

ASKING RESTORATION QUESTIONS IN NEW TESTAMENT SCHOLARSHIP

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Like other scholars of the Old and New Testaments, Latter-day Saints who engage in academic research of the Bible seek to come to understand its context, history, meaning, and application to the lives of believers. In doing so—if they are to do it right—they must seek out the best possible professional training, use the best academic tools, examine the best available ancient evidence, be aware of the best of current scholarship, and ask the same hard questions that others ask. Ideally, this means that Latter-day Saint Bible scholars must master the historical and cultural sources that pertain to the world in which the Bible came to be, and they must know the languages of the original writers so they can study their words without having to rely on the scholars who translated those words into modern languages.

But for Latter-day Saint scholars, all of that is not enough, even if done extremely well. Unlike their academic colleagues, Latter-day Saints have both additional evidence and additional questions, and their work is not done until that evidence is examined and those questions

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are asked. The evidence is the flood of new information made available by the Restoration of the gospel through the Prophet Joseph Smith. The questions are those that inevitably flow as a result of the bright light that the Restoration shines on everything important—including the Bible and our understanding of it.

Here are some examples of questions that we must ask: Does the restored gospel have something to say regarding a given matter of biblical interpretation? Does the Book of Mormon reveal things that can enlighten our understanding of the Bible? Do the revelations to Joseph Smith contribute to our knowledge of it? Did the Prophet say or write anything on the topic? Is there—or should there be—a Latter-day Saint point of view on this issue? What are the underlying presuppositions of biblical scholarship, and what do those presuppositions say about conclusions based on them? Are the standard academic assumptions correct? And does the gospel teach us anything about those assumptions?

Another way to ask these questions would be to inquire simply, Is there a Latter-day Saint scholarship of the Bible?

I believe that there is, and must be, a Latter-day Saint Bible scholarship, and I believe that in fundamental ways, it must be different from the scholarship of others. The restored gospel gives Latter-day Saints evidence not available to anyone else, evidence that answers many questions over which students of the Bible have struggled for years, in some cases for centuries. Latter-day Saint Bible scholarship embraces revealed sources and uses them at every stage in the process of understanding and interpreting the words of scripture. Drawing from the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible, and the Prophet's teachings and writings, Latter-day Saints read the Bible differently from how others read it. Given those additional resources, we are going to see things in the Bible not visible to our friends and colleagues not of our faith.

In studying and understanding the Old and New Testaments in the light of the restored gospel, Latter-day Saints are sometimes accused of "Christianizing" or "Mormonizing" the Bible.¹ But in using modern revelation in their scholarship, Latter-day Saints are simply using all the

sources available to them, which is a necessary scholarly practice. To consciously choose not to use all the evidence, including the very best evidence, is to engage in shoddy scholarship. And to ignore evidence made uniquely available by means of the restored gospel is to be unfaithful to the Restoration and its blessings.

WHAT IS IMPORTANT AND WHAT IS NOT

The restored gospel does not give Latter-day Saint scholars an excuse to be smug, lazy, or uninformed. The same qualities and efforts that are required for serious scholarship in the broader academic world are also required of us. Nor do the additional questions we must ask make our task necessarily easier. Latter-day Saint scholars, like others, need to challenge unproven assumptions, question unfounded traditions, and demand evidence for historical and interpretive claims. Where the Restoration provides answers, we must rely on those answers and use them in our continuing quest for truth. We need not believe any tradition simply because it is a tradition, and commonly held assumptions are not part of our religion simply because they are commonly held. This is as true for Latter-day Saint traditions and assumptions as it is for those that come from elsewhere. But where modern revelation gives us a clear view—whether substantiating or refuting customary beliefs—that is where we stand.

Some matters are important and their answers necessary, whereas some are not. For example, the New Testament teaches the Resurrection of Jesus in several passages (see Matthew 28; Mark 16; Luke 24; John 20; 1 Corinthians 15:3–14). The Resurrection is confirmed in modern revelation as well, explicitly and repeatedly (see Helaman 14:15–17; 3 Nephi 11; D&C 138:27; Moses 7:62). With those evidences, the historicity of the Resurrection must be viewed as a truth that is non-negotiable, and Latter-day Saints cannot reject it in good conscience. In contrast, and I select this only as an example, neither the New Testament nor modern scripture identifies Mark as the author of the second Gospel. No scriptural passage says Mark wrote Mark, and the earliest existing written sources that attribute the authorship to him do not come until long after his time.³ Based on circumstantial evidence and the available tradition, I personally believe that Mark was the

author of Mark. But I do not know of any way in which the restored gospel has anything at stake in whether he did or did not. Thus, it seems that this matter—unlike the issue of Jesus’ Resurrection—is fair game for continued exploration, interpretation, and examination of evidence. There are many other examples like this. Again, where modern revelation *has* spoken, we embrace the revealed information and bring it into our research and writing.

In this chapter, I will examine three topics of fundamental importance to New Testament research—authorship, dating, and the corruption of the text—to illustrate what the Restoration contributes to creating a Latter-day Saint point of view about the origin and early history of the New Testament.

AUTHORSHIP

The four Gospels were written anonymously, perhaps because the ancient authors did not want to draw attention to themselves and detract from the subject of their writing, Jesus Christ. Early tradition attributed the books to four people known from the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, attributions that are now rejected by many Bible scholars. Latter-day Saints are under no obligation to accept those identifications simply because they are printed in modern translations. But does the Restoration provide evidence beyond that found in tradition and in the Bible? In some cases it does.

Joseph Smith’s translation of the Bible calls the Gospels of Matthew and John “testimonies,” but it does not do the same for Mark and Luke.³ Because Apostles are called to be “special witnesses of the name of Christ in all the world” (D&C 107:23), does the designation of only those two books as “testimonies” suggest apostolic authorship and thus substantiate the traditional designations? I think it does, but the matter is, admittedly, far from certain. At the very least, the designations give authority to the witness of Christ in those books. Joseph Smith added these words to the author’s introduction at the very beginning of Luke: “As I am a messenger of Jesus Christ . . . ,”⁴ giving authority to Luke’s account but not telling us all we might want to know about the author and the nature of his calling.

In the Book of Mormon, an angel taught Nephi about the early

history of the Bible. When it went forth, “it contained the fulness of the gospel of the Lord, of whom the twelve apostles bear record” (1 Nephi 13:24). The New Testament would “go forth by the hand of the twelve apostles” (1 Nephi 13:26). It is the record “of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” (1 Nephi 13:39). A visionary record, presumably the book of Revelation, was written by “one of the twelve apostles of the Lamb” named “John” (1 Nephi 14:20, 27). Further, we are to seek Jesus, “of whom the . . . apostles have written” (Ether 12:41). In the Doctrine and Covenants, we learn that we are to say nothing but what “the . . . apostles have written” (D&C 52:9, 36), “as it was written by the . . . apostles in days of old” (D&C 66:2).

These and similar passages are sometimes overlooked, but they tell us important things about the authorship and origin of the New Testament: it would be the Apostles’ record, it would contain their writings, and it would go forth by their hand. To be sure, these verses do not answer all our questions, nor can we say exactly what they mean. For example, we might suspect that writings commissioned by, or endorsed by, Apostles might well be included in their record. But at the very least, these verses cast serious doubt on theories that rule out inspiration and apostolic authorship for the Gospels and other New Testament books. Whatever the circumstances were of the writing of the documents of the New Testament, modern revelation testifies that it is indeed the testimony of Jesus Christ that the ancient Twelve created and sent to the world. This may also substantiate the traditional authorship of Mark, as an associate of the Apostle Peter (see 1 Peter 5:13), and of Luke, as an associate of the Apostle Paul (see Colossians 4:14).

But what exactly does “authorship” mean? Examples from modern Church history show us that this matter is not as simple as it may seem.⁵

In 1838 the Prophet Joseph Smith began an autobiography, compiled from his memory, his journals, and the records of others. The first installment was published in a Church newspaper in 1842.⁶ When he died, the history had been compiled only to 1838 and was published only to 1831. Assistants carried on the work, both in Nauvoo and in Utah, where installments were published in the *Deseret News* until the completion in 1858.⁷ Decades later, Elder B. H. Roberts compiled the

history into a six-volume book that is still in print today. He refined it with his own careful editorial hand, and it was published as *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, with Joseph Smith identified as its author.⁸ But did Joseph Smith write it? The *History of the Church* starts with autobiographical material that the Prophet dictated to scribes. It then shifts to the format of an ongoing diary, with his journals providing the framework. The Prophet's journals were intermittent. Some entries appear to have been dictated by him, but much of the journal material was kept independently by his clerks, who recorded his daily activities as they observed them. In the compilation of his history, clerks' entries in the third person were transformed to first person, making the Prophet the speaker. Where there were gaps in the record, passages from the journals of others were added to supply the needed information so none of the significant documented acts or words of Joseph Smith would be excluded. One such entry comes from the diary of Elder Wilford Woodruff: "Joseph Said the Book of Mormon was the most correct of any Book on Earth & the key stone of our religion & a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts than any other Book."⁹ Staff members added letters, transcriptions of sermons, and other documents in their proper sequence to make the record as complete as possible. Using today's definitions, we would not say that Joseph Smith "wrote" all of the *History of the Church*. But it was clearly created at his instruction and under his direction, and the historians who continued the process after his death were completing the work he had begun.

In 1938, Elder Joseph Fielding Smith of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles published *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, a collection of the Prophet's writings and sermons, mostly extracted from the *History of the Church*.¹⁰ Because this book collected Joseph Smith's words, he is listed as its author, even though he did not compile it and probably never thought of publishing such a book, and even though it first came out over ninety years after his death. Similarly, in 1994, when I published *Joseph Smith's Commentary on the Bible* from excerpts from primary records of his sermons and writings, I was gratified that the U. S. Library of Congress cataloged it with Joseph Smith as its author—150 years after

his death—and with me only in the supporting role of compiler and editor.¹¹

These examples, well documented and from recent history, show what cautions we should observe when we speak about the authorship of books of the New Testament—which are neither well documented nor recent. I believe that the biblical Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John wrote Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. But I cannot say how that authorship process worked nor how the final products compare with what the original writers first said or put into writing.¹²

DATING

Modern revelation provides some answers concerning the dating of New Testament writings. Scholars typically date the composition of the Gospels to about AD 70 or later. In the case of the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), a substantial reason for doing this is that they contain the Olivet Discourse, Jesus' sermon in which He foretold, among other things, the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. If one begins with the assumption that no one can see beyond his or her own time, then Jesus' prophecy of Jerusalem's destruction—precisely because it came true—must have been written after the fact, thus after AD 70. Latter-day Saints do not share the assumption that one cannot foresee the future, so we are not bound by the conclusions that necessarily follow from that assumption.¹³ But does modern revelation contribute anything to substantiate New Testament accounts of Jesus foretelling events that actually happened after His day? The answer is yes.

The Olivet Discourse is repeated twice in modern scripture: in Joseph Smith—Matthew in the Pearl of Great Price and in section 45 of the Doctrine and Covenants. The Joseph Smith—Matthew account is the Prophet's New Translation of Matthew 24.¹⁴ It is a much-clarified version of the prophecy that not only substantiates the account in Matthew but also improves upon it. Doctrine and Covenants 45 likewise confirms the biblical Olivet Discourse. The Lord told His modern disciples: "Wherefore, hearken and I will reason with you, and I will speak unto you and prophesy, as unto men in days of old. And I will show it plainly as I showed it unto my disciples as I stood before

them in the flesh, and spake unto them” (D&C 45:15–16). Then follows a retelling of the sermon, substantiating the historicity of the biblical account and its content.

Many scholars, including some Latter-day Saints, see other features in the Gospels that suggest the passage of some time after Jesus’ Resurrection before they were written. But the date of AD 70, mandated by the prophesied destruction of Jerusalem, is not an issue for those who believe in modern revelation.

As we have seen, the New Testament would be the Apostles’ record of Jesus and would be taken forth by them (see I Nephi 13:24, 26).¹⁵ This provides a fairly narrow time frame during which the documents could have been written. After the original Twelve and Matthias, who was called to replace Judas (see Acts 1:21–26), it is unclear how long the Lord perpetuated the apostleship. Although the evidence is unclear, it appears that only James the brother of Jesus, Barnabas, and Paul became Apostles after that time (see Acts 12:17; 14:14; Galatians 1:19), each called before AD 50. Neither scripture nor tradition mentions any others called to the Twelve. When Clement of Rome wrote around AD 96, he spoke of the Apostles in the past tense and gave no indication of any living at that time. By that point in history, it is likely that only John remained, who at about the same time ended his public ministry. Our evidence suggests that sometime near the middle of the first century, because of apostasy, the Lord ceased calling new members of the Twelve (see I Corinthians 4:9). If the New Testament went forth in the hands of the Twelve, as the angel told Nephi, then it had to be done while there were still Apostles in the Church to do it.

THE GREAT AND ABOMINABLE CHURCH AND CORRUPTION OF THE TEXT

When we ask Restoration questions as we study the history of the text of the New Testament, we gain a perspective that is not possible otherwise. Joseph Smith wrote: “Many important points, touching the salvation of man, had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled.”¹⁶ He said further: “We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly” (Article of Faith 8), or, concisely, “as it ought to be, as it came from the pen of the original writers.”¹⁷

Because the Prophet appears to have been speaking of more than simply conveying the text from one language to another, the word *translated* in the eighth Article of Faith presumably includes the entire process of transmission from original manuscripts to modern-language printings. On another occasion, he pointed out that there are “many things in the Bible which do not, as they now stand, accord with the revelation of the Holy Ghost to me.”¹⁸

We know little about the history of Christianity in the last four decades of the first century AD.¹⁹ The book of Acts, our major source of historical knowledge from Jesus’ resurrection to about AD 63, ends not long before Peter and Paul were executed in Rome, according to tradition.²⁰ From then until early in the second century, we have few historical sources that tell us of the fate of the Church. Without its two leading personalities, however, it is reasonable to suspect that the Church faced significant challenges. When historical sources begin to reappear near the turn of the second century, they show that much had changed in the Church: Apostles were gone, no others were being chosen to take their place, and Christians longed for the old days when the Lord’s servants were still among them.²¹ In those early historical sources, it is also evident that the doctrines of the Church had changed as well.²² The earliest known fragments of New Testament manuscripts date to not long after this time.

Jesus and His Apostles prophesied of a coming apostasy in the Church.²³ The Greek word *apostasía*, inadequately translated as “a falling away” in the King James Version (2 Thessalonians 2:3), means “rebellion,” “mutiny,” “revolution.”²⁴ It is used in ancient literature with reference to uprisings against established authority, describing well what was prophesied to happen in the Early Christian Church, according to several New Testament passages.²⁵ The Apostasy, by the very nature of the word itself and as foretold in the New Testament, had to be the work of insiders, not persecutors or external enemies. It was brought about as members of the Lord’s Church rebelled against the authority and doctrine of the Apostles and replaced them with leaders and teachings of their own choosing.

Modern revelation, particularly in the Book of Mormon, gives a window from which we can gain glimpses into the earliest decades of

Christianity. The angel taught Nephi about a “great and abominable church” that would bring people “down into captivity.” In part, it would do that by removing things “which are plain and most precious” both from the scriptures and from the gospel itself. The New Testament, which would be brought forth by the Apostles, would ultimately not go to the world until “many plain and precious things” in it would be “taken away” as it went “through the hands of the great and abominable church” (1 Nephi 13:4–6, 20–29). The angel’s words do not allow us to take this matter lightly: “After these plain and precious things were taken away it goeth forth unto all the nations of the Gentiles. . . . Because of the many plain and precious things which have been taken out of the book, which were plain unto the understanding of the children of men, according to the plainness which is in the Lamb of God—because of these things which are taken away out of the gospel of the Lamb, an exceedingly great many do stumble” (1 Nephi 13:29).

With respect to the New Testament, much of the process of removing “plain and precious things” had to be very early, clearly in the first century AD, because we have evidence that the dissemination of the books of the New Testament was well under way early in the second century.²⁶ The spread of the New Testament, the appearance of aberrant beliefs very early in the Church, the New Testament prophecies of the Apostasy, and the descriptions of Nephi and his angel-instructor identify the “great and abominable church” of 1 Nephi 13 with the Christian church itself, now dominated by the philosophies, behavioral patterns, and people who rejected, and then supplanted, the Apostles and the gospel in its purity that they had taught.²⁷ In the hands of individuals clearly intent on altering the apostolic record, the first and most significant changes were made in the New Testament text, as the angel informed Nephi.

Because our informant is an angel in the Book of Mormon, we know that the removal of “plain and precious things” from the original New Testament was a historical reality, and we trust the angel’s words that its implications were profound. But we do not know what those changes were. And because that work was done prior to the time in which copies of New Testament manuscripts spread throughout the ancient world, we likely will not learn the content of the original New

Testament texts from the thousands of ancient fragments that have been discovered so far, all of which appear to be copies of copies of copies of texts that had already been altered “through the hands of the great and abominable church” (1 Nephi 13:28).

PROVING TO THE WORLD

A common academic view today is that the New Testament is “a very human book.”²⁸ But when we ask Restoration questions, we come to a Latter-day Saint point of view that the New Testament is a divine work that, like everything else touched by human hands, shows evidence of human fingerprints. Those fingerprints, whether large or small, may provide us with academic questions and historical uncertainties, but they do not negate or devalue either the cumulative product nor the vast majority of its details.

Joseph Smith believed in the Bible “as it came from the pen of the original writers,” and so do Latter-day Saints today.²⁹ But unlike scriptural fundamentalists, we do not believe that the Bible is inerrant, even in its original manuscripts. There are many instances in which the Gospel writers relate events differently or record Jesus saying different words in the identical circumstance. Such differences were probably in the authors’ originals. Jesus told His disciples:

The Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him. (Matthew 20:18–19)

The Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him. (Mark 10:33–34)

All things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge him, and put him to death. (Luke 18:31–33)

These three accounts are not identical, and it may well be that none of them conveys Jesus' words with utter exactness (not to mention the fact that Jesus was not speaking English, the language of this translation, nor Greek, the language in which the Gospel writers wrote His words).³⁰ The New Testament has many such inconsistencies, but Latter-day Saints are not concerned by them because we recognize that it is the New Testament's message that is sacred, not its precise words, and each of these accounts communicates well the same point, even if the words are different. Variants like these do not harm the integrity of the Gospels nor their message. Even the writers of the Book of Mormon were keenly aware of their own imperfections. The Title Page reminds us, "If there are faults they are the mistakes of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of God."

Some variants in the New Testament text are more difficult to explain. For example, the Synoptic Gospels present the Last Supper as a Passover meal, whereas for John, the Passover began at sunset following Jesus' death on the cross. John also has Jesus nailed to the cross at a different hour of the day. For such questions, scholars employ historical and textual criticism in an attempt to determine historical realities and original words. But even historical puzzles like these are of no consequence to the message of the Gospels. Latter-day Saint New Testament scholars are aware that problems like these exist in the text and have no reason to pretend otherwise. Even though they do not have all the answers to explain them, they are not bothered by them.³¹

The Prophet Joseph Smith endorsed both the New Testament's apostolic origin and its content. In his sermons and writings, he quoted or made reference to over three hundred New Testament passages, attesting to the fact that he ascribed real authority to them.³² We have no record of any authorship issues being brought to his attention, nor of him questioning the traditional authorship attributions. It appears that he simply took for granted the authorship designations printed in his Bible. He said that Latter-day Saints are "the only people under heaven" who believe in the Bible.³³ He stated: "The fundamental principles of our religion [are] the testimony of the apostles and prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, 'that he died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended up into heaven.'"³⁴ One of the purposes of the Restoration

was that of “proving to the world that the holy scriptures [the Old and New Testaments] are true” (D&C 20:11), something that would make no sense if the Bible were *not* true. Likewise, the prophesied calling of the “choice seer,” Joseph Smith, was not only to bring forth new scripture but also “to the convincing them of my word, which shall have already gone forth among them” (2 Nephi 3:11). Certainly, if the Prophet’s mission was to convince the world of the truth of the Bible, the Bible must be true, despite whatever imperfections may exist in it.

The scriptures also promise that in the last days, truths lost from the Bible would be restored. The Book of Mormon would reveal “plain and precious” things (1 Nephi 13:35), and it would join with other books of the Restoration to convince people all over the world “that the records of the prophets and of the twelve apostles of the Lamb are true” (1 Nephi 13:39). “These last records,” the angel told Nephi, “shall establish the truth of the first, which are of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, and shall make known the plain and precious things which have been taken away from them” (1 Nephi 13:40). I believe that among “these last records” is the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, which restores New Testament material that was lost anciently. But probably most of the restoration of the New Testament was actually the restoration of its pure doctrine, brought about by means of the books of modern revelation given to the world through the ministry of Joseph Smith. Reading the apostolic record in the light of that pure doctrine, illuminated by modern scriptures and modern prophets, makes the New Testament whole again and restores its plain and precious truths.

SCHOLARSHIP AND CONSECRATION

Latter-day Saint Bible scholars have a mission different from that of their peers in that they both embrace and use in their research the information obtained through modern revelation. They recognize that the New Testament is not only interesting and influential, but it is also *important*. Thus they understand that although professional training and hard work are necessary requisites for true scholarship, a greater goal is true discipleship. Their research, therefore, is not merely a work of avocation or profession but, indeed, of worship and consecration. And unlike many of their peers who set the agenda for religious discourse in

their denominations, Latter-day Saint Bible scholars hold allegiance to the Church as an institution and welcome the continuing guidance of those whom the Lord has called to preside in it.

The restored gospel provides a doctrinal backdrop and perspective to our study of the New Testament that would be impossible without it. Through the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, and the Prophet's sermons and writings, we have a much better view of the big picture of the gospel and a sharper focus on many of its smaller details. By asking Restoration questions that come from our enhanced vision that modern revelation provides, we are able to see and understand more clearly the critical issues that relate to the early history of the New Testament.

NOTES

1. An example of this notion is Melodie Moench Charles, "The Mormon Christianizing of the Old Testament," *Sunstone*, November–December 1980, 35–39.

2. See Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3.11.8; Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 3.39.14–17.

3. The footnotes at the beginning of Mark and Luke in the 1979 Latter-day Saint edition of the Bible are in error. See New Testament Manuscript 2, folio 1, page 1; 2, folio 2, pages 8 and 45; 2, folio 4, page 105, in 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, Brigham Young University, 2004), 235, 314, 359, 442.

4. New Testament Manuscript 2, folio 2, page 45, in Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation*, 359.

5. The following paragraphs are drawn from a fuller discussion in Kent P. Jackson, *The Restored Gospel and the Book of Genesis* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2001), 59–61, in the context of a discussion of the authorship of Genesis.

6. See "History of Joseph Smith," *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 10 (March 15, 1842): 726–28.

7. See Dean C. Jessee, "The Writing of Joseph Smith's History," *BYU Studies* 11, no. 4 (Summer 1971): 439–73.

8. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1902–12).

9. Recorded November 28, 1841; Scott G. Kenny, ed., *Wilford Woodruff's Journal 1833–1898 Typescript* (Midvale, UT: Signature Books, 1983), 2:139.

10. See Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938).

11. See Joseph Smith, *Joseph Smith's Commentary on the Bible*, comp. Kent P. Jackson (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), copyright page.

12. The obscurity of the men Matthew, Mark, and Luke adds, in my mind, credibility to the attribution of the Gospels to them. If one were to invent authors for anonymous early Christian documents, none of those names would come to mind.

13. See R. T. France, *The Gospel of Mark: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 35–41.

14. Including Matthew 23:39.

15. For the complexities involved with the word *apostle*, see Eric D. Huntsman, “Galilee and the Call of the Twelve Apostles,” in *The Life and Teachings of Jesus Christ, Vol. One: From Bethlehem through the Sermon on the Mount*, ed. Richard Neitzel Holzapfel and Thomas A. Wayment (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2005), 228–38.

16. Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 1:372.

17. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 256. The editors of the *History of the Church*, either from some other source or from their memory of what the Prophet had said on another occasion, added the following phrase, not found in the original transcript of Joseph Smith’s statement: “Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors” (*History of the Church*, 6:57). Ironically, the history of this phrase illustrates the process of editors (even well-meaning ones) changing a text and reminds us that we must exercise caution and humility when dealing with the history of any ancient writing.

18. Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 211; spelling and capitalization modernized.

19. The following discussion summarizes a fuller treatment in Kent P. Jackson, *From Apostasy to Restoration* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1996), 1–56.

20. See Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 2.25.

21. See Justin Martyr (AD 110–65), *Hortatory Address to the Greeks*, 8; and Hegessipus, in Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 3.32.7. These can be found in A. Roberts and J. Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, repr. 1951); and P. Schaff and H. Wace, *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2d series (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, repr. 1983).

22. See Jackson, *From Apostasy to Restoration*, 23–27.

23. See Kent P. Jackson, “‘Watch and Remember’: The New Testament and the Great Apostasy,” in *By Study and Also by Faith*, ed. John M. Lundquist and Stephen D. Ricks (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1990), 1:81–95.

24. See William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, ed. Frederick W. Danker, 3d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 120.

25. See Matthew 24:5, 9–11; Acts 20:29–31; 2 Thessalonians 2:1–12; 1 Timothy 4:1–3; 2 Timothy 4:3–4; 2 Peter 2:1–3; 1 John 2:18.

26. See Richard D. Draper, “The Earliest New Testament,” in this volume.

27. The description of the “great and abominable church” in 1 Nephi 13 is in concrete historical terms pertaining to the demise of the Early Church. In 1 Nephi 14 the term is used in more universal terms, primarily with respect to the latter days.

28. Bart D. Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005), 11.

29. Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 256.

30. Some of the word differences we see in the Synoptic Gospels in the KJV are the result of translators’ choices, not different Greek words.

31. Bart Ehrman’s self-described (but not unprecedented) shift from being a believer in the inerrancy of the Bible to being an agnostic illustrates, in my mind, the inherent dangers in fundamentalism of any sort. See Ehrman, *Misquoting Jesus*, 1–15.

32. See the scripture index in Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 421–25. See also Jackson, *Joseph Smith’s Commentary on the Bible*.

33. *Elders’ Journal*, July 1838, 42.

34. *Elders’ Journal*, July 1838, 44.