

19

GOLD PLATES

WARNINGS & WITNESSES

FOR OUR DAY

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JAREDITE GOLD PLATES WARN NEPHITES

“Now after Mosiah had finished **translating** these records . . . this account did cause the people of Mosiah to mourn exceedingly, yea, they were filled with sorrow; **nevertheless it gave them much knowledge, in the which they did rejoice.**”

Mosiah 28:17-19

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MOSIAH COMMISSIONS SEARCH PARTY

“... [Mosiah] was desirous to know concerning the people who went up to dwell in the land of Lehi-Nephi, or in the city of Lehi-Nephi; for his people had heard nothing from them from the time they left the land of Zarahemla; therefore, they wearied him with their teasings.

“And it came to pass that king Mosiah granted that sixteen of their strong men might go up to the land of Lehi-Nephi, to inquire concerning their brethren.

“And it came to pass that on the morrow they started to go up, having with them one Ammon, he being a strong and mighty man, and a descendant of Zarahemla; and he was also their leader.”

Mosiah 7:1-3

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ZENIFF LEADS EXPEDITION TO RECLAIM LAND

“I, Zeniff, having been taught in all the language of the Nephites, and having had a knowledge of the land of Nephi, or of the land of our fathers’ **first inheritance** . . . And yet, I being over-zealous to **inherit the land of our fathers**, collected as many as were desirous to go up to possess the land, and started again on our journey into the wilderness to go up to the land . . .”

Mosiah 9:1, 3



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LIMHI'S MEN FIND RECORD ON GOLD PLATES

“... I [King Limhi] caused that forty and three of my people should take a journey into the wilderness, that thereby they might find the land of Zarahemla . . . [and they] traveled in a land among many waters, having discovered a land which was covered with bones of men, and of beasts, and was also covered with ruins of buildings of every kind . . . And for a **testimony** that the things that they had said are true they have brought **twenty-four plates** which are **filled** with **engravings**, and they are of **pure gold**. . . . and there is **no one** in the land that is able to **interpret** the language or the engravings that are on the plates.”

Mosiah 8:7-9, 11

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**TRANSLATION OF THE JAREDITE GOLD PLATES
COMPARED WITH THE
TRANSLATION OF THE NEPHITE GOLD PLATES**

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GEOGRAPHY PARALLELS

Jaredite Gold Plates	Nephite Gold Plates
Jaredites lived on the American continent.	Nephites lived on the American continent.
Jaredite nation was as “numerous as the hosts of Israel.” (Mosiah 8:8)	Nephite civilization was “as numerous almost, as it were the sand of the sea.” (Mormon 1:7)
Jaredite record was discovered in “. . . a land which was covered with bones of men, and of beasts” (Mosiah 8:8)	Early American settlers recorded evidence of decayed human bones in United States heartland.
Jaredite record was discovered in land “among many waters.” (Mosiah 8:8)	Nephite record was discovered in upstate New York near Lake Ontario and other surrounding lakes including Canandaigua, Seneca, and Cayuga.

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RECORD PARALLELS

Jaredite Gold Plates	Nephite Gold Plates
Jaredite record was hid up by a lone witness and survivor of Jaredite destruction, Ether. (Ether 15:33)	Nephite record was hid up by a lone witness and survivor of Nephite destruction, Moroni. (Mormon 8:3-4)
Jaredite record required someone who could interpret languages. (Mosiah 8:11-12)	Interpretation of Nephite record was locked, except to someone who could interpret. (2 Nephi 27:7-20, Book of Mormon Title Page, paragraph 1, Ether 5:1)



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TRANSLATION PROCESS PARALLELS

Jaredite Gold Plates	Nephite Gold Plates
Jaredite plates are translated with Urim & Thummim by seer, Mosiah. (Mosiah 28:13-16, Mosiah 8:13)	Nephite plates are translated with Urim & Thummim by seer, Joseph Smith. (Joseph Smith—History 1:35)
Mosiah’s gift to translate “is a gift from God. . . . [a] high gift from God. . . . a gift which is greater can no man have” (Mosiah 8:13-16)	“Through the medium of the Urim and Thummim I translated the record by the gift, and power of God.” (Joseph Smith, Times and Seasons 3, (March 1, 1842): 707)
Mosiah’s Urim & Thummim described as “two stones which were fastened into the two rims of a bow.” (Mosiah 28:13)	Joseph Smith received Mosiah’s Urim & Thummim, described as “two stones in silver bows.” (Joseph Smith History 1:35) “a curious instrument which the ancients called ‘Urim and Thummim,’ [c]onsisted of two transparent stones set in the rim of a bow fastened to a breastplate.” (Joseph Smith, Elders' Journal 1 (July 1838) 42-43)

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JOSEPH SMITH USES JAREDITE-NEPHITE URIM & THUMMIM TO TRANSLATE

“That the **Urim and Thummim**, or two stones, **given** to the **Brother of Jared** were those in the **possession** of **Mosiah** appears evident from Book of Mormon teachings. . . . At the command of the Lord, however, Moroni also sealed up the greater things in this vision and also the interpreters—which were the **same ‘two stones’** had by the Brother of Jared . . . Joseph Smith **received** with the breastplate and the plates of the Book of Mormon, the **Urim and Thummim**, which were hid up by Moroni to come forth in the last days as a **means** by which the ancient record might be **translated**, which Urim and Thummim were given to the Brother of Jared. . . . These stones, the Urim and Thummim which were given to the Brother of Jared, were **preserved** for this **very purpose** of translating the record, both of the **Jaredites** and the **Nephites**.”

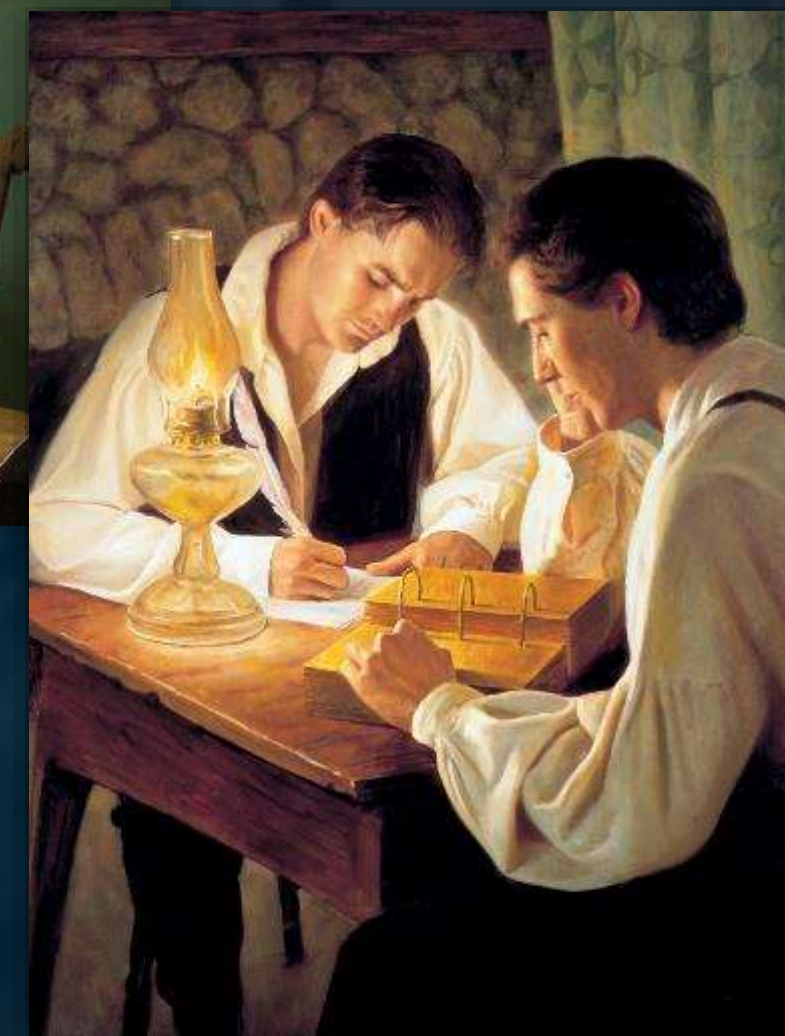
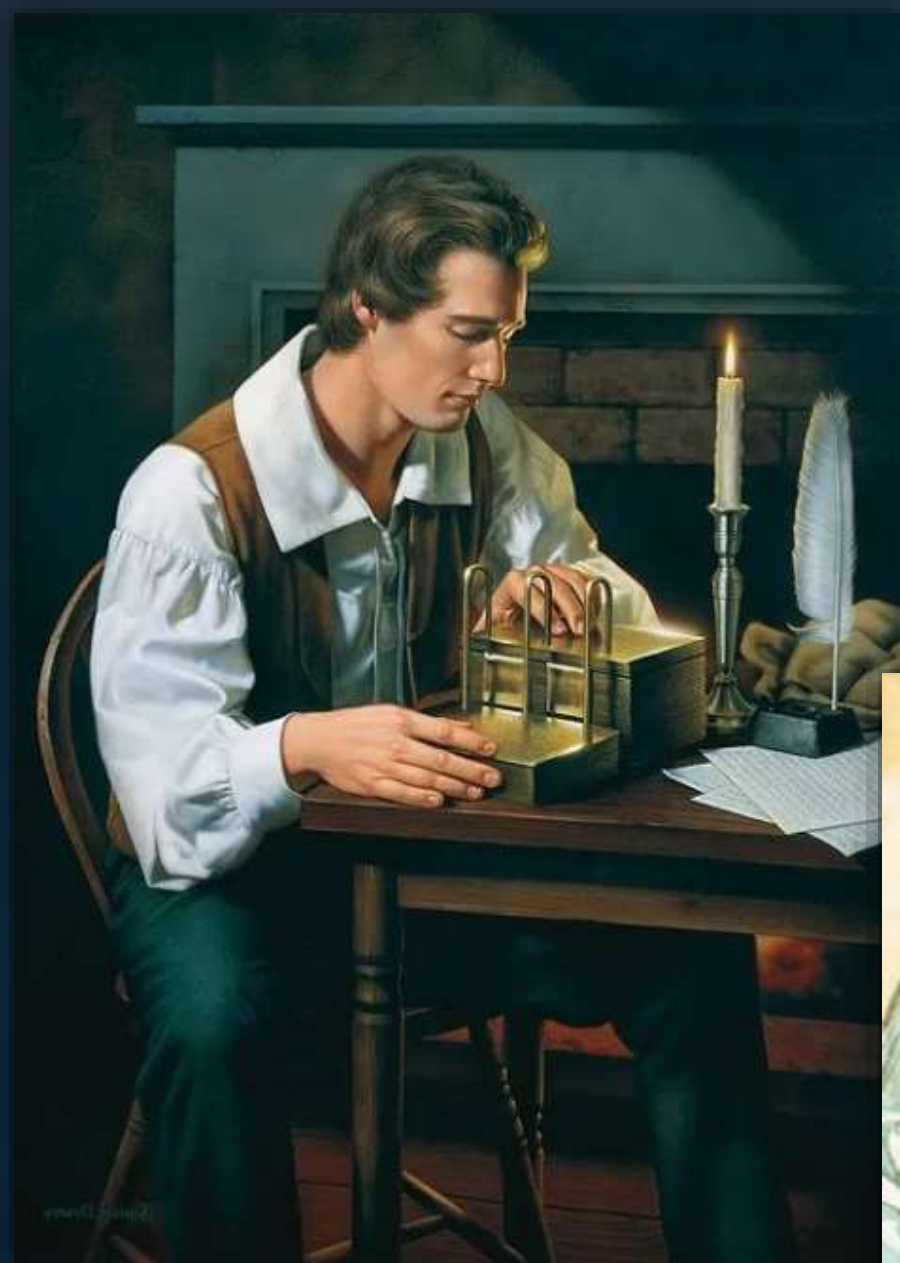
Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation 3:224-226

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TRADITIONAL BOOK OF MORMON TRANSLATION



Traditional artwork or film productions portraying the translation of the Book of Mormon.

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WHAT DID THE URIM & THUMMIM LOOK LIKE?

“With the records was found a curious instrument which the ancients called ‘**Urim and Thummim**,’ which consisted of **two transparent stones set in the rim of a bow** fastened to a breastplate. Through the **medium** of the **Urim and Thummim** I **translated** the record by the gift, and power of God.”



*Joseph Smith, “Church History,” Times and Seasons, March 1, 1842.
Artistic depiction of interpreters (Attribution: David A. Baird/Historical Arts and Castings)*

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“NO AUTHENTIC STATEMENT[S]”

“... there is **no authentic statement** in the history of the Church which **states** that the use of such a stone was made in that translation. The information is all **hearsay**, and personally, **I do not believe that this stone was used for this purpose.**”



Joseph Fielding Smith, Doctrines of Salvation, 3:226

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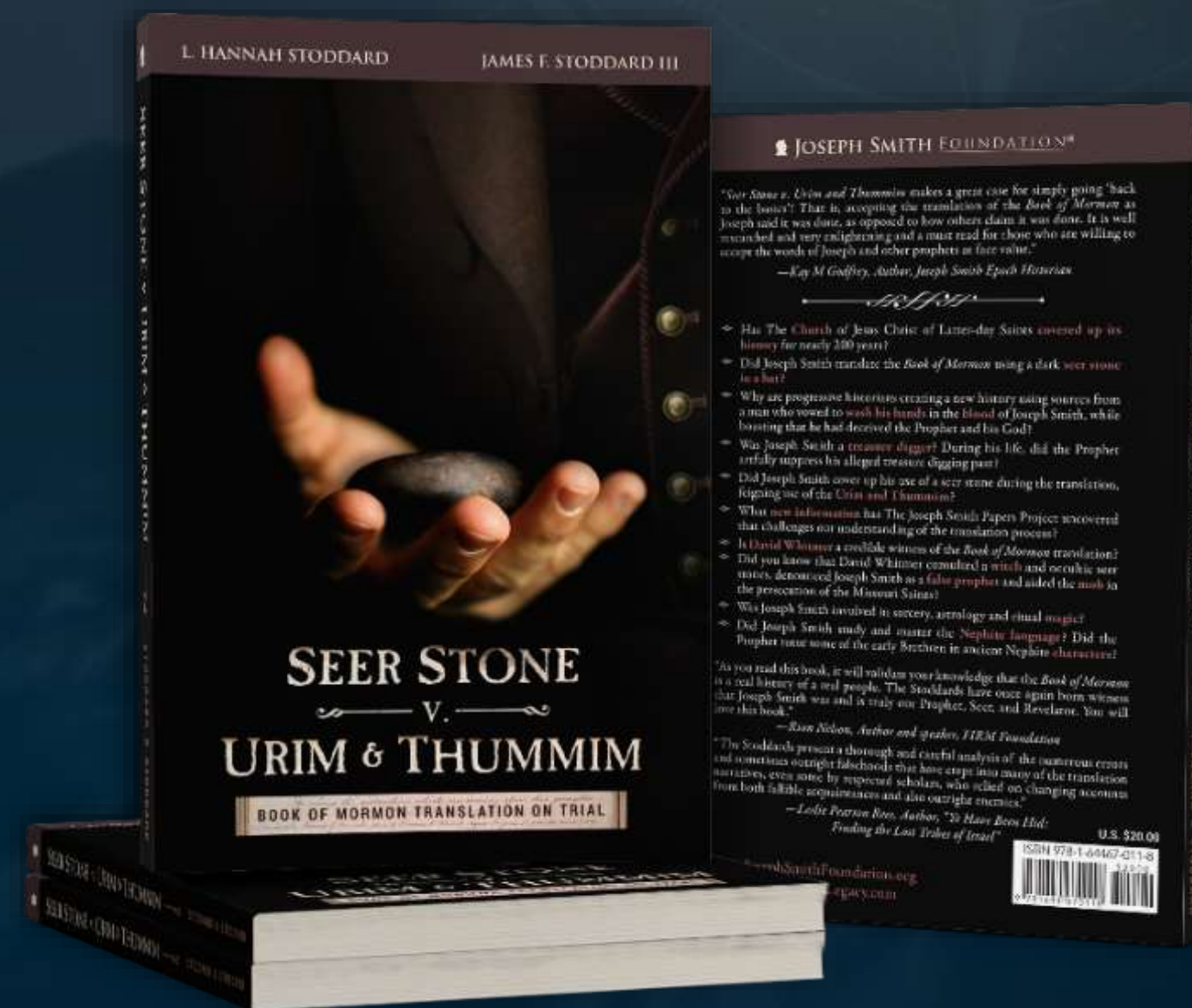
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EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY OF TRANSLATION

- The Lord Jesus Christ (Doctrine & Covenants)
- The Prophet Joseph Smith
- Moroni
- The Brother of Jared
- Oliver Cowdery

= NO seer stone in a hat for translation



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CONCERNS WITH ALLEGED “EYEWITNESSES”

- **Joseph Smith** stated repeatedly he used the **plates** and studied the **characters** on the plates to perform the translation.
- David Whitmer and Martin Harris **never saw** the plates or the Urim & Thummim until *after* the translation was nearly finished and they had their experience to serve as witnesses. Therefore, they were not eyewitnesses to the translation work Joseph Smith described.
- Many individuals claiming to be eyewitnesses of the translation not only contradict Joseph Smith’s testimony, but also **contradict their own statements**, sometimes **multiple** times. This includes David Whitmer, Martin Harris, and Emma Smith.
- Statements promoting the seer stone in a hat came from individuals who were either **anti-Mormons actively fighting** the Church, or men and women in **apostasy** who had **abandoned** the Church.
- Statements **contradict Joseph Smith** and appeared **decades after** the translation of the Book of Mormon occurred.

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WHY DOES TRANSLATION PROCESS MATTER?

- Why would Mormon use precious room on the plates to include numerous details about Mosiah's translation of the Jaredite gold plates?
- Did Mormon foresee the present controversy over Latter-day Saint Church history in our day?
- Was Joseph Smith involved in folk or ritual magic?
- Does virtue, and worthiness impact your work for the Lord?
- Did Joseph Smith's personal character impact the translation of the Book of Mormon?



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SEERSHIP IS GREATEST GIFT IN MORTALITY

“And the king said that a seer is greater than a prophet.

“And Ammon said that a **seer is a revelator and a prophet** also; and a gift which is greater can **no man have**, except he should possess the power of God, which no man can; yet a man may have great power given him from God.

“But a **seer** can **know** of things which are **past**, and also of things which are to **come**, and by them shall **all** things be **revealed**, or, rather, shall secret things be made manifest, and hidden things shall come to light, and things which are not known shall be made known by them, and also things shall be made known by them which otherwise could not be known.”

Mosiah 8:15-17

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JOSEPH SMITH REPUDIATES CLAIMS HE HAD A CAREER IN TREASURE DIGGING

“In the month of October Eighteen hundred and twenty five I hired with an old Gentleman, by name of **Josiah Stoyal** who lived in Chenango County, State of New York. He had heard something of a silver mine having been opened by the Spaniards in Harmony, Susquahanah [sic] County, State of Pennsylvania [sic], and had **previous to my hiring** with him been digging in order if possible to discover the mine. After I went to live with him he took me **among the rest of his hands** to dig for the silver mine, at which I continued to work for nearly a month without success in our undertaking, and **finally I prevailed** with the old gentleman to **cease digging** after it. **Hence** arose the very prevalent story of my having been a money digger.”

Joseph Smith History, 1838–1856, volume A-1, p. 7-8, Joseph Smith Papers; Joseph Smith, "History of Joseph Smith," Times and Seasons 3, no. 13, May 2, 1842.

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URIM & THUMMIM IS A PRIESTHOOD INSTRUMENT

- President Brigham Young taught that usage of the Urim & Thummim is connected to the Aaronic Priesthood and calling of a bishop. (Journal of Discourses 9:86-87)
- Abraham was given Urim & Thummim to be taught astronomy by the Lord. (Abraham 3:1-4)
- May be tied to temple endowment and sacred covenants.



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SYNOPSIS OF JOSEPH SMITH'S TESTIMONY

- Joseph Smith **used** ancient, physical, Nephite **plates** to translate the Book of Mormon. He did **not** leave them **covered** or hiding underneath his bed or elsewhere during translation.
- Joseph Smith **translated** using the Urim and Thummim and not a seer stone. The Urim and Thummim and the seer stone are two **different** artifacts.
- Joseph Smith temporarily lost the Urim and Thummim after the 116 pages were stolen, but the **plates** and the **Urim and Thummim** were later **returned**.
- Moroni and other Nephite prophets once lived. They are legitimate historical figures and the Book of Mormon is an **historical record**. The Jaredite, Nephite, and Lamanite civilizations once existed, and their descendants are still alive today.
- Joseph Smith "**translated**," in the true sense of the word, the Nephite plates.
- Many "false reports" were spread in Joseph Smith's day regarding the translation. These false reports, antagonistic to clear statements made by Joseph Smith, still circulate today and are now heavily incorporated into progressive "new narratives."

*For additional sources, footnotes, and extended historical commentary, please see the book *Seer Stone v. Urim & Thummim: Book of Mormon Translation on Trial*.*

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SEERS SERVE & BECOME “GREAT BENEFIT”

“Thus God has provided a means that man, through **faith**, might work mighty **miracles**; therefore he becometh a **great benefit** to his fellow beings.”



Mosiah 8:18

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GREATNESS OF JOSEPH SMITH

- “Joseph Smith, the Prophet and Seer of the Lord, has done **more, save Jesus** only, for the **salvation** of men in this world, than **any other man** that ever lived in it.” (Doctrine and Covenants 135:3)
- “I am bold to say that, Jesus Christ excepted, **no better man** ever lived or does live upon this earth.” (Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* 9:332)
- “It has been my faith and belief from the time that I was made acquainted with the Gospel that **no greater prophet** than Joseph Smith ever lived on the face of the earth **save Jesus Christ.**” (Wilford Woodruff, *Journal of Discourses* 21:317)



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WITNESSES PARALLELS

Jaredite Gold Plates	Nephite Gold Plates
Physical plates were a witness that the account of Limhi's men was true. (Mosiah 8:9)	Three and Eight Witnesses were shown plates as witness to Book of Mormon. (Ether 5:3, 2 Nephi 27:12, The Testimony of Three Witnesses, The Testimony of Eight Witnesses)
"Witness" of Jaredite plates included swords. (Mosiah 8:9-11)	Witnesses were shown Sword of Laban, found with Nephite plates. (Doctrine & Covenants 17:1)
"Witness" of Jaredite plates included breastplates. (Mosiah 8:9-11)	Witnesses were shown breastplate, found with Nephite plates. (Doctrine & Covenants 17:1)

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PLATES PARALLELS

Jaredite Gold Plates	Nephite Gold Plates
Jaredite Plates were pure gold. (Mosiah 8:9)	Book of Mormon was written on gold plates. (Joseph Smith History 1:34)
Plates contained engravings in an unknown language to anyone alive at the time. (Mosiah 8:11)	Nephite plates contain Reformed Egyptian engravings in an unknown language. (Joseph Smith History 1:64, Mormon 9:32-34)
Jaredite records were of great importance and gave the Nephites “much knowledge.” (Mosiah 28:18)	Book of Mormon was written for our day. (2 Nephi 3:5, 12; numerous testimonies of latter-day prophets)

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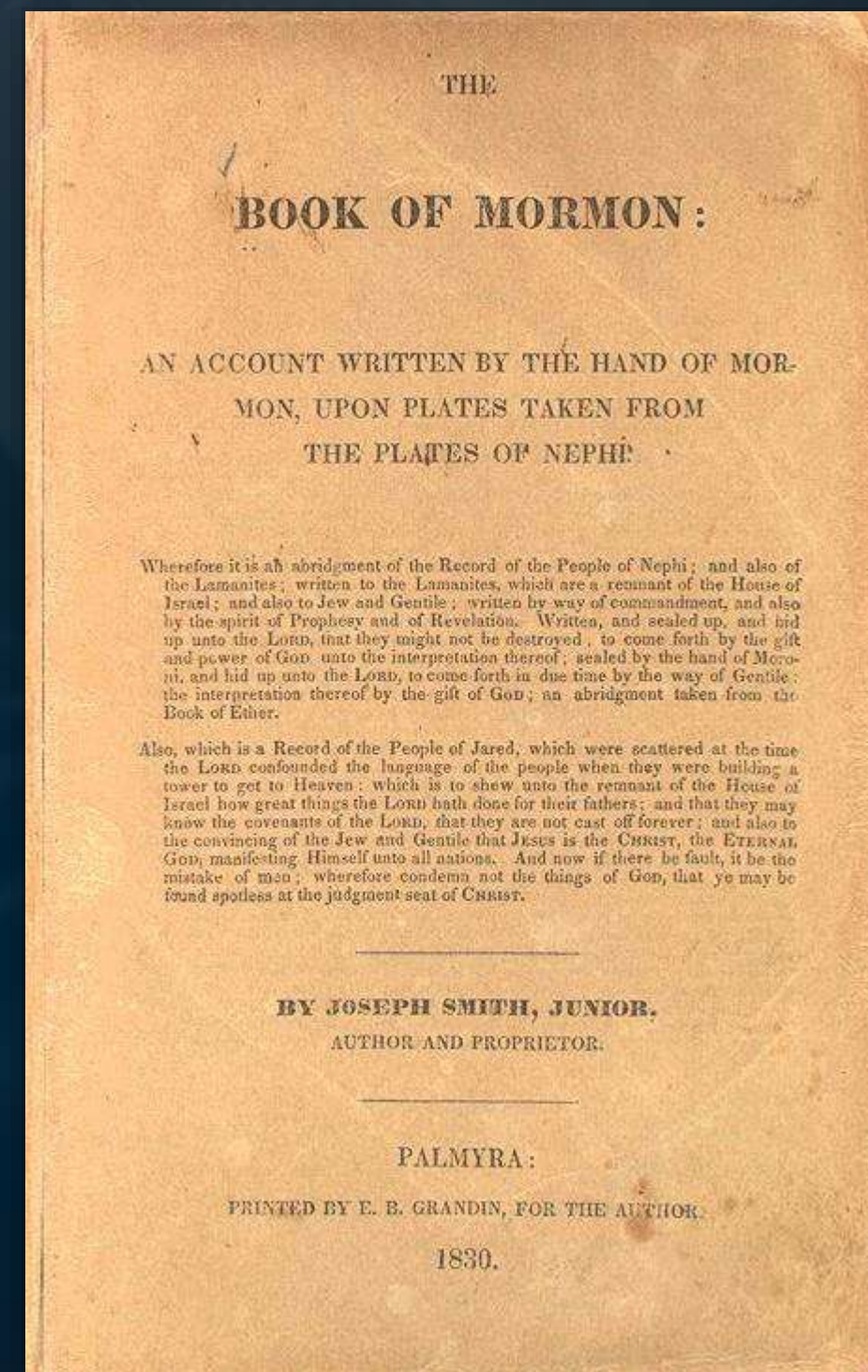
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BOOK OF MORMON REFORMATION

“And thus, if the people of this generation harden not their hearts, I will **work a reformation among them**, and I will put down all lyings, and deceivings, and priestcrafts, and envyings, and strifes, and idolatries, and sorceries, and all manner of iniquities, and I will establish my church, like unto the church which was taught by my disciples in the days of old.”

Doctrine and Covenants 5:5, 1833 version

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PURPOSE OF RECORD PARALLELS

Jaredite Gold Plates	Nephite Gold Plates
“Great mystery” was contained on Jaredite plates. (Mosiah 8:19)	Mormon’s record “reveal[s] all things from the foundation of the world unto the end thereof.” (2 Nephi 27:10)
Interpreters were prepared for Jaredite plates to unfold “mystery.” (Mosiah 8:19)	Urim & Thummim were prepared for translating Nephite Plates. (Joseph Smith—History 1:35)
Jaredite plates revealed “cause” of their destruction. (Mosiah 8:12)	Nephite plates warn Latter-day Saints of what led to the Nephites’ downfall. (e.g. Mormon 2:8, 5:11, 6:22, 8:27, 9:22)

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MORE PARALLELS!

Jaredite Gold Plates	Nephite Gold Plates
The Nephites had a great desire for the record to be translated. (Mosiah 28:12)	Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery had a great desire to translate the Book of Mormon.
The sealed portion of the Jaredite record came forward during Christ’s coming to the Nephites. (Ether 4:1)	The sealed portion of the Book of Mormon will come forward at some future time. (Ether 4:5-7, Elder Bruce R. McConkie, “This Final Glorious Gospel Dispensation,” etc.)

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WHAT WAS THE ENVIRONMENT LIKE?

- Apostasy and wickedness
- Bondage because of rejecting God
- Some are faithful, while others are struggling
- Contention and war

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WARFARE TO OBTAIN LAND OF INHERITANCE



Zeniff leads people in war by “cry[ing] mightily to the Lord,” “putting their trust in the Lord,” and “remember[ing the] deliverance of our fathers.” (Mosiah 9:16-18, 10:19)



First Great Awakening in America leads to renewed repentance and emphasis on a “new birth” experience, laying the foundation for the Revolutionary War which “redeemed the land by the shedding of blood.” (Doctrine and Covenants 101:80)

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**JAREDITE & NEPHITE RECORDS SUPPORT
PEOPLE EMERGING FROM APOSTASY & TURNS
THEM TO THE TRUE & LIVING GOD**

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3 CHIEF SCRIPTURAL RECORDS

1. Brass Plates

- Records from the Creation down
- Foundation of culture and government
- Like unto Bible

2. Translation of Jaredite Gold Plates

- Record of fallen Jaredites
- Written on gold plates
- Translated using Urim & Thummim
- Gave them “much knowledge”
- Jaredite nation ended at or near Hill Cumorah.

3. Revelations & writings of contemporary prophets

1. Bible

- Records from the Creation down
- Foundation of Western Civilization, bringing prosperity
- “like unto” brass plates (1 Nephi 13:23)

2. Translation of Nephite Gold Plates

- Record of fallen Nephites
- Written on gold plates
- Translated using Urim & Thummim
- “for our day”
- Nephite nation ends at or near Hill Cumorah

3. Revelations & writings of contemporary prophets (Doctrine and Covenants + other revelations)

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WHY CAN WE NOT HAVE THE BRASS PLATES OR SEALED PORTION?

“I am clear in my mind that the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon **will not come forth** until the Millennium. The same is undoubtedly true of the fulness of the Bible, though some additions could well be made before that time. . . . The perfected Bible of the future will surely include all that was on the brass plates of Laban. . . . **Someday** the Lord will raise up a prophet, who will also be a seer and a translator, to whom he will give the **brass plates** that they may be translated for the benefit and blessing of those in all nations. Would to God that the work might commence at least in our day though in fact we have **no such hope**. **Why** should the Lord give us what is on the brass plates or in the sealed portion of the Book of Mormon when we **do not** even **treasure up** and **live by** what He has already **given** us?”

Bruce R. McConkie, The Joseph Smith Translation: The Restoration of Plain and Precious Things, edited by Monte S. Nyman and Robert L. Millet [Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1985], 15-16

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“UNDER CONDEMNATION”

“And your minds in times past have been **darkened** because of unbelief, and because you have treated **lightly** the things you have received—

“Which **vanity** and **unbelief** have brought the **whole church** under **condemnation**.

“And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even **all**.

“And they shall **remain** under this condemnation until they **repent** and **remember** the new covenant, even the **Book of Mormon** and the **former commandments** which I have given them, not only to say, but to **do** according to that which I have written— “

Doctrine & Covenants 84:54-57

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“GOD IS NOT PLEASED”

“My beloved brethren and sisters, for some years now I have been deeply concerned that we are **not using** the Book of Mormon **as God intends**.

“As I participated in the Mexico City Temple dedication, I received the distinct impression that **God is not pleased** with our neglect of the Book of Mormon.

“In the eighty-fourth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord decreed that the **whole Church was under condemnation**, even all the children of Zion, because of the way they treated the Book of Mormon.”

President Ezra Taft Benson, “A New Witness for Christ,” October 1984

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LIMHI LAMENTS WICKED BLINDNESS

“O how marvelous are the works of the Lord, and how long doth he **suffer** with his people; yea, and how **blind** and **impenetrable** are the understandings of the children of men; for they will **not seek** wisdom

... Yea, they are as a wild flock which fleeth from the shepherd, and **scattereth**, and are **driven**, and are **devoured** by the beasts of the forest.”

Mosiah 8:20-21

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CAN YOU TELL THE DIFFERENCE?

“I have noted within the Church a difference in **discernment, insight, conviction,** and **spirit** between those who **know** and **love** the **Book of Mormon** and those who do not. That book is a **great sifter.**”



Ezra Taft Benson, Ensign, December 1988, “Jesus Christ—Gifts and Expectations”

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HOW DO WE INCREASE ACTIVITY LEVELS?

“Often we spend **great effort** in trying to **increase the activity levels** in our stakes. We work diligently to raise the percentages of those attending sacrament meetings. We labor to get a higher percentage of our young men on missions. We strive to improve the numbers of those marrying in the temple. All of these are commendable efforts and important to the growth of the kingdom. **But** when individual members and families **immerse** themselves in the **scriptures regularly and consistently**, these other areas of activity will **automatically come**. **Testimonies** will increase. **Commitment** will be strengthened. **Families** will be fortified. **Personal revelation** will flow.”

*Ezra Taft Benson, “The Power of the Word,” Ensign, April 1986
(delivered at Priesthood Leadership Meeting)*

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