

Joseph Smith as Translator & Seer

Highlights & Commentary on the Stoddard's Urim
Translation Book & Related Essays Defending the Work
& Character of Joseph Smith



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Visit JosephSmithFoundation.org to order the full Urim Translation on Trial book which I highlight here.

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Part 1: Introductory Messages on the Translation & Its Relation to Joseph's Role & Character

Urim & Thummim, NOT a Seer Stone Used in Translating the Book of Mormon: Looking at Primary Sources Q&A with Kimberly Smith, Joseph Smith Foundation Contributor

Some are shocked to learn that the seer stones in possession of Joseph Smith may not have been used in the translation of the Book of Mormon as is currently taught in the church. For the past 200 years the church teaching was that he used the Urim and Thummim, and that's what the D&C, Book of Mormon, etc. say that he used. But modern liberal scholars have been using apostate sources to start saying Joseph used the seer stone instead in the translation.

See the Seer Stone vs Urim & Thummim book by James and Hannah Stoddard for more on this subject (purchase it at josephsmithfoundation.org), which shows that there are no authoritative statements from those who remained strong in the church saying that a stone was used in translation. What the Lord & Joseph Smith said is that

the Urim and Thummim were used, and that they were prepared for many years for that purpose. The book shows how some very strong minded progressive church historians pushed for a more human version of Joseph Smith, less inspired, and downplayed his role as prophet receiving divine revelation.

Here is a Q&A I had with Joseph Smith Foundation contributor Kimberly Watson Smith on these subjects, shared with permission:

Question: Is there not an account of Emma Smith saying Joseph used the hat to help translate? Also one of the story where the false Stone was replaced for the true Stone and Joseph said all is dark as Egypt and he couldn't translate until the correct Stone was back?

Answer:

The source that Progressive scholars use for Emma claiming he used a stone in the hat comes from an alleged interview conducted by Joseph Smith III, her son who was the founder of the RLDS church and was head of the lifelong crusade to deny plural marriage. The interview he alleges that happened between him and his mother wasn't released until months AFTER her death. And was published in the Saints Herald which was an RLDS publication in 1879.

In that same source, Emma also denies that Joseph practiced and taught plural marriage and she also states that "David Whitmer can be trusted and relied upon to tell the truth".

So if you believe Emma's statements in this interview than you have to also believe that David Whitmer who

For the last 50 years went around publishing books and articles denying Priesthood Restoration, claiming Joseph Smith was a false and fallen Prophet, denying all the revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants AND denying that Joseph Smith held any keys was being truthful. The Saints Herald interview is an unreliable source and if it is to be relied upon and Emma was being truthful than you have to also believe Joseph Smith was a false and fallen Prophet and one who believes this to be true cannot rightly claim to have a testimony of the church or the restoration.

Another problem with the source is that a decade earlier, Emma was interviewed by another newspaper and her memory was so far gone that she said she couldn't remember anything and would have to "read it in her books".

Any honest person would ask themselves... is this source reliable considering Joseph Smith III's animosity towards the Saints And the CHURCh?

Why did Emma suddenly regain a memory on her death bed that she didn't have 10 years earlier? Why did she trust David Whitmer who never stopped claiming Joseph Smith was not a true prophet?

Joseph Smith III was only 11 years old when his Father died. He was surrounded by a lot of Apostates, men who were involved in the conspiracy and the mob that killed his father, who worked hard to influence him to fight against the Church. He was greatly deceived.

I have personally read original letters between him and Hyrum's grown children trying to teach Joseph Smith III the truth and he refutes it And denies it.

I have read original letters between Joseph Smith III and William E McClellin who was an apostle turned bitter enemy who was involved in the Haun's Mill Massacre, returned to the scene of the crime and was found laughing over the dead bodies of children and raped women. William E McClellin was the REAL Author of the stone in the hat narrative who convinced Joseph Smith III of the truth of it and also convinced David Whitmer to change his testimony on translation. Which you can read how many times he changed his testimony in the Seer Stone vs Urim and THUMMIM book.

It is historical laziness and our reliance on the so called experts and these "modern scholars" that is responsible for the church accepting the same tired and worn out anti-Mormon claims that have been refuted since the commencement of the Church. And only resurfaced again during the Leonard J Arrington era when he trained future scholars of the church to take these sources seriously so they could "change the history and change the doctrine".

With the Joseph Smith papers and the open archives anyone can fact check sources for themselves. It isn't even very hard.

Question: was there anyone else who told the seerstone in a hat narrative besides Emma and David Whitmer?

Answer:

yes there were others but they all come from people who were NEVER involved in translation of the Book of Mormon and apostatized from the Church. Also the earliest source for the stone and the hat narrative came from Mormonism Unveiled by Eber D

Howe, who swore to wash his hands in the blood of Joseph Smith, and was the first anti- Mormon publication that contained affidavits from people who claimed to know Joseph Smith but fought bitterly against the church.

Doctor Philastrus Hurlbut was hired by an anti-Mormon committee to collect the affidavits but they had to publish them under Howe's name in order to make them appear Credible because Hurlbut was involved in several affairs and robbed and murdered a man.

This is the source for the Stone in the hat story. It makes you so made when you read the history and see how the narrative started to discredit Joseph Smith by known murderers is now touted as the "faithful narrative" today.

Question: Did Joseph have a seer stone?

Answer:

I don't deny that Joseph Smith had a Seer Stone or perhaps more than one.

What we do know is that a Seer Stone was NEVER used in translation. We have the testimony of Jesus Christ in scripture (Doctrine and Covenants section 17), the multiple testimonies of Joseph Smith who repeatedly said he translated the plates using the Urim and THUMMIM. And never said anything about a Seer Stone used for translation. And also His principle scribe, Oliver Cowdery also repeatedly testified of the Urim and Thummim as well. There is not a single statement coming from Joseph Smith or Oliver Cowdery about the stone in the hat.

What we do know is that he did have a Seer Stone. In the history of Joseph Smith by his mother, Lucy Mack tells the story of Joseph Smith Sr overhearing Willard Chase

and other plotting to take the plates from Joseph. And Emma telling Joseph of the plot. Joseph reaches into his pocket and pulls out a stone, looks inside it (without a hat) and reassures Emma that the plates are safe. The Stone described by Lucy was not brown but was white and clear like a diamond.

We know through scripture that all the SEERS held a stone but the Stone was called a Urim and THUMMIM which means lights and perfections or in other words receiving perfect truth aka revelation. Seer Stone is not a term found anywhere in scripture. The Lord described a white stone that we receive in the Celestial Kingdom in Doctrine and Covenants and in the Book of Revelation. There are no public teachings from Joseph Smith or Brigham Young on the spiritual operation of these “Seer Stones” so we can not speculate. Satan has a counterfeit and that is where our understanding of Seer Stones comes from but to apply that understanding to a Heavenly device when it’s operation has not been revealed is wrong and irresponsible and will open people to the adversary who is more than happy to reveal to you his counterfeit.

Question: Was there not a lady used a "peep stone" to try to find the plates?

Answer:

Yes her name was Sally Chase. It was a peep Stone and it was definitely from the Occult.

Bruce R McConkie wrote:
[Bruce R. McConkie, p 565+] PEEP STONES.
See Devil, Revelation, Urim and Thummim.

“In imitation of the true order of heaven whereby seers receive revelations from God through a Urim and Thummim, the devil gives his own revelations to some of his followers through peep stones, or crystal balls. An instance of this copying of the true order occurred in the early days of this dispensation. Hiram Page had such a stone and was professing to have revelations for the up-building of Zion and the governing of the Church”

We learn in Doctrine and Covenants section 28 that Hiram Page found a stone and was receiving revelations from his stone. Many members were deceived by it. Joseph Smith had Oliver Cowdery take Hiram Paige aside and tell him the revelations were of the devil. The Stone And the Revelations were destroyed.

What it comes down to is the scriptural fact that only those whom God calls as Seers have the authority from God to use stones or other devices for Revelation. I personally believe that God took that authority from us due to disobedience to the Revelations of Joseph Smith and will not be restored again until He returns to redeem Zion.

In other words, I don't trust anyone alive today who claims to have a Seer Stone and can use it.

In addition to Aaron and the Priests of Israel including Abraham in the Bible who we have record of having “Seer Stones” aka a URIM and THUMMIM, Book of Mormon Prophets also had them see

Omni 1:20-21

Mosiah 8: 13-19; 21:26-28; 28: 11-20; Ether 4: 1-7

Question: What of the story of the stone being replaced?

Answer:

the story of the stone being replaced was allegedly from Martin Harris.

The problem with that source also is that is COMPLETE HEARSAY.

It comes from a reporter who claims to have interviewed Martin Harris who he alleges told him the story. But there are no first hand accounts of Martin Harris claiming he ever said that or even telling that same story.

Conclusion:

I also want to quickly point out that in the History of Joseph Smith he emphasized that there were so many falsehood produced and written about Himself, his family, and the church that it could fill VOLUMES. And he could not even write a hundredth part of the lies that were being spread.

We shouldn't be surprised that these sources exist but we should be very distrusting and skeptical of so called "professionals" who use these sources and give them the same kind of validity as true and faithful sources.

In addition to Mormonism Unveiled being a favorite source of our modern scholars they also like to quote from Tiffany's journal which was a newspaper/periodical from Joseph Smith's time that was equivocal to the National enquirer of today.

That's why we must do our own factchecking and not rely upon "experts".

Summary of Hurlbut: The Corrupt Source of the Sources on “Magical Treasure Stone” Joseph Smith

Hurlbut was a robber, murderer, adulterer and was excommunicated from at least 3 churches. He then swore to wash his hands in Joseph Smith's blood. He was also locked out of another Christian church for same reasons. He was jailed for the threats etc. He fled the country. Not a credible guy. Yet the modern church historians are giving credence to the affidavits he gathered against Joseph! They are what compose *Mormonism Unveiled* by ED Howe who hated Joseph and left Christianity for spiritualism/satanism. Hurlbut sold his collections to Howe since no one would believe it coming from him, he being so incredible.

Incredible indeed! This is where the stories of him being a treasure seeker, looking for treasure in a hat, lying to people about locations of buried treasure, being a drunkard, being lazy, supposedly saying there really are no gold plates, randomly attacking people, drawing magic circles and practicing necromancy, and all manner of ridiculous stories. Some people who he interviewed had regular and good things to say about Joseph he ignored those people and instead went to all the crazies to gather their stories.

The accounts to this day about Joseph finding a seer Stone in someone's field is from one of these affidavits and is total bogus.

And Joseph did not use a rock and a hat to translate the holy Book of Mormon! That was never the account until the 60s when these super liberal historians started taking evil men's accounts seriously.

Richard Bushman, author of “Rough Stone Rolling,” Toying with Anti-Christ Narratives

The following is by Kimberly Smith, Joseph Smith Foundation contributor, and is shared with her permission.

During General Conference October 1970, President Benson identified and named five specific antichrists in our own day. Among the 5 Anti-Christ's named, Sigmund Freud was the TOP of the List.

We must keep this in mind. A prophet of God identified a modern Anti-Christ in our day!

An antichrist is an opponent of Christ; he is one who is in opposition to the true gospel, the true Church, and the true plan of salvation. President Benson taught that the purpose of the Book of Mormon is to bring men to Christ by “testifying of Christ and revealing His enemies.

In 2005, Historian and LDS Author Richard Bushman wrote an explosive Biography, *Rough Stone Rolling*, on the Prophet Joseph Smith completely changing his nature and character from a Prophet of God, so Holy and Pure that both the Father and Son would come to while yet in his youth, into a Lazy, adulterous, Treasure Digger, involved in magic and the occult claiming these activities served as a "preparatory gospel". Bushman even went as far as to INSIST that the Church must

CHANGE ITS DOMINATIVE NARRATIVE, change the history that was upheld for over 190 years by every President of the Church!

Was Richard Bushman writing a "Faithful History" based on credible, authenticated sources? Must we accept this "New Joseph Smith" and re-write our history to reflect Bushman's NEW interpretations.??

Richard Bushman in a series of lectures regarding the writing of his magnum opus, *Rough Stone Rolling*, admitted the following:

"I don't think many professionals set as their goal to determine if Joseph Smith was a true prophet. Most begin with a desire to understand the person they are writing about and portray him as accurately as they can. In my case, I wanted to understand how Joseph Smith understood himself... I try to get inside my subject's mind. That is the kind of history I like to read and choose to write".

What does it say about Bushman that he used the psychology of a known "ANTICHRIST" instead of facts and data to interpret Joseph Smith? And how different are his delusions about the mind of one of the greatest men to ever walk the face of the earth compared to what God says about him?

In Section 121 of the Doctrine of Covenants Jesus Christ said to the Joseph Smith:

"God shall give unto you knowledge by his bHoly Spirit, yea, by the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost, that has not been revealed since the world was until now"

In other words, God is saying that Adam, Enoch, Abraham, and etc had KNOWLEDGE but the Prophet Joseph Smith had MORE knowledge than them!!!

Ricard Bushman did not write a faithful Biography of the Prophet Joseph Smith. He saw Joseph Smith as a sick patient who needed to be diagnosed. Instead of writing a truthful history, he wrote a "Psychohistory" using Freudian psychology to misuse evidence and to serve up "questionable interpretations". This is NOT an honest Scholarship.

"In an effort to understand eighteenth-century religious and political thought, Bushman was a Young scholar who took seminars from psychosocial theorist Erik Erikson, a student of Freud's. Psychological theory had entered the writing of historians trained in the generation after World War II And Bushman found in what later became known as "psychohistory" a way to extend his empathetic approach" (Bushman, Believing History, Introduction xiii).

"All of these Eriksonian notions were in the back of my mind when I worked in the Prophet Joseph Smith over the past eight years. I really didn't set out to do a deep psychological portrait of the Prophet. I knew I lacked Erickson's finesse, but after completing the biography last year, I realized that Erickson's influence could be seen in its pages". Richard Bushman

Bushman's ego and confidence in "psychology" were greater than his knowledge and confidence in God and his chosen Latter-day Servant even the Prophet Joseph Smith. For "there is not so great a man as Joseph standing on this generation... His mind, like Enoch's, expands as eternity, and ONLY GOD can comprehend his soul".

I highly recommend this Two-Part Vidcast from the Joseph Smith Foundation in order to get the REAL

HISTORY, the TRUE FACTS, and the REAL DATA about Bushman's claims.

Part One: <https://fb.watch/5jVwucn1dx/>

Part Two:

<https://www.facebook.com/JosephSmithFoundation/videos/1094141174426752>

Joseph Smith the Scripture Student from Youth & Adult Scholar

Joseph Smith starts telling his story of the time when he was around 6 or 7 years old. Why? It had so much to do with his spiritual development. Why? When he was laid up 3 years with his leg injury he read. He read a lot. What did he read? The Bible. He said he could go learn from going to the woods and reading the bible for 2 hours than from a year of church. He also hung out in the local bookstore reading, so much so that they had to chase him out.

He was well familiar with all the denominations and leaders thereof. He spent his time in the Christian community, and knew the doctrines of each group.

By the way, the statement that he couldn't dictate a coherent sentence by Emma isn't a legitimate statement, and came from her last words, at which time she denied many obvious truths, such as Joseph's plural marriages.

Later in life Joseph became an even greater scholar, becoming well versed in ancient tongues. He lamented that he couldn't further master all languages due to the time constraints of his administrative duties. But he was able to quote scriptures in many languages, and had a working knowledge of Hebrew, and other stirring feats of intelligence in realms not only of leadership and spirituality, but letters and scholarship.

Translation VS Revelation: Book of Mormon Origin Resolves Issues

The Book of Mormon was TRANSLATED into English by Joseph Smith. Progressives claim it was a revelation on a stone. Not so.

So the questions automatically resolve with the translation perspective.

Yes, Joseph could add words to the Book of Mormon in later years, clarifying things of the translation.

Yes, Joseph could use language found in the bible, he was well versed in the bible, and used that language to describe the ideas presented on the plates.

Yes, the plates existed, he used the plates to translate. Progressives say the plates weren't even used in the process and it was just a stone in a hat, they therefore say 'was the book even represented in what appeared on the stones?' God didn't preserve the plates for ages just to have them not be used. This whole idea stinks to high heaven, and the anti's would love to promote the

narrative that there weren't plates, or that said plates weren't used or were otherwise unimportant.

If a random stone which glowed in a hat was used to translate, why would the plates be so painstakingly preserved across the ages? Why would the Urim and Thummim (translators) be passed down from generation to generation?

Sadly, the church is bowing to the interpretations of these progressive bias historians who are completely changing church history as we know it. Satan is the driving force behind these things.

Joseph loved to study and learn ancient languages. He was a translator in every sense. He studied characters, learned the language for several months before the translation began. It is claimed that all was said about the translation process is that it was "by the gift and power of God." But look at the original sources, way more than that is revealed. Joseph specifically said he translated the book from hieroglyphics.

“Witnesses” 2021 Movie Concerns

There could be some usefulness of this movie but here are some concerns.

Shows translation by stone in hat and the trading stone for a fake, which story is complete here-say.

It's laughable that the plates aren't being used in the translation, and are just set to the side. This is what some claim, so they put it in the movie, but seriously, those sources are anti-Christ non-sense.

Shows Joseph becoming quite angry on various occasions.

Shows Joseph expressing doubt in his calling.

Blames Joseph for the bank failure (it was the saints not heeding his counsel that triggered the fail, not to mention the many institutions undergoing similar crisis at that time in America).

Doesn't show the angel appearances. The closest they get is in one scene having light shine on their faces as they pray.

Very little coverage to the faithful members, mostly shows Joseph and everything around him falling apart and Joseph not knowing what to do, and the occasional little testimony that the Book of Mormon is true.

Depicts Joseph as more of a confused weakling than a mighty prophet. Yes he was imperfect and didn't know everything, but he was called of God and did a mighty work, and this film seems to take these sacred things too lightly.

Introduces plural marriage without really giving an explanation, mostly just an accusation against Joseph.

Beware some of these ideas against Joseph and fake translation ideas are remnants of the Hoffman

forgeries: “False assumptions inspired by Hofmann documents or citations that eventually lead back to his fabricated evidence still distort some depictions of Latter-day Saint history.”

See the “Hofmann Forgeries” church web page.

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/history/topics/hofmann-forgeries?id=p6&lang=eng#p6>

Part 2: Highlighting Seer Stone v. Urim & Thummim: The Book of Mormon Translation on Trial by Hannah & James Stoddard



About the Book

These notes are shared with permission but may not accurately represent all ideas in the book. See **JosephSmithFoundation.org** for more information and to order a copy of the book. Purchase a copy at the Joseph Smith Foundation website: [Seer Stone v. Urim & Thummim: Book of Mormon Translation on Trial \(Book\) - Online Store \(josephsmithfoundation.org\)](https://www.josephsmithfoundation.org/Seer-Stone-v.-Urim-&-Thummim-Book-of-Mormon-Translation-on-Trial-Book)

These are quick notes to get an overview which don't contain many of the ideas and sources cited in the book.

Pages I refer to throughout this booklet indicate the page in the book the citation and source are found, not the actual page of the source itself. Those interested in further study of certain topics listed in this booklet can get the full book for the complete quotes and references.

This is a most exciting book for taking a closer look at how the scriptures and prophets said the Book of Mormon was translated. It suggests that it is only a new idea that the dark seer stone was used for translating the book. It maintains what the church has taught for centuries, that the translation was done by the Urim & Thummim handed down for generations for that purpose. The book also defends the character against slanderers of Joseph Smith. Sadly, progressive church historians today think it wise to take the testimonies of traitors and esteem those as highly as trusted sources. Scholars today are relied upon heavily in the church for telling us our history, so it is only fair that we hear from more than just a handful of progressive scholars to get this information. This book helps open some healthy debate, which is essential to good academics. Of course, learning about spiritual events cannot ever simply be done by an appeal to history. We must place in highest esteem the revealed word of the Lord on the subject as found in the standard works of scripture, and this volume encourages just that. Readers will be pleased to learn that more has been revealed on this subject than some report there to be. As for references in the text, I counted 584. This is a work for scholars to reckon with and take seriously. The Stoddard's are not afraid to mingle scholarship with faith as they present what faithful historians like Joseph Fielding Smith would be proud of,

accurately representing both history and the spirit of the restoration of the gospel. I am a member of the Church and am happy to see other members taking a stand. Prophets have long taught: If something doesn't square with the scriptures, it is to be rejected. This work demonstrates a translation method which indeed squares with the standard works of scripture.

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
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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.)

Introductory Picture

(image: bookofmormonevidence.org)

HOW DID JOSEPH TRANSLATE THE PLATES?



Ch. 1: Two Conflicting Narratives (A
Major Shift, Does it Matter? Joseph
Smith & the Occult)

References in this chapter: 21

Book of Mormon characters were reformed Egyptian (Mormon 9:32). The Urim & Thummim were the Nephite interpreters.

The Smith family were God-devoted New England stock. They were honest and hardworking. 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 Josph 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?

The “seer stone in a hat” narrative contradicts legitimate eyewitnesses.

Joseph Smith And The Occult

Richard Bushman pushes the seer stone narrative, and says “remnants of the magic culture stayed with [Joseph] to the end.” Bushman says Joseph “gazed into stones and saw treasure.” Bushman says magic was Joseph’s “preparatory gospel.” Bushman 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. They claim Joseph did fortune telling via a **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? ("No Authentic Statement" for Seer Stone Translation, President Joseph Fielding Smith's Research, How to Approach Book of Mormon Translation)

References in this chapter: 13

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

Joseph Fielding Smith 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 Book of Mormon 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 (Entire Translation with Urim & Thummim, an Ancient Artifact, Not a Random Stone, The Three Commanded to Witness of the Urim, Translating the Engravings)

References in this chapter: 21

Did Joseph Smith Translate The Entire Book of Mormon Using The Nephite Urim & Thummim? Or Only a Part?

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

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

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

The angel returned the U&T to Joseph. (says Times & Seasons). p19

D&C 42:1-2 1844 edition says Joseph used the U&T of the Jaredites to translate the Book of Mormon. p20

Joseph, Moroni, and others described the U&T as 2 stones which are **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 1844 edition 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 p22-3

In D&C 36:9 1844 edition 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 (Joseph’s Testimony of Using the Urim and Nephite Plates in Translation, not Dark Stone, Urim Returned after 116 Pages Lost)

References in this chapter: 33

Joseph Smith was the only successful translator, we should give his testimony precedence. P24

Did The Prophet Joseph Smith Comment On The Translation Of The Book of Mormon?

-Progressives say over and over that Joseph “said very little” about the translation process, or that Joseph “never gave any details.” These same people are those who claim Joseph 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 Joseph to describe the translation. p27

Joseph’s written testimonies tell that he used ancient physical Nephite plates to translate the Book of Mormon. They say that he didn’t leave them covered or hiding during translation. They say that he used the U&T, not a seer stone in translation. They say that the U&T was temporarily lost but was returned to him. p27

Joseph’s written testimonies also tell that the Book of Mormon was of real people who once lived, and that descendants of those nations are alive today.

Joseph’s written testimonies tell that he “translated” the record in the truest sense of the word. They say 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 Joseph Smith Use The Nephite Plates To Translate The Book of Mormon?

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

Joseph said all 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 (see Joseph Smith History). 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 to be 6” wide, 8” long, thinner than common tin, Egyptian characters, bound by 3 rings, and part of the book sealed. The 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 Joseph Smith 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 there is specific mention of the U&T for translation. p31

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

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

Fallen David Whitmer said Joseph 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 David Whitmer speaks of the seer stone as an icon of Joseph’s alleged disobedience and pride. p36

Actually Joseph did lose the U&T but shortly thereafter “they were returned to me” he said (Joseph Smith History). 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 (Lucy Mack Smith Hist). p34

Joseph said, “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

Ch. 5 Witness #2: Joseph Smith: Translator Or Reader? (Familiarity with Nephite Culture, Angelic Nephite Tutors, Studying Characters)

References in this chapter: 43

Progressive historians insist that Joseph didn't translate, but that he just read. Richard 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"

The Webster 1828 dictionary entry on translate says, "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 which suits the capacities of the readers, and that if it were translated again at a later time, scripture would be different from the present translation. p40

Joseph chose which words to use for the translation.
p40

(Note - this fact alone shuts down many anti-Mormon scoffers.)

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, and that we should therefore 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 Book of Mormon 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 135:3, etc.). p41

D&C 135:3: “Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done more, save Jesus only, for the salvation of men in this world, than any other man that ever lived in it... [he] left a fame and name that cannot be slain. He lived great, and he died great in the eyes of God and his people;”

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. (Joseph 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]; he told of the “**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.” (Luck Mack History) p42-43

Joseph learned of the ancient legal systems of “this country”; of “their origin, progress, civilization, laws, governments” etc. (Letter to John Wentworth; Joseph Smith History) 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

(Note – and through the course of his life, the he had little formal education, he became one of the most learned men that ever lived; it is not accurate to go around calling Joseph an ignorant farm boy. He even spent much time reading the bible as a young child while

down with his leg injury, etc. In a similar way that we should speak of Christ not so much as our brother but as our Lord out of respect for His role and atonement, so should we be careful about referring to Joseph in belittling terms.)

John Taylor said that 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 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”** (Joseph Smith History) p47

Joseph spent more time studying the characters than he spent translating and dictating the book to his

principal scribe Oliver Cowdrey. Clearly this was a translation, not a reading! p48

In the time between 1827-1829 when Joseph had the plates he likely would have used that time to further study the language. p48

Joseph's "1st 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..." (Lucy Mack Smith History). This could have functioned as a "Rosetta Stone," or key to the language. 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, I know that 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 Book of Mormon.)

Joseph said “I translated the Book of Mormon from hieroglyphics; the knowledge of which was lost to the world; in which wonderful event 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”... (Joseph Smith) p51

Joseph mastered the language, then translated! This matches what we see in other scriptures: Nephi was instructed of the Lord how to build a boat and doing 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 (Missionary Training Center) today, missionaries learn languages remarkably fast. The US military was shocked at how even the instructors were young, they couldn’t understand how this all happened. In short, Gods ways are higher than our ways, and God can quicken the understanding of His people for His purposes. p51-52

How Did Joseph Smith 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.” (Joseph Smith History) 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. (Joseph Smith History & Joseph Smith Church History) 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 [Joseph Smith]. 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 Bruce R. McConkie said “**[Joseph Smith] 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 Joseph Smith, and how effectively we echo or proclaim that word to the world...Joseph Smith 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 Joseph Smith received. (see the talk “This Generation Shall Have My Word through You”) p55 footnote

Brigham Young and John Taylor spoke of Joseph being a natural born prophet & seer. p55 footnote

Ch. 6 Witness #2 Joseph Smith: Book Of Mormon the “History of Ancient America”

References in this chapter: 38

The Book of Mormon 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

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

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

Joseph spoke of a Nephite altar in Adam-Ondi-Ahman. p58

Those who say Joseph never used the plates wonder if the Book of Mormon 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 Joseph’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 translation narrative say either 1. Joseph saw words, 2. Joseph thought he saw words, or 3. Joseph claimed to see words but didn’t. 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 “19th 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 a treasure-digging seer stone originally used for occultic purposes, wouldn't the adversary taint the words that came from it? This is why the stone narrative doesn't make sense. p61

Now we have progressive scholars saying the Book of Mormon isn't "based on a true story" and that it's just the random ideas of Joseph. 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. p61 You see where this stone business leads? It brings the entire restoration into question.

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 Book of Mormon 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

Note – I find their lack of faith disturbing. Without the record being true as claimed, we wouldn't trust them on anything else either. Their testimonies are the foundation of the restoration. If scripture isn't true, our cause is lost.

Brigham Young 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 Book of Mormon and 31% of 'Utah Mormons' say its not a 'literal historical account'** (Religion News, 2019) p65 Is it any wonder, with the zany things the liberal historians are claiming? It seems the historians now are doing everything they can to fit in with the world, and offend the saints. Gone are the days of church historian Joseph Fielding Smith when it was the other way around.

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

Joseph said the Book of Mormon 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 22nd of September A.D. 1827, the angel of the Lord delivered the records into my hands.” (JS Hist) p68

Joseph said the Book of Mormon 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...” (Joseph Smith to N.C. Saxton) p68

Ch. 7: Witnesses #3-5: Ancient Prophets (Moroni, Brother of Jared, Mosiah)

References in this chapter: 47

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 19th 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

Joseph Fielding Smith points out that

- 1. Nephites and Jaredites used the same Urim & Thummim.**
- 2. Urim & Thummim was specifically prepared for translating the Book of Mormon and Jaredite records.**
- 3. Urim & Thummim was superior to any seer stone the prophet may have possessed.**

THEREFORE, Joseph Smith used the Urim & Thummim to translate the Book of Mormon.

J Fielding Smith concluded that there is no credible historical statement claiming JS used a seer stone to translate the Book of Mormon.

Ch. 8 Witness #6: Oliver Cowdery
(Meeting Joseph, Translating with
Urim & Thummim, Joseph Not
Treasure Digger, Cowdery's 1848
Testimony)

References in this chapter: 33

Oliver Cowdery was the scribe for almost the entire book.

Meeting The Prophet Joseph Smith

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 Urim & Thummim

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 Book of Mormon 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

The Book of Mormon 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 Lamanite” 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 Joseph Smith 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 Unveiled: Hurlbut on Trial (Membership & Excommunication, Incites Persecution Against Joseph)

References in this chapter: 28

this one book “Mormonism Unveiled [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

The book "Mormonism Unveiled" was among one of the first known "anti-Mormon" publications and represents the first significant published opposition to Joseph Smith and the restoration. It was a collection of affidavits and research collected by LDS Church dissenter Doctor Philastus 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. 103

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 Joseph Smith

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 Joseph Smith.** 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 Unveiled: Hurlbut’s Affidavits (Violence Against the Latter-day Saints, Hurlbut on Trial)

References in this chapter: 27

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 Cowdrey 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 Joseph 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 Joseph, and Joseph 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 Joseph.
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 (Joseph Smith 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 Frederick G. Williams told how Hurlbut had gathered many ridiculous stories for his affidavits. He made harsh death threats against Joseph. He fired up the people against Joseph. p116

The court determined that Joseph had “reason to fear that Doctor Philastus 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 and LDS Response)

References in this chapter: 18

Impact Of Mormonism Unveiled

The 1st chapter of Mormonism Unveiled speaks of Joseph 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

Richard Bushman says in essence, referring to things said about Joseph in Mormonism Unveiled, don't worry about Joseph 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 Unveiled: Demise & Rebirth (on E.D. Howe)

References in this chapter: 29

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 p.

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 says, “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? (Whitmer Contradicts Joseph, Excommunicated, Joseph & Whitmer Parallel to Moses & Covetous Korah)

References in this chapter: 75

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 antagonizer 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 apostasy 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

Paused taking p lowercase and pick marks out

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 apostacy 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 (Interviews, Stone in Hat, Who Saw the Translation, Inconsistencies, Whitmer as Eyewitness?)

References in this chapter: 75

-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? \(Magic is Satanism, Not Suffer a Witch to Live, Joseph's Minor Sins, Magic Not "Preparatory Gospel" or Culture, Parallel Accusations to Christ\)](#)

References in this chapter: 56

-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 Cowdry 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 stons: 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 (Reject the “New Narrative”, Testimonies of Joseph The Prophet)

References in this chapter: 27

-in a 2016 survey on why members leave the church, it was shown that the 3rd 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**.

Testimonies 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 Lehitos 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

Resource: Dumb Rock or Biblical
Interpreters? Researchers Standing up
for Urim & Thummim, SLC Tribune
Article

<https://www.sltrib.com/religion/2023/03/20/how-did-joseph-smith-translate/>

The Prophesied Tool for Translation

What do the scriptures say would be used for translating the sacred record of Mormon? What did Joseph Smith and those directly involved have to say?

What are the detractors promoting? Sadly, there is a trend among modern church historians to take previously known anti-Mormon sources and treat them when the same credibility of well established and trusted witnesses.

This book by the Stoddards does an excellent job of academically establishing the Urim and Thumim, not the seer stones, as the tool for translation. Join me as we highlight a few key points on these matters in this booklet.

HOW DID JOSEPH TRANSLATE THE PLATES?

