

The Book of Mormon

by Marvin Cowan

The Book of Mormon is a sacred history of the ancestors of the Native Americans, considered a companion scripture to the Bible, but has been criticized for its historical and scientific inaccuracies, contradictions, and absurdities.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 19:15, 2 Corinthians 13:1, Galatians 1:8

Topics: "Authority of Scripture", "The Book of Mormon vs. The Bible"

Description

Marvin Cowan discusses the claims surrounding the Book of Mormon, emphasizing that while it is presented as a second witness to the Bible, it lacks the historical and doctrinal consistency found in the Bible. He argues that the Book of Mormon does not provide new revelations or doctrines that are not already established in the Bible, and questions the necessity of its existence if it does not add to the fullness of the gospel. Cowan highlights contradictions within the Book of Mormon and critiques the claims of its divine origin, suggesting that it has been altered over time and lacks archaeological support. He concludes that the Bible, with its numerous witnesses and established teachings, stands as the complete word of God, making the Book of Mormon unnecessary.

Transcript

"We also believe the Book of Mormon to be the Word of God."

8th Article of Faith by Joseph Smith

Mormonism says the B. of M. is a sacred history of the ancestors of the Native Americans just like the Bible is for the Jews. LDS claim the B. of M. was originally written in "Reformed Egyptian" on gold plates which an angel gave to Joseph Smith in 1827. He translated the B. of M. into English by "the gift and power of God" and published it in 1830.

A SECOND WITNESS

The subtitle on the cover of current copies of the B. of M. is "Another Testament of Jesus Christ." LDS often put the Bible and B. of M. together and say they are two witnesses for the same message. They use II Cor. 13:1 and Deut. 19:15 to teach that everything must be established "in the mouth of two or three witnesses." They claim the Bible is one witness and the B. of M. is a second witness for Christ. But the above scriptures refer to witnesses with mouths, not to books! The Bible is composed of 66 books written

by over 40 different witnesses, so the gospel of Christ already has more than two or three "witnesses." Does the B. of M. have any new or different doctrines? If it does, it falls under the condemnation of Gal. 1:8-9. If it does not have any new or different doctrine, why is it needed? If the fulness of the gospel was proclaimed by Paul in the Bible (Rom. 15:19), there is no need for the B. of M.. But, the LDS teach doctrines not found in the Bible, so they try to discredit it in order to show the B. of M. is needed.

Mormonism claims that the inhabitants of America needed the B. of M. because Jesus is the Savior of the "whole world," and it would not be fair to give scripture only to Jews. Using that same logic, books of scripture should be needed for Australia, Africa, Asia, and so on. The B. of M. even teaches that in II Nephi 29:12, yet Mormons recognize no other "scripture" except their own four standard works! Where is that other "scripture" that II Nephi 29:12 mentions? If other nations were to have their own scripture, why does Rom. 3:2 say, "unto them [Jews] were committed the Oracles [divine messages] of God"?

The B. of M. says that Jesus Christ came to America after His resurrection (III Nephi 11). LDS claim that Jesus' visit to America fulfilled John 10:14-16. But, the context shows Jesus was talking to Jews (v. 19), so the "other sheep" were non-Jews or Gentiles, since the Jews recognized only those two kinds of people. Why did Jesus give the great commission in Matt. 28:19-20 and Mark 16:15 if He was going to personally deliver His own message? And what good did it do for Christ to visit America? According to the B. of M., in less than five centuries they had buried and forgotten their scripture and all "Christians" were destroyed! It was through European missionaries with a Bible, not the B. of M., that Native Americans learned about Christ!

PROOF TEXTS FROM THE BIBLE

LDS claim that the Bible is incomplete, mistranslated, corrupt, and so on, yet they quote that "corrupt" Bible to show that it predicted the coming forth of the B. of M. centuries ago! They assume that the texts they use are reliable while they claim other texts are not! But, they have no evidence to support their claims. The following are some of the proof texts the LDS use:

1. From Ezek. 37:15-17 they claim: (1) the sticks are really scrolls; (2) the stick of Judah is the Bible; (3) the stick of Joseph is the B. of M.; and, (4) the joining of these sticks means the joining of two writings - the Bible and the B. of M.. But the Hebrew word translated "stick" means a piece of wood, not a scroll. The Lord also told Ezekial precisely what to write on the two sticks, and it was not the "Bible" and the "B. of M." He was told to write the words "for Judah" on one stick and "for Joseph" on the other. The Bible speaks of books and scrolls in many verses, such as: Is. 8:1; 34:4; Jer. 36:2; Ezek. 2:9; 3:1-3; Rev. 6:14. It also speaks of sticks in Num. 17:1-8; 15:32; I Kings 17:12. But God never interchanges these words. The people asked in Ezek. 37:18, "Wilt thou not show us what thou meanest by these?" That question is answered in the next few verses, when the Lord declared the two Kingdoms of Israel would be brought together as one nation with one King again. In fact, the entire chapter is a prophecy of the restoration of Israel to her own land after captivity. For LDS to claim a couple of verses are about the B. of M. in the middle of that message would be out of place. Furthermore, it was Ezekial who wrote on both sticks. Did Ezekial write both the Bible and the B. of M.? If not, the Mormon interpretation does not fit this text.

2. Mormons also claim that Is. 29:1-4 predicts the coming forth of the B. of M. Apostle LeGrand Richards says of v. 4, "Obviously, the only way a dead people could speak 'out of the ground' or 'low out of the dust' would be by the written word, and this people did through the Book of Mormon. Truly it has a familiar spirit for it contains the words of the prophet of God of Israel" (M.W. &W., p. 69). There are 15 Old Testament

references to "familiar spirits," and every one of them refer to mediums in witchcraft, including Is. 29:4 (Lev. 20:6; Duet. 18:10-12). If the LDS believe the B. of M. has a "familiar spirit," they are identifying it with witchcraft! But, this text is really talking about the destruction of Ariel or Jerusalem, not about the B. of M.

3. LDS claim Is. 29:11-12 was fulfilled when Smith received and translated the gold plates. Martin Harris mortgaged his farm to pay for publishing the first edition of the B. of M. Harris desired to verify Smith's translation, so he took a copy of some of the "Reformed Egyptian" characters with Smith's translation to Professor Charles Anthon of Columbia University. LDS claim that Anthon pronounced the translation correct. Part of this event is recorded in the P. of G. P. J.S. History 1:63-65. But, Harris' visit to Anthon was very different from Is. 29:11-12. This text shows: (1) This is a parable and the subject is a vision, not a book. (2) The vision of the prophets of that day had become as meaningless to the people as the words of a book that was sealed. Isaiah was referring to the condition of the people at that time, and not about a book of some future time. (3) According to Harris, the professor said the translation was correct. Anthon could have said this only if he read it. But, Isaiah said the learned man could not read the book because it was sealed! The only way the professor knew the plates were "sealed" was because Harris told him they were. (4) In Isaiah the book went to the learned man first - then to the unlearned. But the Mormon story has the book of gold plates delivered first to the unlearned (Smith) who copied some of the characters with his translation on a piece of paper which was taken to the learned (Anthon). In Isaiah, the same "sealed book" was taken to both the learned man and the unlearned man. But, Anthon did not receive any book - sealed or unsealed! (5) In Isaiah, the book was delivered to the unlearned and he simply said, "I am not learned," and made no effort to read it or translate it. But, Smith claimed he did read the book, even though he was unlearned.

Apostle LeGrand Richards wrote, "Professor Anthon did not realize that he was literally fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah" (M.W. & W., p. 50). But, Anthon did not believe he was fulfilling prophecy, because in a letter to E.D. Howe, a Painsville, Ohio, newspaper editor, he relates the event as a hoax and a scheme to "cheat the farmer [Harris] of his money" (and Harris did lose his money).

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

Since the B. of M. is supposed to be a revelation from God like the Bible, both should display equal evidence of God's wisdom. LDS leaders have certainly made some great claims for it. For example, "The Prophet Joseph Smith said, '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'" (T. of P.J.S., p. 194).

He also said, "Take away the Book of Mormon and the revelations, and where is our religion? We have none" (Ibid., p. 71). But, Smith's successor, LDS Prophet Brigham Young, said, "There is the New Testament; you may leave out the Book of Mormon and the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and follow the precepts of that book faithfully, and I will warrant you to arrive at salvation" (J. of D., Vol. I, p. 244). This is another example of LDS prophetic inconsistency.

LDS Apostle Orson Pratt wrote a series of questions and answers in which he said, "Q. What will be the consequences if they (the United States) do not embrace the Book of Mormon as a divine revelation? A. They will be destroyed from the land and sent down to hell, like all other generations who have rejected a divine message" (The Seer, p. 215). The United States still has not embraced the B. of M. after more than 150 years, but they have not been destroyed either!

Pratt also said, "Before this [the B. of M.] was offered to the world, the Lord confirmed it by opening the heavens in broad daylight, and sending down an holy angel, who descended in the presence of four individuals, three besides Mr. Smith, and the angel took the plates, and turned them over leaf after leaf, while, at the same time, the voice of the Lord out of the heavens told them it had been translated correctly, commanding them to send forth their testimony to all nations, Kingdoms, tongues, and people" (J. of D., Vol. II, p. 293).

Joseph Smith told the same story in the D.H.C., Vol. I, pp. 54-55, yet over 4000 changes have been made in the B. of M. since the Lord said it was correct!

Pratt also claimed, "If we compare the historical, prophetical, and doctrinal parts of the Book of Mormon with the great truths of science and nature, we find no contradictions - no absurdities - nothing unreasonable" (A. of F., p. 505).

INTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR THE BOOK OF MORMON

Contrary to Pratt's claims, the B. of M. does have many contradictions, absurdities and unreasonable statements. The following are examples beginning on page one:

1. I Nephi 1:1-4 says Lehi, a devout Jew living in Jerusalem, kept a sacred record in the Egyptian language. But Jews were enemies of the Egyptians in 600 BC. King Josiah was killed in a battle with Egypt about 608 BC, and Judah paid tribute to Egypt after that (II Chron. 35:20-36:4). Since Hebrew was the sacred language and the Lord was then "against Egypt" (Jer. 46:1-2), no devout Jew would write in Egyptian.

2. I Nephi 2:5-8 says that the River Laman emptied into the Red Sea. But, there are no rivers in all of Arabia now or in recorded history, and no river empties into the Red Sea! The Red Sea is a body of water connected to the Mediterranean Sea on the north and to the Indian Ocean on the south. When it rains, which is rare, a wadi (a dry riverbed) will carry water for a short time. But a wadi is not a river. Also, no Hebrew named his child "Sam" (v. 5). "Sam" is an American name, but not a Hebrew name.

3. I Nephi 5:14 says that Lehi did not know what tribe of Israel he was from until the brass plates were brought to him from Jerusalem. That seems strange since Lehi had supposedly lived all his days in Jerusalem (I Nephi 1:4). Devout Jews of that era prided themselves in keeping meticulous family genealogies.

4. I Nephi 10:3-11 has Lehi giving more specific "prophecies" of the coming of Christ than all Old Testament prophets put together! He supposedly lived in Jerusalem prior to some Old Testament writers and contemporary with others, but there is no Biblical or historical evidence of his existence in either the old or new world.

5. I Nephi 5:14 and II Nephi 3:4 says Lehi was a descendent of Manasseh who was the son of Joseph who was sold into Egypt in Gen. 37:36. In II Nephi 3:4-16, Lehi claimed he quoted a prophecy by that Biblical Joseph which said a latter day prophet named Joseph would be born as a descendent of Lehi. The heading over II Nephi 3 says, "Joseph in Egypt saw the Nephites in vision - He prophesied of Joseph Smith." President Joseph Fielding Smith, Apostle Bruce McConkie and many other LDS leaders claim that this text is a prophecy of Joseph Smith (Answers to Gospel Questions, Vol. 5 pp. 182-184; M.D. pp. 396, 700). While II Nephi 3 is hard to follow because it mentions three different Josephs, it certainly sounds like

Joseph Smith is to be a descendent of Lehi. But, Mormon 8:2-3 and Ether 4:3 indicate all the Nephites were killed by the Lamanites (Native Americans). Therefore, if Joseph Smith's lineage was through Lehi, he would have been a Native American. But, Joseph Smith's genealogy shows that his forefathers came from England. Yet, Joseph Fielding Smith said, "Joseph Smith was of Ephraim" (Answers to Gospel Questions Vol. 3, p. 198). How could he be of Ephraim if he descended from Lehi who came through the lineage of Ephraim's brother Manasseh?

6. II Nephi 3:14-16 also says that Joseph Smith's enemies were to be confounded when they sought to destroy him. But, Joseph Smith was shot and killed in Carthage, Illinois, while he was in jail on June 27, 1844 (D.H.C. Vol. 6, pp. 616-617).

7. In II Nephi 3:3 and 23, Joseph, son of Lehi, was promised "thy seed shall not be destroyed," but Mormon 8:2-5 and Ether 4:3 say that the Nephites were "all destroyed." That included all of Joseph's descendants! A "god" who would make promises and then break them is certainly not immutable or unchangeable as M.D., p. 318, says (See II Tim. 2:13). And what sort of foreknowledge or omniscience did He possess when He entrusted "the fullness of the gospel" to people who were annihilated? Some LDS writers have tried to explain this contradiction by claiming that "destroyed" does not mean "annihilated." But Moroni said that he alone was left of all the Nephites, and that there was none left but Lamanites. If the Nephites were not annihilated, then the B. of M. does not demonstrate the "superior clearness" like Mormons claim (M.D. p. 199; A. of F., p. 274). Furthermore, if any Nephites survived, where are they?

8. I Nephi 2:5, 4:35 and 7:5-6 tell how Lehi's family, Ishmael's family, and Zoram left Jerusalem in 600 B.C. to come to the New World. Seventeen people are specifically mentioned in I Nephi 2:1, 5; 4:35; 7:6; and 18:7. Two of Ishmael's sons also had families (I Nephi 7:6), and Nephi mentions his sisters in II Nephi 5:6, so there may have been a total of 25 people. But, II Nephi 5:5-6 and 28 say that those few people divided into two opposing nations in less than 30 years. They were the righteous white skinned Nephites and the unrighteous dark skinned Lamanites who are the ancestors of the Native Americans. By the most rapid human reproduction, they could only add a few dozen people in that brief time, and most of those would still be children. Therefore, those two nations could not have been very big!

9. II Nephi 5:16 says that the Nephite (see #8) nation built a temple like Solomon's less than 19 years after their arrival in America (I Nephi 18:23; II Nephi 5:28). By contrast, Solomon's temple took seven and a half years to build (I Kings 6:1, 38) with 30,000 levied Israelites and 150,000 hewers of stone and carriers (I Kings 5:13-15). 550 chiefs and 3300 subordinates supervised the work (I Kings 5:16; 9:23). Of these, 3600 were Canaanites and 250 were Israelites (II Chron. 2:17; 8:10). How did those few Nephites build a temple like Solomon's in such a short time? II Nephi 5:15 also says that all manner of wood, iron, copper, brass, steel, gold, silver, and precious ores were found here in great abundance. But, the next verse says that the American temple was built like Solomon's except for the precious materials which "were not found upon the land!"

10. II Nephi 5:21 shows that during their first 19 years in America, Laman and Lemuel (two of Lehi's sons), along with their descendants and followers, turned dark-skinned because of disobedience. This phenomenal change of skin color is seen throughout the B. of M.. In III Nephi 2:11-16, the dark-skinned Lamanites (Native Americans) turned white within one year as a result of accepting the true gospel! But in the 1981 edition of the B. of M., II Nephi 30:6 has been changed to say that converted Lamanites become "pure" instead of "white" like the previous editions said. After 150 years of Mormonism, perhaps LDS

leaders noticed that Native Americans do not become white when they become Mormons! Since both Nephites and Lamanites changed color according to their righteousness or unrighteousness throughout the B. of M., Native Americans should still turn white and LDS apostates should turn dark if Mormon 9:9-10 and 19 are true.

11. The B. of M. sounds Biblical because some 27,000 words are copied, often verbatim, from the King James Version of the Bible. II Nephi chapters 12-24 are copied from Isaiah 2-14, III Nephi 24-25 are copied from Malachi 3-4, and I Nephi 20-21 are copied from Isaiah 48-49 except for a few additions in the B. of M. Even the italicized words are copied from the KJV Bible! The italicized words were not in the original text, but were supplied by the KJV translators to give a better, smoother reading in English. Since the King James Bible was completed in 1611 A.D., and the B. of M. was published in 1830, it is obvious which one copied the other.

12. II Nephi 26:33 says all people, "black and white, bond and free, male and female," are alike unto God. But, the black race was not like others to the LDS Church concerning the priesthood until President Spencer Kimball's "revelation" in 1978. And females are still not like LDS males because females do not hold any priesthood (authority).

13. Jacob 2:23-27 says that David and Solomon's polygamy was abominable before God. Yet, D. & C. 132:37-39 says God gave many wives and concubines to David and Solomon which were counted for righteousness and they did not sin. How could that be true if polygamy was abominable before God? (II Tim. 2:13).

14. Jacob 4:1 says, "I cannot write but a little of my words, because of the difficulty of engraving our words upon plates" (the gold plates translated by Joseph Smith). If it was so difficult to engrave words on the plates, why is Jacob 4:1-3 so wordy? And why does IV Nephi 1:6 say, "And thus did the thirty and eighth year pass away, and also the thirty and ninth, and forty and first, and the forty and second, yea, even until forty and nine years had passed away, and also the fifty and first, and the fifty and second; yea, and even until fifty and nine years had passed away." Jared's wise brother who counseled God in Ether 2-3 could have told the Lord how to more simply say, "59 years had passed away."

15. In Jacob 7:27, the French word "Adieu" concludes the book of Jacob. How did a French word get into the English translation of the Reformed Egyptian language? The B. of M. dates Jacob between 544 and 421 B.C. The French language did not even exist until around 700 A.D.

16. Enos 25 says that Enos "began to be old" when his father Jacob was born 170 years or more earlier (I Nephi 18:7).

17. Omni 1:21 has time counted by "moons." But, the Nephites and Lamanites were Israelites and they never counted time by moons.

18. Mosiah 2:3 says that they followed the law of Moses in offering the firstlings of flocks for burnt offerings. But, firstlings were never used for burnt offerings in the Mosaic law (Deut. 15:19-20). The B. of M. has also intermixed law and grace, not discerning the difference between the Old and New Testament.

19. Jesus Christ was to be born "at Jerusalem," according to Alma 7:10. But Micah 5:2 and Luke 2:4 state that it was in Bethlehem! Alma 7:10 also says that Mary "shall be overshadowed and conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost." But Mormonism teaches that Mary conceived Jesus through relations with God

the Father who is a resurrected and glorified man (see A. of F., pp. 79, 472-473). In the J. of D., Vol. I, pp. 50-51, Brigham Young emphatically declares that "Jesus Christ was not begotten by the Holy Ghost."

20. Alma 13:1 says, "And again my brethren, I would cite your minds forward to the time when the Lord God gave these commandments." Was this time past or still future?

21. Alma 18:26-28 teaches that God is a "Great Spirit." But Mormonism today teaches that God the Father and Jesus Christ have bodies of flesh and bone (D. & C. 130:22).

22. Alma 30:2 says that in the sixteenth year "there began to be continual peace." But Alma 35:13 says of the eighteenth year, "Thus, commenced a war between the Lamanites and the Nephites." So continual peace continued rather briefly!

23. In Alma 46:15, believers are called Christians in 73 B.C. But, Acts 11:26, declares they were first called Christians at Antioch (about 42 A.D.)!

24. Helaman 12:25-26 says, "we read..." and then it quotes John 5:29. Helaman wrote this in 6 B.C., according to the date given in the B. of M. Since the book of John was written nearly 100 years after 6 B.C., how could Helaman quote it before it was written and quote it from the 1611 A.D. King James Version Bible? Mormons do not believe there was any contact between Israel and America after Lehi left Jerusalem and that is why they say Jesus had to bring the gospel to America Himself. But, if there was no contact between Israel and America, how did Helaman get the book of John to quote it?

25. Helaman 14:20 and 27 say that darkness covered the whole earth for three days at Jesus' death. Compare that with the three hours mentioned in Matt. 27:45; Mark 15:33; and Luke 23:44.

26. III Nephi 11 says that the great multitude gathered around the temple heard a voice from heaven which caused their bodies to "quake" all over and their hearts to burn. This voice declared not once, but three times, "Behold my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (compare with Matt. 17:5). A Man then descended from heaven before their eyes and declared He was Jesus Christ. Then the great multitude (not just doubting Thomas) came "one by one until they had all gone forth" to feel His hands, feet, and wounded side. In III Nephi 28:21-22, Daniel's experience in the lion's den and the three Hebrew children's experience in the fiery furnace were also "outdone" by the three Nephites. These and other Bible stories are "enlarged" in the B. of M.

27. The B. of M. people who spoke "Reformed Egyptian" not only used the French word "adieu" but also used the Greek words Alpha and Omega in III Nephi 9:18 and raca in III Nephi 12:22, which is Greek from Aramaic.

28. III Nephi 12:2 and Moroni 8:11 say sins are remitted by baptism, but D. & C. 20:37 declares that remission of sins is a qualification for baptism (II Tim. 2:13)!

29. In IV Nephi 1:18 and 22, one generation is equivalent to one hundred years. That concept is foreign to both the Bible and recorded history.

30. Ether 2:3 mentions honey bees among living things that the Jaredites brought to America when they left the tower of Babel. But, archaeologists say honey bees were brought to America by the Spanish explorers after Columbus discovered America!.

31. In Ether 2:16 to 3:6, Jared's brother is instructed by the Lord to build eight barges in which to travel to America. Under God's direction they are made "tight like unto a dish" and "the length of a tree" (v. 17). Because they are air-tight without windows or light, Jared's brother questions God about how to get air inside the barge. God answered, "Make a hole in the top and also in the bottom; and when thou shalt suffer for air thou shalt unstop the hole and receive air. And if it be so that the water come in upon thee, behold, ye shall stop the hole, that ye may not perish in the flood" (v. 20). The Lord did not know whether water would come into the boat with holes in both the top and bottom, so He said if it does, then plug it up! God also needed help in solving the lack of light in the barges, so He asked Jared's brother, "What will ye that I should do that ye may have light in your vessels?" (2:23). Jared's brother told the Lord to make two stones to shine in each barge's interior. Even though Jared's brother also asked, "Whither shall we steer?" (2:19), no provision was made so they could see out of the barges to steer them. Did the barges navigate themselves? Notice what power moved the barges: "The Lord God caused that there should be a furious wind blow upon the face of the waters toward the promised land - and this wind did never cease to blow. Thus, they were driven forth, three hundred and forty and four days" (Ether 6:5, 8, 11). At only three knots per hour they would have traveled farther than the circumference of the earth in 344 days! That constant, furious wind blew them very slowly!

32. Ether 6:7 indicates that the Jaredites knew about Noah. But, Moses wrote about Noah long after Jared left the Tower of Babel for America. Since there was no contact between the old world and the new world how did the Jaredites know about Noah?

33. Ether 7:9 says that steel was melted out of a hill and breakable windows are mentioned in Ether 2:23. But, archaeologists claim that steel and glass windows did not exist when the Jaredites left the tower of Babel! Steel is not made by melting it out of a hill either.

34. Ether 11:1-2 says that many prophets predicted extinction of the Jaredites if they did not repent. Later, two rival leaders, Coriantumr and Shiz, led their armies against each other in battle (14:17-31). The text says of Coriantumr, "He saw that there had been slain by the sword nearly two millions of his people... two millions of mighty men, and also their wives and their children" (Ether 15:2). In preparation for the next battle, "they were for the space of four years gathering together the people... with their wives and children - both men, women and children being armed with weapons of war... they did march forth one against another to battle" (15:14-15). After about six days of battle, there remained only "fifty and two of the people of Coriantumr, and sixty and nine of the people of Shiz" (15:23). After two or three more days, only Coriantumr and Shiz remained, weary and wounded (v. 29). "And it came to pass that when Coriantumr had leaned upon his sword, that he rested a little, he smote off the head of Shiz. And it came to pass that after he had smitten off the head of Shiz, that Shiz raised upon his hands and fell; and after that he had struggled for breath, he died" (15:30-31). Men do not struggle for breath when they are beheaded! Verse 32 concludes the story saying, "Coriantumr fell to the earth, and became as if he had no life." This carnage took place at the hill Ramah or Cummorah by Joseph Smith's home near Palmyra, New York (Ether 15:11). Mormon 6:11-15 and 8:2-3 tell of another great battle centuries later at the same hill when all of the Nephites were killed. That left only the dark-skinned Lamanites to be found by Columbus upon his arrival in America. Archaeologists have never found any evidence of such gigantic battles at "Hill Cummorah."

Changes in the Book of Mormon

Devout Mormons have often tried to defend the B. of M. by challenging non-Mormons to try to write a book of scripture like it. They have listed thirty ways such a book must be like the B. of M. But, most of their claims for the B. of M. are not valid. For example, they claim, "The first edition as you first dictate it to your secretary must stand forever." The Mormon who made that claim apparently did not know that there have been more than 4,000 changes in the B. of M. since the first edition! In the 1830 edition of the B. of M., notice:

1. Joseph Smith claimed to be the author on both the title page and in the preface. The title page now says "translator" and there is no preface.
2. I Nephi 11:18 said, "Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is the mother of God." Now it says, "...Mother of the Son of God."
3. I Nephi 11:21 said, "Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Eternal Father!" Now it says, "...even the Son of the Eternal Father."
4. I Nephi 11:32 said, "And I looked and beheld the Lamb of God, that he was taken by the people; yea, the everlasting God was judged of the world." Now it says, "yea, the Son of the everlasting God was judged of the world."
5. I Nephi 13:40 said, "...and shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people, that the Lamb of God is the Eternal Father, and the Savior of the World." Now it says, "...that the Lamb of God is the Son of the Eternal Father."
6. I Nephi 20:1 originally read exactly like Is. 48:1 in the King James Bible. Now it reads, "...out of the waters of Judah or out of the waters of baptism." Apostle Mark E. Petersen said, "A direct reference to baptism was plainly deleted from Isaiah 48:1" (As Translated Correctly, p. 14). Petersen was attempting to show how the B. of M. helped correct errors in the Bible, but he picked a very poor example because it is the B. of M. that has been changed! Neither the Hebrew text of Is. 48:1 nor the original B. of M. support the present reading of I Nephi 20:1. Even as late as the 1888 edition of the B. of M., that phrase was not in the text.
7. Alma 46:19 said, "He went forth among the people, waving the rent of his garment in the air, that all might see the writing which he wrote upon the rent." Now it says, "...waving the rent part of his garment in the air that all might see the writing which he had written upon the rent part." God's English in 1830 was about like Joseph Smith's!
8. Mosiah 21:28 said, "King Benjamin had a gift from God -." Now it reads, "King Mosiah had a gift from God." Dr. Sidney B. Sperry of Brigham Young University said that "the reading King Benjamin is an out-and-out error, because the King had been dead for some time" (The Problems of the Book of Mormon, p. 203). He blamed the error on Mormon and the gold plates, and said this was "another human error that Joseph Smith was glad to correct." "King Benjamin" in Ether 4:1 was also changed to "King Mosiah." Since the gold plates are not available and there isn't one single copy of them in the original "Reformed Egyptian" language, there is no way to check Sperry's claim that this was Mormon's error. But, if the B. of M. was "translated" by the gift and power of God as LDS claim, why didn't God correct this "error" when the first B. of M. was published? And are there other errors in the B. of M. that still need to be corrected? More changes were made in the B. of M. in 1981 after Sperry wrote his book.

9. Alma 29:4 declares, "I had not ought to harrow up in my desires, the firm decree of a just God, for I know that he granteth unto men according to their desires, whether it be unto death or unto life; yea, I know that he alloteth unto men, yea, decreeth unto them decrees which are unalterable, according to their wills, whether it be unto salvation or unto destruction." From the second edition until 1981, the italicized words were omitted. It then read, "I ought not to harrow up in my desires - according to their desires.... yea I know that he alloteth unto men according to their wills, whether they be unto salvation or unto destruction."

That doctrinal change made it agree with D. & C. 56:4-5, which says, "Wherefore I, the Lord command and revoke, as it seemeth me good; and all this to be answered upon the heads of the rebellious, saith the Lord. Wherefore, I revoke the commandment which was given unto my servants Thomas B. Marsh and Ezra Thayre, and give a new commandment unto my servant Thomas..." Since those italicized words were put back into Alma 29:4 in 1981, the contradiction of unalterable decrees that can be revoked is again in LDS scripture!

10. Alma 37:21 and 24 originally mentioned the use of "directors." Now it says "interpreters." The "interpreters" in the B. of M. were used to interpret languages while the "director" was a ball which functioned like a compass.

There are many other changes that affect doctrine and history as well as grammar in the B. of M. But, President Joseph Fielding Smith, the tenth Prophet of the LDS Church, wrote, "During the past week or two I have received a number of letters from different parts of the United States written by people, some of whom at least are a little concerned because they have been approached by enemies of the [LDS] Church and enemies of the Book of Mormon, who had made the statement that there have been one or two or more thousand changes in the Book of Mormon since the first edition was published. Well, of course, there is no truth in that statement - there was no change of doctrine" (Improvement Era, December, 1961, pp. 924-925).

Anyone can compare the first edition with the current edition and see many changes - including doctrinal changes. Copies of the 1830 first edition are available because the LDS-owned Deseret Book Company published a replica of it in 1980 to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the LDS Church. Utah Lighthouse Ministry (see bibliography) also sells two reprints of the 1830 B. of M. One is an LDS publication entitled Joseph Smith Begins His Work, Vol. I, and the other is 3913 Changes in the Book of Mormon.

Yet, Joseph Smith said that he and the three witnesses of the B. of M. heard a voice from out of the bright light above them, saying, "these plates have been revealed by the power of God, and they have been translated by the power of God. The translation of them which you have seen is correct and I command you to bear record of what you now see and hear" (D.H.C., Vol. I, pp. 54-55). Although the voice is not identified, the reader is left with the impression that it had to be the Lord since He commanded Joseph and the others to testify of what they saw and heard. The translation they saw was the one published in 1830, so why was it changed? Did God decide it wasn't as good as He said it was? Or can men improve on what God did?

David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses of the B. of M., wrote:

I will now give you a description of the manner in which the Book of Mormon was translated... Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the

darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing, one character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principle scribe, and when it was written down and repeated to brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear. Thus, the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God, and not by any power of man (An Address to All Believers in Christ, p.12).

Notice that Joseph read the English interpretation, but God was the translator! Joseph did not even have to look at the gold plates! No wonder he called the B. of M. the "most correct of any book on earth" (T. of P.J.S., p.194). Martin Harris, another one of the three witnesses, also claimed that the B. of M. was translated this way (Myth of the Manuscript Found, 1883 edition, p. 91).

But, critics have pointed out so many grammatical errors in the first edition of the B. of M. that LDS scholars were embarrassed to attribute such poor language to God. Finally, Apostle B.H. Roberts wrote, "Are these flagrant errors in grammar chargeable to the Lord? To say so is to invite ridicule. The thoughts, the doctrines are well enough; but the awkward, ungrammatical expression of the thoughts is doubtless the result of the translator's imperfect knowledge of the English language - that old theory cannot be successfully maintained; that is; the Urim and Thummim did the translating, the Prophet, nothing beyond repeating what he saw reflected in that instrument" (Defense of the Faith, pp. 278-279, 295, 306-308).

This is the view held by most Mormons today. Dr. Sidney B. Sperry of Brigham Young University, declared, "The writer happens to know that Dr. [James] Talmage was a stickler for good English and a close student of the Book of Mormon. He knew as well as anyone the imperfections of the literary dress of the First Edition of the Nephite record and took a prominent part in correcting many of them in a later edition of the work (1920)" (The Problems of the Book of Mormon, p. 190). Since one of the titles of every LDS President is also "translator," why didn't Joseph Smith or one of his successors make the corrections by divine power? Talmage was not one of the LDS Presidents and therefore did not have either the title or divine power of "translator."

Very few Mormons know that the B. of M. has been changed, and those who do usually claim that the only changes were additions of chapters, verses, and punctuation. Yet, as noted, changes in doctrine, history, and grammar were also made.

Book of Mormon Clarifies Doctrine

William A. Morton wrote in an LDS pamphlet, "Now, once we become thoroughly convinced that the Book of Mormon is true, it will, as I have said solve any theological problem that may confront us. Do we want knowledge concerning God, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost? We can get it in the Book of Mormon. Would we know concerning the pre-existence of spirits - the fall of man and the atonement - the principles and ordinances of the Gospel of Christ - the state in which spirits of men live between the time of death and the resurrection - we can find it in the Book of Mormon" (Why I Believe the Book of Mormon to be the Word of God, pp. 4-5).

But, the B. of M. does not solve the theological issues Morton mentioned! It either contradicts those LDS doctrines or it says nothing at all about them! For example:

1. LDS teach that God the Father has a tangible body of flesh and bones (D. & C. 130:22). But, Alma 18:26-28 in the B. of M. says God is "a Great Spirit."

2. LDS teach that Christ was born of Mary and "an immortal, or resurrected and glorified Father" God (A. of F., pp. 472-473). But Alma 7:10 in the B. of M. says that Mary was "overshadowed and conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost."

3. LDS believe that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are three different Gods (T. of P.J.S., p. 370). But II Nephi 31:21 in the B. of M. says that these three are one God!

4. LDS believe that men can become gods and that God was once a man (A. of F., p.430). But, Mormon 9:9 and 19 in the B. of M. say, "God is the same yesterday, today, and forever - an unchangeable being." The B. of M. never says that God was once a man or that men can become gods.

5. LDS believe there are innumerable gods (P. of G.P. Abraham 4-5). But in Alma 11:26-31 in the B. of M., Amulek claims an angel told him there was only one God! The B. of M. teaches only one God.!

6. LDS Prophet Joseph Fielding Smith wrote, "I never speak of the part Eve took in the fall as a sin, nor do I accuse Adam of a sin (D. of S., Vol. I, p. 114). But Mosiah 3:19 in the B. of M. says, "For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam, and will be, forever and ever, unless he yields to the enticings of the Holy Spirit..." Isn't an enemy of God guilty of sin? II Nephi 2:21 also says, " All men... were lost because of the transgression of their parents" (Adam and Eve).

7. Milton R. Hunter wrote, "The atoning blood of the man of Galilee washes away the sins of all mortals who through faith, repentance, and baptism, and through living every other Gospel principle to the best of their ability, have done everything within their power to bring about their own redemption" (G.T.A., p. 178).

But, Mosiah 4:2-3 in the B. of M. shows that all the people who cried, "O have mercy, and apply the atoning blood of Christ that we may receive forgiveness of our sins - received a remission of their sins" without baptism or any other personal effort being put forth! Verse 8 says that there are no other conditions whereby man can be saved. Thus, the B. of M. does not solve nor clarify LDS doctrine.

On other important LDS doctrines, such as the pre-existence of spirits, the B. of M. says nothing at all (except pertaining to Christ and Satan). Nor does the B. of M. say anything about the great LDS doctrines of eternal progression, eternal intelligences, authority or priesthood necessary to act for God, dark skinned individuals having dark skin because they were not valiant in pre-existence and therefore cursed as to the LDS Priesthood (until 1978), genealogies, baptism for the dead, celestial marriage, wearing of sacred underwear, three heavens, a temporary hell, men becoming gods or that God was once a man, a plurality of gods, and so on. Yet, the B. of M. is repeatedly called the "fulness of the everlasting gospel" (D. & C. 20:9; 27:5; 42:12). Thus, these doctrines cannot be part of the "fulness of the gospel," or else "fulness" does not mean "fulness"!

The B. of M. is called the "fulness of the gospel" even though only one-third of the "gold plates" were translated by Joseph Smith (J. of D., Vol.III, p. 347). Did God inspire men to keep a sacred record which was two-thirds irrelevant? Even the prophet Mormon said in III Nephi 26:6-8, "And now there cannot be written in this book even a hundredth part of the things which Jesus did teach unto the people. But behold the plates of Nephi do contain the more part of the things which He taught the people. And these things have I written, which are a lesser part of the things He taught the people."

Notice the 99/100 of what Jesus taught was not recorded on all the gold plates abridged by Mormon (vs. 11). If this is true, could one-third of the plates translated into the B. of M. contain the "fulness of the

gospel"?

The B. of M. gives no new information concerning Christ or His gospel - except that He personally came to America to preach the gospel after telling His disciples "go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). If there is no new information in the B. of M., why do we need it? But if it does contain a new or different gospel, it falls under the curse of Gal. 1:8-9! Thus, if the Bible is the word of God, there is no need for the B. of M.

EXTERNAL EVIDENCE FOR THE BOOK OF MORMON

Translation Time

Joseph Smith began to translate the B. of M. on April 12, 1828, with Martin Harris acting as scribe (D.H.C., Vol. I, pp. 20-21). They worked until June 14, 1828, when Harris took the translation home with him. Somehow it disappeared and has never been found. Many assume that Harris' wife destroyed the translation because she did not want him to invest in it. Smith kept no copy and claimed if he re-translated the same section his enemies would alter the missing copy, and then they would produce it after he had re-translated that section in order to prove he could not re-translate it exactly as before. But, an altered copy could easily be detected, so this could have been an excellent opportunity for Smith to prove the book was really being translated by the gift and power of God!

Furthermore, Harris had already taken a copy of some of the "caractors" found on the gold plates to Professor Anthon, who "stated that the translation was correct," according to the LDS story. In order for Anthon to pronounce Smith's translation correct, he had to be able to read the original. Thus, if the translation taken home by Harris had been altered, Professor Anthon should have been able to verify the correct copy. Professor Anthon, however, also wrote about Harris' visit, and called the "gold plates" story a hoax to cheat Harris out of his money (letter to E.D. Howe, a Painsville, Ohio, newspaper editor).

Instead of re-translating the 116 pages lost by Harris, Smith translated an "abridgment" of the same material. It was certainly convenient for Smith that there was an abridgment of exactly the same material Harris had lost! This abridgment is mentioned in The Words of Mormon 1:3-6.

Smith began to translate this abridgment of the B. of M. on April 7, 1829, with Oliver Cowdery, one of the three witnesses of the B. of M., acting as scribe (D.H.C., Vol. I, p. 32). By May 15, 1829, 38 days later, he had completed 69 pages. That was excellent speed considering the fact that only about six pages of the King James Bible had been copied in that section. But, the Wayne County, New York, records show that the B. of M. was registered on June 11, 1829. If a week is allowed to process the application (and it would be difficult to do it in less time), then Smith translated the remaining 519 pages in 20 days! Just to hand-copy p. 69 to p. 588 in the original 1830 B. of M. would be an exhausting, if not impossible job in 20 days!

But, David Whitmer, Martin Harris, and others claimed that Joseph Smith read God's translation to Cowdery who wrote it down and then read it back to check it - and that takes time! Of course, if LDS reject that method, as B.H. Roberts and others have, then they are left with the method mentioned in D. & C. 9:7-10 which was to "study it out in your mind," and if the translation was correct, "your bosom shall burn," otherwise "you shall have stupor of thought." If Smith translated this way it may explain the poor grammar in the 1830 B. of M. But, translating that way would be so time consuming that it would be impossible to translate 519 pages in 20 days!

Something must have happened between Smith's translation of the 116 pages that Harris lost and when he translated the entire B. of M. It took 63 days to translate the 116 pages, but only 58 days to translate all 588 pages! The translating was done by the gift and power of God both times, but the last time it operated five times faster! Apparently there were no more abridgments of the B. of M., since Joseph had a duplicate copy made of the entire manuscript prior to taking it to the printer (D.H.C., Vol. I, p. 75).

Origin of the Book of Mormon

William Morton, an LDS writer, said that there are "two theories respecting the origin of the Book of Mormon. One of these is the Solomon Spaulding theory... and the other theory - the one held and advocated by the Church" (Why I Believe the Book of Mormon to Be the Word of God, pp. 5-6).

In two brief paragraphs, he ridicules the Spaulding theory, and he spends the rest of his time supporting the LDS theory. But, Mr. Morton was misinformed when he said that anti-Mormon writers claimed Spaulding wrote the B. of M. They usually claim Spaulding wrote a book entitled Manuscript Found which Sidney Rigdon took from a print shop. Sidney and Joseph together used some of the ideas and much of the language from that book to write the B. of M. according to that theory.

One of Spaulding's stories, entitled "Manuscript Story" was found in 1884 and is now in Oberlin College in Ohio. Morton claims it bears no resemblance to the B. of M., but there are ideas in it that could have inspired Smith to write the B. of M. Furthermore, Spaulding's daughter claimed that her father wrote "other romances," so it is wrong to assume that the only book he wrote is in Oberlin College (The Myth of the Manuscript Found, p. 104). Since Spaulding's Manuscript Found has not been found, the Spaulding theory is hard to prove. However, a number of people testified that they heard Spaulding read Manuscript Found and they saw a resemblance to the B. of M. Yet, that is not the only possible origin for the B. of M. other than Smith's story.

Joseph could have been inspired to write the B. of M. by Ethan Smith's View of the Hebrews, which was published near Joseph's home in 1823 and enlarged in 1825. Like the B. of M., it claims that Native Americans were descendants of Israelites. Shortly before he died, Mormon historian B. H. Roberts compiled a list of parallels between the B. of M. and View of the Hebrews. Hal Hougey published it with his own observations under the title A Parallel - The Basis of the Book of Mormon. Also, on October 4 and 11, 1825, the Wayne Sentinel newspaper in Palmyra, New York, published M. M. Noah's ideas of how the Native Americans descended from the Israelites. On August 11, 1826, those who were delinquent in paying for their subscription for the newspaper were listed in that paper. It showed that Joseph Smith, Sr., owed \$5.60, which means that articles claiming that Native Americans descended from Israelites were in the Smith's home long before the B. of M. was published with that concept!

Joseph Smith's mother, Lucy Mack Smith, tells how Joseph entertained his family when he was only eighteen, "During our evening conversations, Joseph... would describe the ancient inhabitants of this continent, their dress, mode of traveling, and the animals upon which they rode; their cities, their buildings, with every particular; their mode of warfare; and also their religious worship. This he would do with ease, seemingly, as if he had spent his whole life among them" (History of Joseph Smith by His Mother, 1954 edition, pp. 82-83).

Obviously, Joseph had a good imagination. The same kind of descriptions appear in the B. of M., so, with material like View of the Hebrews, and M. M. Noah's articles to inspire him, Joseph could have easily written the B. of M. Numerous other books and articles were available to Joseph which claimed the Native

Americans were part of the lost ten tribes or descendants of Israel. Contrary to LDS claims, that idea was not unique to Joseph Smith, but rather it was a leading concept in Joseph's time!

LDS often claim that an unlearned person like Joseph Smith could not write a book like the B. of M. But, illiterate Mohammed compiled the "God-given" Koran, the sacred scripture of several hundred million Muslims. Many other books such as The Book of Jasher, The Lost Books of the Bible, and The Forgotten Books of Eden sound a lot like scripture, so it is not impossible to write books that have a scriptural sound. Thus, the real question about the B. of M. is whether or not it was given by God. If it was not, it makes little difference who wrote it!

The Witnesses of the Book of Mormon

In the front of every B. of M. appears, "The Testimony of Three Witnesses" with the names of Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris printed under it. But, that "testimony" never appears with their signatures! Replicas of the Declaration of Independence with signatures are available and that was signed long before this "testimony," so why is it not published with their signatures? Has what they signed been altered? II Nephi 27:12-13 in the B. of M. had predicted, "Wherefore, at that day when the book shall be delivered unto the man of whom I have spoken, the book shall be hid from the eyes of the world, that the eyes of none shall behold it save it be that the three witnesses shall behold it by the power of God, besides him to whom the book shall be delivered. And there is none other which shall view it, save it be a few according to the will of God." Why does it say "none shall behold it save it be the three witnesses" if there were going to be a "few others" too! This will be discussed in more detail later with the "Eight Witnesses."

II Nephi 11:3 and Ether 5:2-4 in the B. of M. also refer to the three witnesses. D. & C. 5:11-15 speaks of the three witnesses, and says in v. 14, "to none else will I grant this power to receive this testimony."

Since Joseph said he was translating the B. of M. at the Whitmer home (D.H.C., Vol. I, pp. 48-49), the gold plates must have been there (if they existed). Does it make sense for Smith to take the three witnesses from the Whitmer home and go into the woods to pray that they might see the plates (D.H.C., Vol. I, p. 54)? The three witnesses could not see the actual plates in the woods if they were in the Whitmer home! If they saw anything at all it was a "vision" as Joseph said in the D.H.C., Vol. I, p. 55, "the same vision was opened to our (Martin Harris' and Joseph's) view, at least it was again opened to me." D. & C. 17:5 also says they saw the plates "by faith" even as Harris later testified.

While Joseph was still "translating" the B. of M., the Lord told him to have the three witnesses sign "The Testimony of Three Witnesses" in the front of the B. of M. (D.H.C. Vol. I, pp. 57 & 59, D&C 17:5-6). It says the witnesses saw the plates, and "we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God." They declared, "We know" because "his (God's) voice hath declared it unto us." They could not testify that they read and checked the translation, so they testified "an angel" showed them the plates "by the power of God," and God's voice told them the translation was true.

But, all three witnesses testified of other visions and heavenly messages which the LDS Church rejects. For example, David Whitmer said, "In June, 1838, God spoke to me again by His own voice from the heavens and told me to 'separate myself from among the Latter Day Saints' " (An Address to All Believers in Christ, p. 27). All three witnesses apostatized from the LDS Church, and Joseph Smith and other LDS leaders accused them of lying, stealing, cheating, counterfeiting, defrauding, and persecuting the LDS (Times and Seasons, Vol. I, pp. 22-23, 81). Yet, LDS Apostle John Widtsoe refers to the three witnesses,

as well as the other eight, as men of "spotless reputation" (Joseph Smith - Seeker After Truth, pp. 338-339). If the three witnesses were of "spotless reputation" prior to their involvement in Mormonism, how did they become so corrupt while involved with the "one true Church?"

Devout LDS claim that none of the three witnesses ever denied their testimony. But, the official Mormon publication Times and Seasons, Vol. II, p. 482, says that Oliver Cowdery did deny the B. of M., even though LDS claim Oliver returned to the LDS Church. The records show that he and his family joined the Methodist Protestant Church in Tiffin, Ohio, in about 1841, where Oliver served as secretary. When he died in 1850, he was buried by a Methodist minister, John Sexsmith, in Richmond, Missouri.

David Whitmer belonged to at least three of the Mormon splinter groups at different times, but he died still rejecting the LDS Church and its priesthood.

Martin Harris had been a member of at least five religious groups prior to becoming a Mormon, and he joined several others after he left Mormonism. Brigham Young's brother, Phineas, wrote to Brigham on December 31, 1841, from Kirtland, Ohio, saying, "There are in this place all kinds of teaching; Martin Harris is a firm believer in Shakerism, says his testimony is greater than it was for the B. of M." (Martin Harris - Witness and Benefactor of the Book of Mormon, 1955, p. 52).

More than sixty people testified concerning the Sacred Roll and Book of Shakerism, which taught "Christ has made His second appearance on earth, in a chosen female known by the name of Ann Lee." Martin Harris could not believe both that and the D. & C. 49:22, which says, "the Son of Man cometh not in the form of a woman." In his old age, Harris rejoined the LDS Church and was brought to Utah where he died. But, there is no record of Harris ever renouncing his "greater" testimony for Shakerism. Therefore, just because there is no record of the witnesses of the B. of M. renouncing their testimony about the B. of M. that does not prove that they still believed it! If they truly believed it, why did they all apostatize from the LDS church?

The testimony of eight other witnesses also appears in the front of all copies of the B. of M. They claim Joseph Smith showed them the gold plates which had "the appearance of ancient work, and of curious workmanship." But, they were not archaeologists nor linguists, so they could not verify the age or the translation of the plates. Many feel that the witnesses did see some old-looking plates, but that Joseph Smith either made them or had them made. Smith and others later accused Oliver Cowdery of counterfeiting. If he could make counterfeit money, he could also make some phony gold plates. He had been a blacksmith when he was young, so he had ability in that area. The testimony of these eight men was changed after they signed it from "Joseph Smith, Jr. the Author and Proprietor" to "the translator." Such a change also invalidates their testimony.

David Whitmer wrote, "All of the eight witnesses who were then living (except the three Smiths) came out [of the LDS Church]. Peter and Christian Whitmer were dead. Oliver Cowdery came out also" (Address to All Believers in Christ, p. 28). This was in June, 1838. The only ones who remained with Joseph out of the eight witnesses were his father and two brothers.

Apostle James Talmage described the gold plates, saying, "The plates of the B. of M.... were... each about seven inches wide by eight inches long, and in thickness a little less than that of ordinary sheet tin. They were fastened together by three rings running through the plates near one edge; together they formed a book nearly six inches in thickness" (A. of F., p. 262).

Gold weighs 1204.7256 pounds per cubic foot. 7"x 8"x 6"=336 cubic inches or .19444 cubic feet (336 divided by 12 cubed, or 1728). Multiply that by the cubic feet in the gold plates (.19444), and it shows that they weighed about 234.25 pounds! Yet, the testimony of the eight witnesses claims, "We have seen and hefted" the gold plates. And Joseph Smith's mother claimed that he put the plates under one arm and carried them three miles, fighting off the attacks of three robbers at the same time! (Joseph Smith's History By His Mother, 1853 edition, pp. 104-105).

Scientific Evidence for the Book of Mormon

Mormons have published hundreds of books and pamphlets which "prove" the B. of M. One such pamphlet entitled Whence Came The American Indian - America's Ancients Speak From the Dust (Isa. 29:4) begins by saying, "Many Archaeologists agree that: There were two great migrations from Asia to America. The first about 4,000 years ago. The second migration about 600 B.C. They were of the House of Israel. They worshiped one Supreme God. They had a knowledge of early Bible history. They practiced Christianity. They had a knowledge of the Birth and Death of Christ."

But, Dr. Frank H. H. Roberts, Jr., Director of the Bureau of American Ethnology at the Smithsonian Institution in 1963 said in a letter to the author of this book, "The ancestors of the American Indians entered America probably 15,000 years ago and possibly much earlier. It is doubtful if any migrations occurred as late as 600 B.C. There is no evidence whatever of any migration from Israel to America, and likewise no evidence that pre-Columbian Indians had any knowledge of Christianity or the Bible."

Notice that Dr. Roberts contradicted everything in the Mormon pamphlet! Nor have Mormon writers supplied the name and address of a single reputable archaeologist who supports their claims!

Nevertheless, devout Mormons continue to make claims of how the B. of M. has been used as a guide to find ancient ruins in Central and South America. But, the author of this book asked President Joseph Fielding Smith what ancient ruin had been found by using the B. of M. as a guide. In a letter dated March 18, 1966, he replied, "I do not know of any person using the B. of M. as a guide to the discovery of knowledge of these ancestors of the Indian."

For several years, many LDS have made great claims concerning "Stela 5, Izapa" which was found in Chiapas, Mexico, in 1939. In 1941, the Smithsonian Institution and National Geographic Society sent an expedition to study the stone. In a letter to the author of this book, dated May 1, 1963, George Crossette, Chief of Geographic Research at the National Geographic Society, said, "No one associated with our expedition connected this stela in any way with the Book of Mormon." In spite of this, several LDS publications have pictures and comments made by Smithsonian Institute and National Geographic Society which leave the impression that they support the LDS claims.

Mormons like M. Wells Jakeman have published articles in newspapers and periodicals claiming this stone helps prove that the B. of M. is true. LDS usually refer to the stone as "The Lehi Tree of Life Stone," because it supposedly has many similarities to Lehi's vision of the tree of life in I Nephi 8 in the B. of M. Some newspaper articles even claim that the names Lehi, Sariah, and Nephi are on three name glyphs on the stone. But, there are no "name glyphs" on the stone at all! George Crossette also said in his letter that the stone is almost a duplicate, in every elaborate detail, of the so called "Chapultepec" stone, of unknown provenience, now in the National Museum of Mexico.

Brigham Young University professors like Dr. John Sorenson and Dr. Hugh Nibley never accepted the "Lehi Tree of Life Stone" theory. Dr. Sorenson even said, "Most LDS literature on Archeology and the B. of M. range from factually and logically unreliable to truly kooky" (Dialogue, Summer 1969, p. 81).

LDS frequently refer to stories of Quetzalcoatl or some "new archaeological discovery" which "proves the B. of M. is true." Thus far, every "proof" has turned out to be a forgery or a biased interpretation of some ancient material. There has never yet been one B. of M. name, event, place, or anything else verified through archaeological discoveries! Often LDS claim that the reason nothing in the B. of M. has been verified by archaeologists is because it has not been around as long as the Bible. But, archaeology is a relatively new science. The Archaeological Institute of America was only incorporated in 1906, long after the B. of M. was published. Thus, there has been just as much opportunity to find archaeological and historical evidence to support the B. of M. as there has the Bible. Numerous Biblical sites have been located by using the Bible as a guide - but no B. of M. site has ever been found by using the B. of M. as a guide! If God is the Author of both, why is that true?

Anthropologists also claim that Native Americans are "most closely related to the peoples of eastern, central and northeastern Asia." Their body structure is quite different from the Israelites, who are Semites. If they are descendants of the Israelites, why is their body structure more like the people of Asia? Five different language stocks form the basis for all Native American languages. Each stock is as unrelated to the other as English is to Japanese. Those five stocks are the base of 169 related languages that still differ as much from each other as Latin does from English. Since the B. of M. indicates that "Reformed Egyptian" was used by everyone in America, where did all these other languages come from?

In their February, 1978, Statement Regarding the Book of Mormon, the Smithsonian Institution said, "Reports of findings of ancient Egyptian, Hebrew, and other Old World Writings in the New World in Pre-Columbian contexts have frequently appeared in newspapers, magazines, and sensational books. None of these claims have stood up to examination by reputable scholars."

On March 14, 1966, the author of this book asked President Joseph Fielding Smith, "Does the Church have any Egyptian or Hebrew writing that was found in America? If so, where may it be seen?" We mentioned LDS apostle James Talmage's statement in which he claimed Hebrew writing had been found in America and "the characters and the language are allied to the most ancient form of Hebrew, and shows none of the vowel signs and terminal letters which were introduced into the Hebrew of the eastern continent after the return of the Jews from Babylonian Captivity" (A. of F., p. 293). Talmage had to have seen that Hebrew writing in order to make such a comparison, so others should be able to see it too. President Smith never answered the questions, instead he urged prayerful reading of the B. of M. so one could gain a testimony that it is true!

It is incredulous to believe that multitudes of Israelites lived in America speaking Egyptian and writing in "Refor

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