

# THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT IN THE JOSEPH SMITH TRANSLATION

*David A. LeFevre*

In June 1830, two months after the organization of the Church, the Prophet Joseph Smith began work on a project called by the Lord “the new translation of my holy word” (D&C 124:89). For the next three years, he labored on this translation of the Bible, going through the Old and New Testaments and making changes to thousands of verses. Joseph Smith never published the entire work in his lifetime,<sup>1</sup> but the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (now Community of Christ) published an edition in 1867, using the manuscripts that had remained in Emma Smith’s possession after the Prophet’s death in 1844. With Robert J. Matthew’s groundbreaking research and publications in the 1960s and 1970s, the inclusion of translation excerpts officially called the Joseph Smith Translation (JST) in the Latter-day Saints edition of the King James Version (KJV) in 1979, and the publication of the translation manuscripts in 2004, Latter-day Saints can now carefully study Joseph Smith’s work from the original sources.

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*David A. LeFevre is an institute teacher in Bellevue, Washington.*

Several months passed between the work on Matthew and Luke.<sup>2</sup> The work on the Sermon on the Mount text in Matthew was accomplished between 8 March and 7 April 1831. The work on related passages in Luke was done sometime between 20 November 1831 and 16 February 1832.

The translation of Matthew 5–7 was perhaps influenced by the 1829 translation of 3 Nephi 12–14, where the Savior gave a version of the Sermon on the Mount to the people at Bountiful. Yet a close study shows that at least 58 of the 86 verses changed by Joseph Smith’s translation of Matthew 5–7 differ from the account in 3 Nephi, many in substantial ways. Taking into account the verses in Luke that differ in wording from 3 Nephi demonstrates that Joseph Smith did not feel bound by the 3 Nephi version but felt free to translate the New Testament texts as the Spirit led him. Those verses that differ from the 3 Nephi account are the focus of this chapter. Specifically I will examine those changes that clarify the audience and purpose of the sermon, expand the Beatitudes, clarify the questions behind Jesus’ teaching, interpret the law, illuminate the meaning of sayings and metaphors, add understanding to the Lord’s Prayer, and teach how he provides for his disciples. *Italic* shows JST additions to the KJV, while ~~struck-out~~ text shows deletions.

#### AUDIENCE AND PURPOSE

Matthew 5:1 identifies Jesus’ audience as his disciples: “And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him.” Changes made in the JST version make the audience and purpose of the sermon more apparent. For example, JST Matthew 5:2 clarifies the initial audience of the sermon, speaking of “*they who shall believe on your words, when ye shall testify that ye have seen me, and that I am.*” The audience consists of converted disciples being sent out to teach Jesus’ message of salvation to others. This differs from the audience for the initial part in 3 Nephi, where Jesus was speaking to “the multitude” (12:1). The command to those at Bountiful was to heed the words of the chosen twelve disciples, be baptized by them, and receive the Holy Ghost.

JST Matthew 7:1 explicitly spells out the audience. Jesus’ words are directed to “*his disciples*” that they might know what “*they should say unto the people.*” Several times, Jesus charged them, saying, “*ye shall say unto*

*them*” or a similar phrase (vv. 3, 5–7, 9). They were to boldly confront “Scribes, and the Pharisees, and the Priests, and the Levites,” calling them “*children of corruption*” and “*hypocrites*” (v. 5). They were to call “*the world*” to repentance and preach the coming of the kingdom of heaven—an early version of the divine commission to preach the gospel to the world, but “*the mysteries of the kingdom ye shall keep within yourselves,*” for that is like giving holy things to dogs or casting pearls to swine (v. 6).

Another related matter is audience participation. JST Matthew 7:8 captures the sense of a conversation between Jesus and his followers. Given their charge to teach everyone, the disciples raised concerns about the message: “*They will say unto us, We ourselves are righteous, and need not that any man should teach us . . . we have the law for our salvation.*” Jesus’ response was an expansion of the well-known parable of what a man will give to his son: “*Then Jesus answered and said unto his disciples, Thus shall ye say unto them, what man among you, having a son, and he shall be standing out, and shall say, Father, open thy house that I may come in and sup with thee, will he not say, Come in, my son, for mine are thine and thine are mine? Or what man is there of among you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?*” (Matthew 7:9).

In Luke, the audiences and purposes are likewise made clearer in the JST, but they are also distinguished from the Matthean setting and purpose. In Luke, the sermon texts are spread out over many chapters and situations. Part of it was given to “a great multitude of people” (6:17), which included neutral nonbelievers and ardent enemies. Some comments were directed to “his disciples” (6:20). In other cases, the audience is a specific, smaller group, such as “*certain of them*” that came out of a great multitude to ask a question (14:25) or “the Pharisees also who were covetous” (16:14) and who defied Jesus, saying, “*We have the law and the prophets but as for this man we will not receive him to be our ruler, for he maketh himself to be a judge over us*” (16:15). One section was clearly given just to close disciples—“*This he spake unto his disciples*” (12:33)—and as in Matthew, they are “*sent unto them to be their ministers*” (12:30). Thus Jesus’ teachings in Luke were given on several occasions and seem to reflect Jesus taking the content of the sermon reusing it for several purposes and audiences.

## EXPANDING THE BEATITUDES

The sermon begins in KJV Matthew 5 with nine Beatitudes. In the JST, there are three more, making a total of twelve, a significant symbolic number in the New Testament. The first two additions refer to those who believe in Jesus and who believe in the disciples' testimony of Jesus. The third added beatitude puts the entire sermon in a covenantal orientation: those "*that shall believe on your words, and come down into the depth of humility, and be baptized in my name*" shall receive the Holy Ghost and a remission of their sins. This resembles the opening in 3 Nephi 12 but lacks the more detailed explanation in the Nephite account about the calling of the twelve disciples and Jesus' endorsement of their teachings; in Matthew, he had not yet called the Twelve, so he could not make similar statements.

Other changes to the Beatitudes in Matthew generally match the well-known version in 3 Nephi. But in the parallel verses in Luke, the Prophet changed them from the second to the third person, which harmonizes it with both Matthew and 3 Nephi—"for yours *theirs* is the kingdom of God" (6:20) and "Blessed are ye *they*" (6:21). This change extends the audience beyond those hearing him, becoming part of the message the disciples are to take to the world. Interestingly, the only beatitude left in the second person in all three accounts is the one about being reviled, hated, persecuted, ostracized from normal society, and having evil spoken against them; this would happen directly to the disciples hearing the message that day. However, Jesus reassures them that their fathers, the prophets, were likewise treated (see Luke 6:23; Matthew 5:12): therefore the disciples "*shall have great joy*" (Matthew 5:12) and even "leap for joy" (Luke 6:23), "for great is *shall be* [their] reward in heaven" (Matthew 5:12).

## THE QUESTIONS BEHIND THE TEACHING

The JST often adds events that preceded Jesus' teachings, usually in the form of a question by those around him that elicits his response. Often the KJV records only the response, but the JST helpfully adds the setup, giving us a richer context. Two significant examples are provided in Luke, which parallel sayings in Matthew 5:13 and 17.

*Salt without savor.* First, in Luke 14:34–35, "*certain of them*" came to him. He was previously teaching "great multitudes" (Luke 14:25), so this

represents a smaller group, a subset of the crowd. These people said, “*Good master, we have Moses and the prophets, and whosoever shall live by them, shall he not have life?*” (Luke 14:33). It is not clear from the information Luke provided if the question was sincere or an attempt to trip Jesus up. Regardless, as Jesus often did,<sup>3</sup> he did not respond directly to their question but instead used it as a teaching moment to make a greater point: “*And Jesus answered, saying, Ye know not Moses, neither the prophets, for if ye had known them ye would have believed on me, for to this intent were they written. For I am sent that ye might live*” (Luke 14:33).

The scriptures are thus cited as a testimony of his mission, and he used it as an opportunity to certify that eternal life is achieved through him. With that context established, he taught, “*Therefore, I will liken it unto salt which is good: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that who hath ears to hear, let him hear*” (Luke 14:34–35). Then comes a JST change that clarifies the meaning of the metaphor: “*These things he said, signifying that which was written verily must all be fulfilled*” (Luke 14:35).

In other words, the good salt represents those who believe in Jesus’ words and mission. The salt that is “thenceforth good for nothing” (Matthew 5:13) represents those who reject Jesus as the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. This adds meaning to the corresponding Matthew account, which the JST turns from a statement into an invitation: “*Ye are Verily, verily, I say unto you, I give unto you to be the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost his shall lose its savour, wherewith shall it the earth be salted?*” (Matthew 5:13).

The commandment is to believe on Jesus’ words and “salt” the world by sharing them. If the disciples do not do that, they are salt without (Greek *mōrainō*, “foolish<sup>24</sup>) and of no use to the Lord. This ties directly back to the opening words of the Beatitudes just preceding this teaching in Matthew, the charge to the disciples to teach the message to the world.

*Fulfilling the law.* The second example of the JST giving enhanced background is in Luke 16, which aligns with the statement in Matthew 5:17–18 about fulfilling the law. Hearing Jesus’ teachings about the impossibility of serving both God and mammon, “the Pharisees also who were covetous . . . derided” him (Luke 16:14). He chastised them for

hypocrisy, saying that they justified themselves before men but were “*an abomination in the sight of God.*” Their response, entirely defensive in the wake of such an accusation, was clearly spoken to the larger crowd, but directed at Jesus: “*We have the law and the prophets, but as for this man we will not receive him to be our ruler, for he maketh himself to be a judge over us*” (JST, Luke 16:15).

With disciples and others looking on and listening closely to the exchange, Jesus used the moment to teach more about his own mission: “*Then Jesus said unto them, The law and the prophets were testify of me. Yea, and all the prophets who have written, even until John, have foretold of these days. Since that time, the kingdom of God is preached, and every man who seeketh truth presseth into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than for one tittle of the law to fail*” (Luke 16:16–17).

Then to further make his case about the hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders, the JST includes a lengthy addition that also enhances our understanding of the context of the encounter: “*And why teach ye the law, and deny that which is written, and condemn him who the Father hath sent to fulfill the law, that you might all be redeemed? O fools! For you have said in your hearts, There is no God. And you pervert the right way, and the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence of you, and you persecute the meek, and in your violence you seek to destroy the kingdom, and you take the children of the kingdom by force. Wo unto ye adulterers!*” (Luke 16:17).

Jesus’ accusations echo some of the phrases used in the Beatitudes, such as “the kingdom” and “the meek,” but portray the Jewish leaders as those causing the suffering and fighting against the kingdom Jesus is establishing. Their response is surprising. After being charged with so many serious perversions and unrighteous acts, the charge that truly angered them was “*the saying that they were adulterers*” (Luke 16:17).

#### “IT IS WRITTEN”

After the Beatitudes, Jesus taught that he was come to fulfill the law and not destroy it. He presented a series of six examples from the law and then interpreted them for his audience. These illustrations occupy the remainder of Matthew 5. The formula in the KJV is, “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time” (Matthew 5:21), followed by Jesus’ interpretation, “But I say unto you” (Matthew 5:22).

In the JST text, three of the six are changed so that Jesus did not cite something that was said, but rather something that was written (see Matthew 5:27, 31, 33). In 3 Nephi 12, examining the same list of six, we note that five are changed to refer to something written—all but the first was changed. The six examples are listed in the table below:

TOPIC	REFERENCE	KJV	JST	3 NEPHI
1. Killing and Anger	Matthew 5:21–26	“said”	“said”	“said”
2. Adultery and lustful thoughts	Matthew 5:27–30	“said”	“written”	“written”
3. Justification for divorce	Matthew 5:31–32	“said”	“written”	“written”
4. Swearing of oaths	Matthew 5:33–37	“said”	“written”	“written”
5. Revenge and tolerance	Matthew 5:38–42	“said”	“said”	“written”
6. Love and hate	Matthew 5:43–47	“said”	“said”	“written”

Most examples in 3 Nephi are “written,” perhaps reflecting Nephtic dependence on what was recorded on the brass plates.<sup>5</sup> Joseph Smith’s changes in the JST to make half “said” and half “written” perhaps reflects the greater dependence the Old World Jews had on the oral tradition.<sup>6</sup>

One of the three left as “said” in the JST is Matthew 5:43: “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy.” Using “said” in this case does seem logical because there is no record of that complete saying being written anywhere. The first part about loving the neighbor, seems to come from Leviticus 19:18 (“thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself”), a commandment that Jesus used on other occasions (see Matthew 22:39), as well as Paul (Galatians 5:14) and James (James 2:8). But the second half, “hate thine enemy,” is not found in the Old Testament. Scholars believe this is an interpretive tradition current in Jesus’ day.<sup>7</sup> Thus “it hath been said” reflects the combination of quote and interpretation.<sup>8</sup>

This series of examples in Matthew 5 concludes with a powerful summary statement, giving Jesus’ ultimate interpretation and fulfillment of the law, which the JST changes from an evocation of a potential future state—what we may be<sup>9</sup>—to a commandment—what we must become: “Be Ye *are* therefore *commanded to be* perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48).<sup>10</sup>

## THE MEANING OF CERTAIN SAYINGS

*Eye single.* JST changes better explain Jesus' sayings or metaphors. The KJV discusses our eye being "single," which is the Greek *haplous*, meaning "being motivated by singleness of purpose."<sup>11</sup> The JST clarifies which purpose we must be dedicated to in order to receive the promised blessing: "If therefore thine eye be single *to the glory of God*, thy whole body shall be full of light" (Matthew 6:22).

*Mote and beam.* An additional text altered substantially in the JST is Matthew 7:3–5, the mote and the beam:

And again, ye shall say unto them, why is it that thou beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye, and cannot behold a beam in thine own eye? And Jesus said unto his disciples, beholdest thou the Scribes, and the Pharisees, and the Priests, and the Levites? They teach in their synagogues but do not observe the law nor the commandments, and all have gone out of the way and are under sin. Go thou and say unto them, Why teach ye men the law and the commandments, when ye yourselves are the children of corruption?

Say unto them, Thou hypocrite hypocrites, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye eyes, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

In the JST, Jesus gave a lengthy background explanation that changed the target of the criticism from the disciples who were his audience, to the hypocritical Jewish leaders of the day, directing the disciples to use his very words against those same leaders.

*Plucking out an eye or cutting off a hand.* As part of the second item in the Mosaic reinterpretation list, which raised the definition of adultery from the physical act to the lustful thought, Jesus said it is better to pluck out an offending eye or cut off an offending hand than to let the whole body perish. The connection is evident by the proximity of the two thoughts, but the metaphor might seem grotesque. In the JST, Jesus carefully explains its meaning and confirms it is a parable alluding to casting off our sins: "Behold, I give unto you a commandment, that ye suffer none of these things



*to enter into your heart. For it is better that ye should deny yourselves of these things, wherein ye will take up your cross, than that ye should be cast into hell. And Wherefore, if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out . . . And Or, if they right hand offend thee, cut it off. . . . And now, this I speak, a parable concerning your sins. Wherefore, cast them from you, that ye may not be hewn down and cast into the fire”* (Matthew 5:28–30).

One of the phrases in this addition says, “*wherein ye will take up your cross,*” which is linked to denying ourselves of the lustful adulterous thoughts mentioned in Matthew 5:28. Elsewhere in the JST, Jesus broadened that definition of taking up the cross this way: “*And now for a man to take up his cross is to deny himself from all ungodliness, and from every worldly lust, and keep my commandments. . . . Therefore, forsake the world, and save your souls”* (Matthew 16:24–25). Just as Jesus endured to the end and denied himself relief on the cross, so we must take up our own crosses by living in obedience to God and denying sin.

#### THE LORD’S PRAYER

After instructing the disciples not to be like hypocrites in terms of alms giving and prayer, Jesus offered a model prayer. In the JST, changes in the last part of the prayer are particularly worth noting. First, the JST changes the KJV “debts” to “trespasses”: “*And forgive us our debts trespasses, as we forgive our debtors them who trespass against us”* (Matthew 6:12).

While it is easy to see that this harmonizes the verse with Jesus’ language two verses later in Matthew 6:14 (where the KJV says “trespasses”), the Greek words used are not the same: verse 12 is literally “debts” (*opheilēmata*) and “debtors” (*opheiletai*), while verse 14 is a “sin” or “misdeed” (*paraptōmata*). Since the fourteenth century, the words in verse 12 have been translated into English as “debts” and “debtors” in every translation—with one notable exception. William Tyndale, the first man to translate the New Testament into English from Greek, interpreted this verse: “*And forgeve us oure trespasses, even as we forgeve them which trespass us.*”<sup>12</sup> Tyndale’s and Joseph Smith’s word “trespasses” is acknowledged as a metaphorical meaning of the Greek in verse 12, but not the primary or preferred translation.<sup>13</sup> Still, “trespasses” adds power-

fully to the message of the prayer, turning it from a mortal obligation to an eternal one.

In the next verse, the JST changes the doctrinal meaning of the verse significantly with just four words: “And lead *suffer* us not *to be led* into temptation” (JST, Matthew 6:13). A footnote in the LDS edition of the Bible cites the Peshitta New Testament, which is based on the Syriac, an ancient Aramaic text of the New Testament: “Do not let us enter into temptation.”<sup>14</sup> No ancient Greek manuscripts support this change, and an ancient version like the Peshitta is not a particularly strong authority; the variant is not even mentioned in the well-known critical texts, such as *Novum Testamentum Graece* and *The Greek New Testament*. Nevertheless, the JST change here is supported by an ancient source. Joseph Smith’s corrections were made by the Spirit of God not by deciphering a collection of early and often contradictory manuscripts.

At the end of Matthew 6:13 is a phrase considered by scholars to be a late addition to the textual history and thus not an original part of Matthew. The phrase is (in the KJV): “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.” Some ancient manuscripts have part of the phrase (such as “the kingdom”), some have other parts (such as “the power” or “for ever”), and some have parts not in the KJV (“for ever and ever”). Most of the oldest manuscripts do not have it at all.<sup>15</sup> This has led the editors of many modern Bible translations, such as the New International Version and the New Revised Standard Version, to drop the phrase altogether. Likewise, in the related text in Luke 11:4, the phrase is absent, even in the KJV: “And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.” Many scholars similarly consider the final phrase in Luke (“deliver us from evil”) a late addition and so have also dropped it from modern translations.

In the JST for these verses, the Prophet modified both verses in a way that responds to the later scholarly concerns raised over the authenticity of these verses. He translated the two as follows: “Deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever *and forever*. Amen” (Matthew 6:13). “Deliver us from evil, *for thine is the kingdom, and power. Amen*” (Luke 11:4).

Not only did the Prophet retain the contested ascription in Matthew in his translation, he added to it in a way that has support in ancient

manuscripts—the addition of “and forever” is attested both in some ancient Greek and Latin manuscripts.<sup>16</sup> In Luke, he added two of the three parts of the Matthean conclusion—“kingdom” and “power”—and the concluding “Amen.” Scholars may rightly argue that such a change in Luke has little or no manuscript support, but the Prophet was not using manuscripts. Relying on the Spirit, he took a step toward harmonizing the two accounts, something he did in a number of places in the New Testament.<sup>17</sup> But he did not make them identical, which would have been easy to do. Thus we assert that in this case Joseph Smith was restoring original intent, which is similar but not identical, reflecting the two different approaches of the Evangelists (Matthew from his own recollection, Luke from one or more eyewitnesses; see Luke 1:2).<sup>18</sup>

#### THE LORD PROVIDING FOR HIS DISCIPLES

A section that includes several lengthy changes is Matthew 6:25–34, where the Lord teaches about providing for his followers. The comparable verses in 3 Nephi have a long sentence that is added at the beginning of verse 25, shifting the audience of Jesus’ remarks from the larger crowd specifically to the twelve disciples, though the rest of this section is nearly identical to the KJV account. In Joseph Smith’s translation of Matthew, Jesus was already addressing a fairly select group of disciples, and he had not yet called the Twelve: *“And again, I say unto you, go ye into the world, and care not for the world. For the world will hate you and will persecute you, and will turn you out of their synagogues. Nevertheless, ye shall go forth from house to house, teaching the people. And I will go before you, and your heavenly Father will provide for you whatsoever things ye need for food, and what ye shall eat; and for raiment, what ye shall wear or put on. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink”* (Matthew 6:25).

This change serves as a second warning of the persecution the disciples will suffer because of their testimony of Jesus (the first being Matthew 5:11). But it is also a commission to carry on, even going house to house, despite those difficulties. The promised blessing for carrying the message to the people was that the Lord would provide food and clothing so they could complete their missions. That theme was carried into the subsequent verses in KJV Matthew but is powerfully enhanced

by additions and changes in the JST that not only restate the promise of heavenly Father providing for the disciples but chide them for seeking after worldly things, as the Gentiles do, instead of the things of God:

Behold the fowls of the air . . . Are ye not much better than they? *How much more will he not feed you? Wherefore, take no thought for these things, but keep my commandments wherewith I have commanded you. . . .*

*shall he not how much more clothe will he not provide for you, O ye of little faith? . . .*

For *Why is it that ye murmur among yourselves, saying, We cannot obey thy word, because ye have not all these things, and seek to excuse yourselves, saying that after all these things do the Gentiles seek; for Behold, I say unto you that your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.* (Matthew 6:26, 30, 32)

A parallel verses in Luke adds a quotation from the Old Testament: *“And ye are sent unto them to be their ministers, and the laborer is worthy of his hire. For the law saith that a man shall not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn”* (Luke 12:30).

The quote from “the law” in Luke is found in Deuteronomy 25:4. What makes this change worth noting is that the only other place in the New Testament where this idea of not muzzling the ox is found is in the writings of Paul (1 Corinthians 9:9; 1 Timothy 5:18). In both cases, Paul is quoting the scripture as an example of how God will care for a worthy laborer in his kingdom. If Joseph Smith had inserted this reference to muzzling the ox in Matthew, Mark, or John, it would not have had the same significance. First, Luke was Paul’s missionary companion and friend, so for it to also be in his Gospel strengthens the tie between these two men. Secondly, Paul is alone in using this expression in the KJV New Testament, but in the JST Jesus said it first (strictly chronologically), and with the same allegorical meaning. Thus through a JST change of ancient scripture, Paul’s use of the verse is actually quoting a teaching of the Savior.<sup>19</sup>

The concluding remark of this section in Matthew in the KJV is a call to seek first God’s kingdom and his righteousness. But the JST turns that into a statement of work, a call to action, and a setting of priorities:

*“Wherefore, seek not the things of this world, but seek ye first to build up the kingdom of God, and to establish his righteousness”* (Matthew 6:33). All of these changes would be especially significant to the young Church of the 1830s and to their prophet-leader as they began to engage in missionary work and set aside the world in favor of building up the kingdom of God. Indeed, some of the earliest revelations predating the JST contain a similar call to action, including Doctrine and Covenants 6:6; 11:6; 12:6; 14:6, language that probably influenced the Prophet here.

#### MODERNIZING THE TEXT

One final thought about a common JST trend in the Sermon on the Mount relates to modernizing the King James language. Throughout the course of the translation, Joseph Smith made some changes that had no doctrinal impact but which brought the language up to more modern standards. Because of the attention he gave them, the Sermon on the Mount texts in Matthew and Luke are good places to examine that practice in detail. An analysis demonstrates that his efforts to modernize the text were certainly deliberate but not systematic.

In only six instances in these verses, the Prophet replaced more archaic pronouns (“ye” and “thee”) with the modern version (“you”). Far more commonly, he replaced “which” and “that” with “who” when referring to people—thirty-nine times. In Matthew, this happens most often when referring to Deity (twelve times), while in Luke, in all but one instance, it is referring to man (twenty-two times). There are some other minor changes (such as “be” to “is” once, and two occurrences of changing “an” to “a” in front of a word that begins with “h”), but that is the extent of the modernization in the Matthew chapters. In a bit of a reversal, in two instances in Luke the Prophet changed the modern “you” to “ye,” showing preference for the archaic term.

In longer contiguous sections of textual additions—especially noticeable in Matthew with several large blocks and whole sentences added—Joseph Smith used modern pronouns thirty times. However, in forty-four instances, he selected more archaic pronouns in those same additions, most often the word “ye,” which he added twenty-nine times, as compared to twenty-one times for “you.” Finally, in 194 instances, archaic pronouns were retained in the text.

By comparison, in the Book of Moses, which are the first chapters of Genesis and the most heavily edited part of the JST, the word “you” only occurs nineteen times, while “thou” and “thee” are found one hundred and twenty times. That ratio appears to be similar throughout the translated text.

We are left to conclude that while Joseph Smith certainly gave attention to modernizing the language of the Bible, it was not a high priority. The focus was clearly on the more significant doctrinal aspects of the translation. Still, that he did not adhere strictly to the more archaic word forms but deliberately updated them in many cases is an indication that he desired to make the text easier for modern readers to understand.

### CONCLUSION

The JST of the Sermon on the Mount texts in Matthew and Luke include important changes not found in the version in 3 Nephi, which was translated two to three years earlier. The changes that the Prophet made in these chapters were part of his personal prophetic education, by which he learned critical doctrines and principles that he could then teach to the Church. As we study them today, we are also the beneficiaries of that revelation, which helps us better understand the impact of the JST on the restoration of the Church and enhances our appreciation for the eternal truths taught by the Bible.

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### NOTES

1. Some excerpts were published in Church periodicals, which later were compiled in the Pearl of Great Price—thus we have the Book of Moses and Joseph Smith—Matthew, both part of the translation and now canonized as scripture.

2. Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, BYU, 2004); punctuation added. All scriptural quotations in this paper are from this source, unless otherwise noted, using verse numbers from the KJV for ease of reference. JST additions have been attributed to the last complete KJV verse.

3. Thomas A. Wayment, *To Teach as Jesus Taught: 11 Attributes of a Master Teacher* (Springville, UT: Cedar Fort, 2009), 133.

4. Frederick William Danker, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 663.

5. John W. Welch, *Illuminating the Sermon at the Temple and Sermon on the Mount* (Provo, UT: FARMS, 1999), 131–32.

6. Another possibility is that it could be a response to the verbal teachings of Essenes at Qumran and elsewhere.

7. G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, eds., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 27–29.

8. It is noted that the 3 Nephi text has “it is written” here. This actually could prove to be another fascinating example of a text on the brass plates that is not in our current KJV. If indeed such a text existed anciently that said “Thou shalt hate thine enemy” or something similar, it could be the background for the tradition that developed in Jesus’ day, though the text itself had long since been lost to the Jews, and thus to us.

9. The Greek verb form used in Matthew 5:48 is *esesthe*, the indicative future middle 2nd person plural form, which implies an active future state—what we can become.

10. The Hebrew verse Jesus likely alluded to here is Leviticus 19:2, “Ye shall be holy: for I the Lord your God am holy.” Like the Greek, “Ye shall” is a statement of a future action (*Qal* imperfect). The quotation equates “holy” in Leviticus (Hebrew *qadōš*, meaning to be set apart or consecrated [Francis Brown, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2001), 872]) and “perfect” (Greek *teleios*, meaning meeting a high standard, mature, fully developed, complete [Danker, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 995–96]). Don Parry suggests that both have temple implications, because “we become holy through temple worship. The temple, of course, is a Christ and Atonement centered institution, so we really become perfect through His atonement” (Don Parry, personal correspondence).

11. Danker, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 104.

12. William Tyndale, *The New Testament* (W. R. Cooper, ed.; London: The British Library, 2000).

13. The root *ophelēma* is related to the word “sin” in a theological or moral sense (Gerhard Friedrich and Geoffrey W. Bromily, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1967), 5:565; Danker, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 743).

14. This reading comes from the Lamsa translation, [http://www.aramaicpeshitta.com/AramaicNTools/Lamsa/1\\_Matthew/Matthew6.htm](http://www.aramaicpeshitta.com/AramaicNTools/Lamsa/1_Matthew/Matthew6.htm), accessed April 13, 2010.

15. Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Stuttgart, Germany: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2000), 14.

16. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 14.

17. The most obvious example is Mark 13 which Joseph Smith basically made identical to his translation of Matthew 24 (Joseph Smith—Matthew), copying the Matthew text nearly word for word into Mark.

18. Compare this experience to D&C 7, which is a translation of an ancient document written and hid up by John. It is quite likely that this document no longer exists, yet by the spirit of revelation, Joseph Smith was able to translate it and provide it to the young Church.

19. Strengthening the idea that muzzling the ox is a statement of Jesus, the second half of the verse in 1 Timothy 5:18 where Paul uses that phrase includes a parallel remark, "And, the labourer is worthy of his hire." This is not a quote from the Old Testament but is a quote from Jesus himself, as recorded in Luke 10:7. The phrase "and" ties the two quotations together, giving them equal weight. See George W. Knight III, *The New International Greek Testament Commentary: The Pastoral Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 234. Note also that although the book of Luke was written after 1 Corinthians and perhaps 1 Timothy, Luke's sources are "eyewitnesses" (Luke 1:2) who predated Paul and were probably some of the same sources from which Paul got his information about Jesus' sayings and ministry.