophetic Timeline

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- 1 Prophets persecuted: akin to the reformation
- 2 Lehtes to America: akin to Gentiles to America
- 3 Mosiah's law is akin to the US Constitution of the US.
- 4 They found the Jaredite record, which is akin to Joseph Smith finding the Nephite record.
- 5 Then Alma restoring the church is a parallel on a Book of Mormon timeline to Joseph Smith restoring the church.
- 6 Abinadi's martyrdom is akin to Joseph Smith's martyrdom
- 7 Anti-Christ's deceive Nephites: akin to Anti-Christ deceive Saints
- 8 Missionaries to the Lamanites and Nephites: akin to missionaries to the world
- 9 Wicked leaders conspire: akin to communism and socialism
- 10 Title of Liberty: akin to Constitution
- 11 Astonishing church growth: akin to worldwide church growth
- 12 Nephites degenerate: akin to moderns reject founding moorings
- 13 Lamanite religious freedom: akin to walls come down
- 14 Combinations infiltrate Nephites: akin to complicity in America
- 15 Signs warn Nephites: akin to signs warn moderns
- 16 More wicked destroyed: akin to earth cleansed
- 17 Christ visits Nephites: akin to Second Coming

18 Period of peace: akin to the Millennium

19 Nephites openly rebel: akin to Satan loosed after the Millennium

20 Mormon leads final battle: akin to Michael leads final battle