



Seek The Old Paths

“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein”
(Jeremiah 6:16)

Vol. 25, No. 8

August 2014

REWRITING THE BIBLE

Tom Wacaster

There is sufficient evidence to the honest seeker of truth to prove that the book you hold in your hand is, beyond any shadow of doubt, the inspired word of God, all the modernists notwithstanding.

It seems that the 20th and 21st centuries may go down in history as the age when men sought to rewrite the Bible and present to men what THEY want to hear rather than what God wants them to hear. The modern versions (for the most part) are the product of an attempt to put INTO the Bible the creeds and doctrines of men rather than an honest evaluation and translation of what God communicated to mankind.

Calvinism is embedded in the **New International Version** and **Modernism** is manifest in the **Revised Standard Version**. Now we are hearing of the *Gender-Neutral Bible* in which every masculine gender reference to God, Christ and/or the Holy Spirit has been changed from He, Him, or His to “it.” That version barely hit the market when the homosexual activists decided it was time to produce a so-called ‘Bible’ that either removed or edited every reference to homosexuality so as to put the vile practice in a positive light. So the beat goes on, and men in their stupidity think they can eliminate what they don’t like by simply rewriting the Bible. With the exception of the **New King James Version**, every modern translation to hit the market in the last 50 years or so has propagated some kind of error, and the more liberal the translation,

the more error will be found therein.

Attacks upon the word of God are as old as man himself. Satan sought to place doubt in the mind of Eve by suggesting that God did not say what she thought He said. Satan was likely the first one to rewrite Biblical history in an attempt to achieve his desired end. The liberal theologians (if we dare call them theologians) of our day and age are also attempting to rewrite Old Testament history.

Not to be confused with textual criticism, ‘Higher Criticism’ is an attempt to reconstruct the Bible by taking a cut and paste approach to the Scriptures, with more of a cutting than a pasting! For those who have not had the opportunity to study *Higher Criticism, Textual Criticism, Modernism, and/or Post-modernism*, let me assure you that it is not one of my favorite fields of study. I react to such disrespect for God’s word like so many fingernails scraping across the proverbial blackboard — it just rubs against the grain. For the most part, all such theologians take a very critical approach to the examination of the Bible. They begin with a “no miracles allowed” mindset, deny inspiration, and then attempt to attribute every prophecy of the coming Messiah in the Old Testament to a later date than when it was written, the obvious reason being to avoid any

such thing as predictive prophecy; that would demand a miracle, and miracles are not allowed in their way of thinking. According to some “scholars,” the book of Genesis is a “myth,” filled with tales and fables with no more value than Mother Goose or Dr. Seuss (if even that).

One of the most recent attempts to rewrite the Old Testament was headed by (get this) the *“United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.”* A well-known rabbi, Harold Kushner, has co-edited what they call an “adventure” in which the publishers will “bid adieu to the childish version of the Bible.” Archaeological evidence, in their opinion, is lacking to support most of the Old Testament stories that have come to be appreciated by Bible believers. Influenced by the “no absolutes” mentality of their kissing cousins in the field of philosophy, these new found spiritual leaders for our generation are quick to point out that “you just can’t be sure about these things.” One of the central themes of modernism and post-modernism is that you can’t be sure about anything except what science proves, and sometimes you can’t even rely on science! But with their human wisdom asserted, and the

(Continued on page 59)

Rewriting The Bible...



Editorial...

MAN NEEDS HOPE FOR THE FUTURE #2

Garland M. Robinson

HOPE ENCOURAGES US

Hope serves as an anchor, a foundation, a bulwark. It is both sure and steadfast. It is a rock, a support. The Hebrew writer says, "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil" (Heb. 6:17-19). "But I will hope continually, and will yet praise thee more and more" (Psalm 71:14).

It is by hope that we exist peaceably and tranquilly upon this earth. Without hope, what lies ahead in our future and the fearful expectation of it could drive us insane as it does with many that have no hope. Hope inspires us to look ahead in expectation of comfort, consolation and reward.

SAVED BY HOPE

When we hope to go to heaven some day, we do not doubt that heaven is real, we do not doubt that God can save us, we do not doubt at all! We hope, anticipate, expect to be granted entrance into that heavenly land when our time in this world is complete. "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2). "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:11). "For we are saved by hope..." (Rom. 8:24).

Many passages declare heaven to be our eternal home. "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven,

whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel" (Col. 1:5). "But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation" (1 Thess. 5:8). "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:7).

Without hope, there is no salvation. God promises a grand reward to all who obey him in humble submission to his will. Unless we believe that, we do not believe God who made the promise. And, to those who do not believe God, it is impossible for them to be saved. "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6).

OUR HOPE WILL BE REALIZED

The faithful servants of God throughout the ages declare our hope will be realized!

Stephen so lived as to realize his hope to enter heaven. As the mob was stoning the life from his body he said, "Father, lay not this sin to their charge" (Acts 7:60). He was able to see Jesus standing on the right hand of God and said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." May we ask Stephen if heaven was worth the price? His answer would be YES INDEED!

Paul is certainly qualified to tell us of the hope set before us. His life was one of labor, suffering, persecution, slander, beatings, imprisonments, and at times hunger and thirst. No doubt he could have lived a very prosperous life considering his education, acquaintances and Roman citizenship. Yet he declared, "For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him

against that day" (2 Tim. 1:12). "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ" (Phil. 3:7-8). "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. 4:17). He saw beyond the executioner's axe to see the joys of heaven! Facing death he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

The promise given to each of the seven churches of Asia provides hope for all who overcome the temptations and trials of life.

To the **church at Ephesus**: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give **to eat of the tree of life**, which is in the midst of the paradise of God" (Rev. 2:7).

To the **church at Smyrna**: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh **shall not be hurt of the second death**" (Rev. 2:11).

To the **church at Pergamum**: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give **to eat of the hidden manna**, and will **give him a white stone**, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Rev. 2:17).

To the **church at Thyatira**: "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I **give power over the nations**: And he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will **give him the morning star**" (Rev. 2:26-28).

To the **church at Sardis**: "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his

angels” (Rev. 3:5).

To the **church at Philadelphia**: “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name” (Rev. 3:12).

To the **church at Laodicea**: “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne” (Rev. 3:21).

Think of all the godly men and women whose examples have influenced others to live a faithful life according to God’s Word. What a tremendous encouragement they are. They declare unto us that glorious hope that we all embrace. “The hope of the righteous shall be gladness...” (Prov. 10:28).

Think, on the other hand, of all the ungodly men and women whose lives tear down every good thing and whose influence will live on to destroy the home and family, to destroy our Christian life or the lives of our sons and daughters. For such people, there is NO HOPE! “When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth” (Prov. 11:7). “...The expectation of the wicked shall perish” (Prov. 10:28).

WHEN WILL HOPE BE REALIZED?

Our hope will be realized when Jesus comes to bring life on this earth to a close. “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ...Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. ...And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal”

(Matt. 25:31-34, 41, 46).

CONCLUSION

We have eternal life NOW only in prospect, pledge, promise, down payment (2 Cor. 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14). “For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for” (Rom. 8:24)? Full expectation of our hope will not be realized until the judgment. However, we may forfeit our hope at any time by turning away from Christ (cf. Gal. 5:4; 1 Cor. 10:12). The admonition, therefore, is to be faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10). Only the Father knows when Jesus will come again (Mark 13:32). “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour

your Lord doth come...Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh” (Matt. 24:42,44). “Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live: and let me not be ashamed of my hope” (Psalm 119:116).

Do you have the hope of an eternity with God? If not, you can have that hope if you will humbly obey God’s will. **Believe** in Christ (John 8:24), **Repent** of sins (Luke 13:3), **Confess** Christ (Matt. 10:32), be **Baptized** for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38), **Live faithful** the remainder of your life (Rev. 2:10). Then, and only then, will you have the hope of everlasting life!

Rewriting The Bible...

(Continued from page 57)

badge of stupidity displayed for all to see, they declare that “the Bible is a grossly overrated book” and that “no one today seriously accepts” any of the miracles of the Bible. I guess they took a poll that led them to that “overstated conclusion.” I wonder why I was not asked to participate in that poll? As it turns out, this “adventure” never received serious attention, and the project was abandoned a few years back. We are the better for it.

I have several books in my library in which the authors present irrefutable evidence of the reliability of both the Old and New Testaments. There are literally thousands of manuscripts, fragments, and copies of the New Testament compared with a mere handful of some of the great classics of literature. This makes, as one author declared, “the Bible the best documented book from the ancient world.” The evidence is squarely on the side of the reliability and authenticity of the Bible. But then, modernists are not concerned with evidence. The modernists believe the old lie that if you tell someone something long enough and loud enough, they will eventually believe it, no matter how foolish it might seem to be, or how lacking in evidence to support their claim. While these modernists are bold and brash in their claim, I would simply

ask: “Where is the evidence?” There is, on the other hand, sufficient evidence to the honest seeker of truth to prove that the book you hold in your hand is, beyond any shadow of doubt, the inspired word of God, all the modernists notwithstanding.

If, as the modernists would have us believe, the Bible is not reliable, that it has become corrupted, or that it is nothing more than a myth or fable, then why stop with the few translations we now have? Why not produce a ‘bible’ for every imagination of mankind? Is that not where we are headed?

About two years ago there was a debate being held on the Senate floor regarding a bill having to do with abortion (if I remember correctly). I do not recall the nature of the bill, but it is not what was in the bill as much as the reaction to it. Those sponsoring and supporting the bill appealed to the Bible as the basis for the legitimacy of the bill. One Senator, opposed to the bill, simply responded by saying, “Well, men wrote the Bible; men can change it!” How foolish of man to think he can, with the stroke of a pen, change the eternal truths contained therein.

Modern man has come a long way in technology, science, medicine and electronics. But I can say without fear of contradiction that he has taken one giant leap backward when he thinks he can rewrite the Bible.

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WHY I LEFT THE MORMON CHURCH #8

Nathan Franson

The **Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints** is driven largely by a creed of thirteen “Articles of Faith.” To see our ongoing examination of these “Articles,” go to seektheoldpaths.com/stop2014.htm.

SEVENTH ARTICLE OF FAITH

The seventh item in the Articles of Faith reads, **“We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, and so forth.”**

This teaching is actually quite common to much of the religious world and deserves a certain amount of attention. However, for the sake of not being redundant, it is recommended to examine the material printed in the previous two articles found in the June and July issues of *Seek The Old Paths*. The same information prescribed by the Bible for prophets is to be applied to this. There is also a thorough analysis of “tongues” in the August, September, and October issues from 2013.

EIGHTH ARTICLE OF FAITH

The eighth Article of Faith reads, **“We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.”**

The Mormon faith does not abandon the Bible entirely, but they put more emphasis into how they perceive the reliability of the Book of Mormon. There are some things to consider with their statement. First, either the Bible (Genesis to Revelation) is the complete and only inspired word of God or it is not. If it is, then no religion has authority to teach or practice from any other source. If it is not the only inspired text, then the religious world must accept that there may be other forms of inspired writings. If that is the case, then the Book of Mormon may be what Joseph Smith declared it to be. However, when making a claim that the Bible is the word of God “as far as it is translated correctly,” they

are implying that the Bible, unlike the Book of Mormon, may have some unreliable texts. It is important to realize then that the burden of proof is placed on the shoulders of those making such an accusation. In other words, prove where the Bible is not translated correctly or is unreliable in terms of being the word of God. Their statement also places a significant rank on a book that no other religion accepts as inspired canon.

Peter emphasizes, *“For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you”* (1 Peter 1:24-25). The Gospel to which he refers is the same Gospel preached throughout the Bible — not the Book of Mormon. In order to answer whether or not one can get to heaven obeying the Book of Mormon, one must examine if the Book of Mormon is inspired.

AUTHORSHIP OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

The first edition of the Book of Mormon was released in the year A.D. 1830. Controversy surrounds the authorship, beginning with how it was published. On the title page of the original version, Joseph Smith is listed as “Author and Proprietor” when he registered the first edition in New York. If the Book of Mormon was indeed inspired by the Holy Spirit, why did Smith claim to be the author? Mormon apologists contend that the copyright laws in New York, where the Book of Mormon was produced, stated that one must list himself as such in order to prevent plagiarism. However, a careful study will reveal that the law actually states, “Author” or “Proprietor” was sufficient. (Bracha)

Further, this law certainly did not apply to the printed testimony of eleven witnesses who attested that Smith was both Author and Proprietor in the early edition of the book. Present day editions have deleted

those testimonies. Eventually “Author and Proprietor” was replaced with “Translator” on the title page a few years later. So which is it? There is a vast difference between the role of an author and that of a translator. Why not just simply identify himself as “Translator,” which was legal to do? If Smith was the author, then it ceases to be divine. If he was not, why did the eleven witnesses say differently? How can they be trusted? When a sworn testimony is changed, it becomes invalid or questionable at best. Three other assumed witnesses would be added: Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris.

More controversy would follow the authorship by way of a man named Solomon Spalding. Spalding was ordained a Congregationalist preacher in 1787 and later tried his hand at writing novels in the early 1800s. He was never successful, but in 1816 he wrote an unpublished historical romance about the lost civilization of the mound builders of North America titled *Manuscript Found*. It was authored fourteen years **before** the Book of Mormon was released. Its plot and character names are almost identical with the ones found in the Book of Mormon. Because of this, many accused Smith of plagiarism, using Spalding’s work as the theme of the Book of Mormon.

Those in defense of the Book of Mormon have always stood firm that it was nothing more than an attempt to discredit the Book of Mormon. For years the LDS Church was successful in dismantling most of the dispute. However, those who knew Spalding launched their own investigation claiming he was the source. Unfortunately, Spalding died before he had an opportunity to defend his work.

In 1976, three men, Wayne L. Cowdrey, Howard Davis, and Arthur Vanick wrote a book titled *Who Really Wrote the Book of Mormon?* They exposed the original manuscript and had a handwriting analysis performed to see if the original copy of the Book of Mormon matched the original handwritten draft by Spald-

ing. Many pages were confirmed as Spalding's, written verbatim into the Book of Mormon. Names, plots, and places were a match. There were also some significant persons who came forward to confirm the allegations.

John Spalding, brother of Solomon Spalding, attested,

He then told me he had been writing a book, which he intended to have printed, the avails of which he thought would enable him to pay all his debts. The book was entitled the "Manuscript Found," of which he read to me many passages. — It was an historical romance of the first settlers of America, endeavoring to show that the American Indians are the descendants of the Jews, or the lost tribes. It gave a detailed account of their journey from Jerusalem, by land and sea, till they arrived in America, under the command of NEPHI and LEHI. They afterwards had quarrels and contentions, and separated into two distinct nations, one of which he denominated Nephites and the other Lamanites.... I have recently read the Book of Mormon, and to my great surprize I find nearly the same historical matter, names, &c. as they were in my brother's writings. I well remember that he wrote in the old style, and commenced about every sentence with "and it came to pass," or "now it came to pass," the same as in the Book of Mormon, and according to the best of my recollection and belief, it is the same as my brother Solomon wrote, with the exception of the religious matter. — By what means it has fallen into the hands of Joseph Smith, Jr. I am unable to determine. (Howe 279-280)

Martha Spalding, the sister-in-law of Solomon, declared,

I was personally acquainted with Solomon Spalding, about twenty years ago. I

was at his house a short time before he left Conneaut; he was then writing a historical novel founded upon the first settlers of America. He represented them as an enlightened and warlike people. He had for many years contended that the aborigines of America were the descendants of some of the lost tribes of Israel, and this idea he carried out in the book in question. — The lapse of time which has intervened, prevents my recollecting but few of the leading incidents of his writings; but the names of Nephi and Lehi are yet fresh in my memory, as being the principal heroes of his tale. They were officers of the company which first came off from Jerusalem. He gave a particular account of their journey by land and sea, till they arrived in America, after which, disputes arose between the chiefs, which caused them to separate into different lands, one of which was called Lamanites and the other Nephites. Between these were recounted tremendous battles, which frequently covered the ground with the slain; and their being buried in large heaps was the cause of the numerous mounds in the country. — Some of these people he represented as being very large. I have read the Book of Mormon, which has brought fresh to my recollection the writings of Solomon Spalding; and I have no manner of doubt that the historical part of it, is the same that I read and heard read, more than 20 years ago. The old, obsolete style, and the phrases of "and it came to pass," &c. are the same. (Howe, Mormonism Unveiled 280-281)

John N. Miller, an employee of Solomon Spalding in 1811 asserted,

I have recently examined the Book of Mormon, and find in it the writings of Solomon

Spalding, from beginning to end, but mixed up with scripture and other religious matter, which I did not meet with in the "Manuscript Found." Many of the passages in the Mormon Book are verbatim from Spalding, and others in part. The names of Nephi, Lehi, Moroni, and in fact all the principal names, are bro't fresh to my recollection, by the Gold Bible. When Spalding divested his history of its fabulous names, by a verbal explanation, he landed his people near the Straits of Darien, which I am very confident he called *Zarahemla*, they were marched about that country for a length of time, in which wars and great blood shed ensued, he brought them across North America in a north east direction. (Howe, Mormonism Unveiled 283)

In 1833 Aaron Wright, a Justice of the Peace in Conneaut, affirmed,

I first became acquainted with Solomon Spalding in 1808 or 9, when he commenced building a forge on Conneaut creek. When at his house, one day, he showed and read to me a history he was writing, of the lost tribes of Israel, purporting that they were the first settlers of America, and that the Indians were their decendants. Upon this subject we had frequent conversations. He traced their journey from Jerusalem to America, as it is given in the Book of Mormon, excepting the religious matter. The historical part of the Book of Mormon, I know to be the same as I read and heard read from the writings of Spalding, more than twenty years ago; the names more especially are the same without any alteration. He told me his object was to account for all the fortifications, &c. to be found in this country, and said that in time it would be fully believed by all, except learned men and

historians. I once anticipated reading his writings in print, but little expected to see them in a new Bible. Spalding had many other manuscripts, which I expect to see when Smith translates his other plate. In conclusion, I will observe, that the names of, and most of the historical part of the Book of Mormon, were as familiar to me before I read it, as most modern history. If it is not Spalding's writing, it is the same as he wrote; and if Smith was inspired, I think it was by the same spirit that Spalding was, which he confessed to be the love of money. (Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* 284)

Spalding's work was not the only text that was copied. There are also over forty plagiarisms that Smith lifted directly from the *King James Version* of the Bible. These are not just similar passages of content, but are verbatim. They are blatantly duplicated passages, yet taken out of their original context. Consider that the translators of the KJV were not inspired, nor did any of them claim to be such. Smith on the other hand was adamant that he was inspired when he translated the Book of Mormon from "reformed Egyptian" contained in the "gold plates" into English.

The Book of Mormon allegedly covers a historical period from 600 B.C. to A.D. 421. It quotes directly from the KJV that was translated in A.D. 1611. Only one of two conclusions can be made from this. Either the KJV translators copied from the Book of Mormon or the Book of Mormon copied from the KJV translators. Since the Book of Mormon would come into existence 200 years after the KJV was translated, the first theory can be eliminated. Mormon apologists claim that God gave the same revelation in the Book of Mormon as He did in Palestine. Smith held his position of being an inspired translator, and that God was using him to translate directly from "reformed Egyptian" into English. But why would God help him translate it into King James English? That was not the language in Palestine. It was also not the language in the 1830s in America.

Newsroom, a website for LDS resources, lists itself as the official resource for news media, opinion leaders, and the public. The website states, "It [Book of Mormon] has been described as the "keystone" of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. From the beginning, Church members have accepted it as scripture. This does not mean the Book of Mormon replaces the Bible as scripture for members of the Church." (www.mormonnewsroom.org) Perhaps it does not replace it because it attempts to duplicate it. How peculiar it is that the Bible does not contain one passage verifying any historical evidence in the Book of Mormon, yet the Book of Mormon is full of Bible content. The reason is that if the Bible is true, then there is no room for Mormon doctrine or history.

"TRANSLATION" AND "REVELATION" OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

Joseph Smith supposedly translated the Book of Mormon from a heavy tome made of gold, commonly referred to in the LDS Church as the "gold plates." He claimed it was written in "Reformed Egyptian" hieroglyphics, a language that no credible historian has ever validated. In order to translate it, he said he would need the help of the *Urim* and *Thummim*.

The official Mormon website indicates it was "*an instrument prepared of God to assist man in obtaining revelation from the Lord and in translating languages.*" (www.lds.org) While the *Urim* and *Thummim* is found in the Old Testament, the Mormon description of them are completely different, as nowhere is it mentioned that the *Urim* and *Thummim* were used as translating devices. The *New Illustrated Bible Dictionary* defines them as "Gems or stones carried by the high priest and used by him to determine God's will in certain matters." Additionally, there is no record of them being used after the reign of David. Also, Smith and his family were accused on many occasions of being involved in occultic practices.

David Whitmer, one of the Book of Mormon's supposed three main witnesses, would later describe how Smith actually claimed to have received his translating ability. It

was by looking at stones from a well in which letters would appear in English. Whitmer wrote, "...*Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine...*" (Whitmer 12). God's methods of revelation never endorsed an occultic practice of translation. Moreover, why or how would an archaic form of an Egyptian language end up on American soil? No Egyptian hieroglyphics have ever been connected to the American continent, the language was never used, and certainly not a fabricated version of it.

THE "WITNESSES" OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

Located at the front of every Book of Mormon is a written testimony supposedly signed by Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris. They supposedly saw the "gold plates" first-hand and according to Mormon beliefs corroborated Smith's revelation. Mormon officials and members vow that these testimonies have never changed. However, an investigation will show otherwise. Relevant is the fact that credible witnesses must have sound judgment, not be easily swayed, their character and reputation must be unquestionable, and all statements must agree over time. Otherwise, they are untrustworthy. Consider that all three witnesses were excommunicated from the Mormon Church at different times. Two of the three later returned, but their testimony could not be trusted. All three accounts varied over time. (Groat)

Eight other witnesses are also listed in the front of the Book of Mormon. What is important to realize is that they were all either family members or close friends of the Smith and Whitmer families. All eight apostatized from the LDS Church. By 1847, none were a part of it. All eight had questionable accounts outside of what the Book of Mormon lists. They were known to be superstitious, believing in divining rods and magic. Later on, they all said they saw the plates with "eyes of faith" but never actually saw the tangible plates. Smith even referred to them at one point as counterfeiters.

David Whitmer wrote, "If you believe my testimony to the Book of Mormon; if you believe that God spake to us three witnesses by his own voice, then I tell you that in June, 1838, God spake to me again by his own voice from the heavens, and told me to separate myself from among the Latter-Day Saints, for as they sought to do unto me, so should it be done unto them." (Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ*)

Contemporaries of Martin Harris described him as having unstable religious convictions. (Groat)

CAN THE BOOK OF MORMON BE TRUSTED?

Joseph Smith confidently contended, "I told the brethren that the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book." (Smith 461) If Smith really was inspired while translating and God was the author of the English production, there would certainly be no changes needed. But there were changes, in fact, four thousand of them since the 1830 version! The Book of Mormon has undergone quite a makeover through the years including doctrinal and grammatical modifications. If deity truly inspired a prophet, why would there be a need to change anything?

The final chapter of the Book of Mormon contains a "test" to confirm inspiration. It reads, "And when ye shall receive these things I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things." (Moroni 10:4-5)

Mormons urge prospective converts to pray and ask God if it is true. The problem is that it is a loaded approach. Many have read and followed their formula, only to conclude that the Book of Mormon is false.

Those in defense of the Mormon faith will simply say that one does not have enough faith and to pray more. But their judgment is only viable if it is assumed that the Book of Mormon is the authority.

CONCLUSION

If the Book of Mormon is not the divine revelation that Smith and his church claim it to be, then the entire foundation of Mormonism crumbles under its own error and will get no one to heaven. The Bible on the other hand, is God breathed. Paul writes, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16). Paul also writes, "There is one body [church, NF], and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Eph. 4:4-5).

Books of Mormon theology can only be true if their doctrine is unmistakably in unison with what the Bible teaches. Otherwise there is not "one body" or "one faith." The "one faith" provides hope of eternal salvation. The "one faith" enables people to be correctly added to the "one body." The "one faith" keeps people in the grace of God as long as they remain obedient. The "one faith" has been tested and proven to be true time after time. It is the Bible and the Bible alone (2 Peter 1:3; Gal. 1:6-9).

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Grider Town C/C, Opp, AL.....	\$300
Beginning Balance	\$8,787.73
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Postage.....	\$1,744.92
Supplies	\$478.06
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Seek The Old Paths is a monthly publication of the **Leoni Church of Christ** and is under the oversight of its elders. It is FREE, being supported by the contributions of both individuals and congregations. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3, 2 Tim. 4:2, Titus 1:13, Titus 2:1 and 2 Peter 1:12. All mail received may be published unless it is marked “not for publication.” The church building is located at: 6818 McMinnville Hwy, Woodbury, TN 37190.

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