Chapters, Verses, Punctuation, Spelling, and Italics

Kent P. Jackson, Frank F. Judd Jr., and David Rolph Seely

The Bible is a huge book—containing 766,137 words in English. And yet the modern reader can instantly find and turn to any particular passage in this massive book by following the data given in a simple formulaic reference such as Matthew 7:7. From this reference, a reader knows to turn to the book of Matthew, chapter 7, verse 7, where the reader finds the passage, "Seek, and ye shall find." But this system was not part of the original texts of the Bible. The book divisions occur from the fact that the Bible is a collection of many different books; the divisions into paragraphs, chapters, and verses are all artificial and were done centuries after the texts were written.

The English word *Bible* is derived from a Greek word, *biblia*, meaning "books," reflecting the fact that it is a collection. Many books were written in antiquity that were considered sacred by various groups in various places and at different times. Whereas there is much scholarship that deals with the canonization of the books of the Bible, there is little if any explicit information from the earliest historical circumstances of why and how certain ancient books were preserved and considered as canonical or standard works.[1] At some point in ancient times, a collection of those books was made that eventually became what we call the Old Testament. One of the earliest examples we have of such a collection is the plates of brass from 600 BC, which contained the books of Moses,

a history of Israel, a collection of prophetic books, and genealogy (see 1 Nephi 5:10–14). Early Jews thought of the Bible as a collection of three different kinds of material, as reflected by the fact that Jesus spoke of "the law of Moses," "the prophets," and "the psalms" (Luke 24:44).

The earliest list of the thirty-nine specific books of the Old Testament is from the end of the first century AD and records that those books were originally found on twenty-four scrolls—because several of the smaller books could fit onto a single scroll.[2] Because the texts were written on separate scrolls, there was little need to organize them in any particular order. But there was a sense that the Bible contained three types of books and that, just as on the plates of brass, the Law or Torah (the five books of Moses) had preeminence. The rabbis and Jesus often referred to the Old Testament collection of books as the Law and the Prophets. The Jewish canon established a tradition that organized the books according to the three categories: Torah, Prophets, and Writings. The Christian canon, preserved in all Christian Bibles to the present, followed a slightly different order, with historical books (Genesis through Esther), poetic books (Job to Song of Solomon), and prophetic books divided between the Major Prophets (longer books: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel), and the twelve Minor Prophets from Hosea through Malachi.[3]

Just as in the case of the Old Testament, we know very little about the process by which twenty-seven of the many ancient Christian books came to be considered as scripture. The earliest canonical list is the Muratorian Canon, from the late second or third century AD, which lists most of the books that make up the New Testament today, and in a similar order. It appears that the New Testament came about as a compilation of three different collections: a collection of four Gospels, a collection of fourteen epistles of Paul, and a collection of seven epistles from other church leaders, completed with the addition of two texts: the Acts and Revelation.

From the various Gospels that circulated anciently, the church by the middle of the second century had accepted four: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The book of Acts was inserted between the Gospels and the letters to provide a link between the life of Jesus and the ministries of the Apostles and history of the early Church. The fourteen Pauline epistles were eventually organized more or less by length from the longest to the shortest—from Romans to Philemon—followed by Hebrews because

early Christians were uncertain about its authorship. The seven other surviving epistles were added, followed by the book of Revelation.

ANCIENT DIVISIONS OF THE TEXT

Divisions of the texts in the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament have their own history and can be treated separately.[4] It was only when the Christian Bible combined the two Testaments, and especially as the Bible was translated into various languages, that the texts were treated similarly, and a uniform system of numbered chapters and verses was superimposed upon the text that survives to the present time. Because the earliest surviving texts of the Bible date from centuries after the original authors, no one knows the nature of the original divisions. From what is known about the history of the divisions of the texts in the various manuscript traditions, three simple necessities can be identified that motivated the gradual creation of various units and later the systems of numbering those units. First, there was a need to identify and isolate specific units that could be read in worship services in the synagogue or the church. Second, the need occurred to provide a simple way of referring to a specific passage in the Bible to facilitate preaching, teaching, study, discussion, and debate. Finally, both Jewish and Christian scholars created concordances of the language of the Bible—and small numbered divisions of the text were almost a necessity for such concordances.

The oldest surviving Hebrew Old Testament texts are among the Dead Sea Scrolls, found beginning in 1947 in the caves at Qumran—the earliest dating to about 250 BC. These scrolls were written with pen and ink on pieces of leather that were sewn together to form scrolls. The Hebrew text was written in horizontal lines reading from right to left, in columns that were also read from right to left, and the scribes usually left slight spaces between the words. The system of division attested in these earliest biblical texts is neither chapters nor verses but paragraphs according to thematic or sense units.

The system of division into paragraphs was preserved in the Jewish tradition and eventually became part of the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible (see below). The logic of paragraph divisions can be illustrated by several examples. In the Hebrew text of the Creation story in Genesis 1:1–2:3, the text is divided into seven paragraphs coinciding with

the seven days of creation. Within historical narrative, the paragraph divisions occur dividing a story into episodes. Thus 1 Samuel 1 is divided into five episodes tracing the life of Hannah and the birth of Samuel, and Isaiah 1 is divided into six paragraphs of varying lengths that indicate different topics. Paragraph divisions thus dramatically illustrate the episodic nature of biblical narrative and help the reader see the basic sense units of the text.

In addition to the division of the text into paragraph units, the Jewish tradition also developed a system of dividing the Torah into fifty-four larger units, each consisting of many paragraphs, called *parashoth*. Those divisions provided suitable units to be read in the synagogue each Sabbath, with the intent that the whole of the Torah could be read in a calendar year. Each of those sections received a title based on the first word or words of the passage, but they were not numbered. The titles provided a label as a point of reference for teachers and students in the discussion of a text. The whole of the Hebrew Bible, except for the Psalms, is divided into paragraphs, but only the Torah is divided into *parashoth*.

The division into verses preceded the division into chapters. Within the paragraph divisions, Jewish scribes in the Mishnaic period (AD 70–200) developed a system of dividing the biblical text into verse units which roughly coincided with sentences. In addition to ordering the text for easier study, the verse divisions had a function in the reading of the Torah in the synagogue. Because it was customary to read a section of the Bible in the original Hebrew and then stop and translate the passage into Aramaic, verses provided convenient places for the reader to stop and allow the interpreter to speak.[5] Just as with the paragraphs and *parashoth*, the scribes did not number those verses.

About AD 500, a group of rabbinic Jewish scribes and scholars, called the Masoretes, saw that the text of the Bible as it was being transmitted began to show signs of changing through the years. The Masoretes standardized the Hebrew text by developing a system to write vowels, formalized word divisions, developed a set of accents to indicate ancient traditions of reciting the text, created concordances, counted all of the paragraphs, words, and letters, and inserted notes of explanation, references, and statistics in the margins and at the end of the texts in order to help future scribes. Their work is called the Masoretic Text. It became the
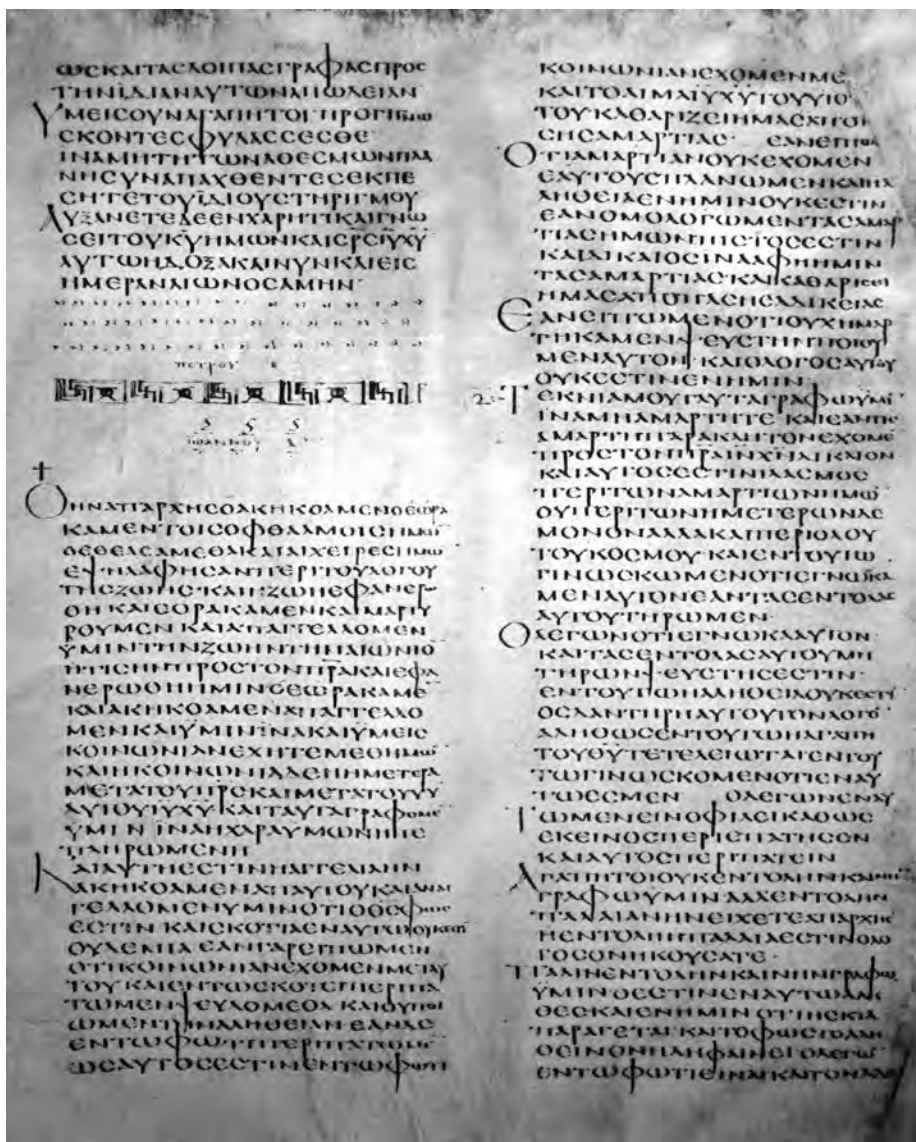
model for all future scribal copying and the standard Bible for most Jews in the world to the present day.

Elements of the paragraph and verse divisions that were preserved in the Masoretic Text were later superimposed in various ways on the texts of the Greek and Latin translations of the Bible that were used by Christians. The King James translators had access to the Masoretic Text and implemented in their translation the original Jewish system of verse divisions together with the system of numbering that they had inherited from other Christian Bible editions and translations. Following the model of the Hebrew paragraph divisions, the KJV translators or editors also created a system of paragraph markers throughout the Old Testament (℄) that most often parallels the divisions found in the Hebrew Bible.

As with the Old Testament, we do not have any original New Testament texts. But we do have very early textual evidence of the New Testament from the beginning of the second century, and those earliest manuscripts were written in the tradition of Greek texts of their day, in all capital letters (uncial script), with no division between the words or sections (*scriptio continua*).[6] While the modern reader may be bewildered by a text that has no apparent breaks,[7] ancient Greek has a set of rhetorical particles that indicate natural pauses and breaks in the text. Most New Testament texts were written on parchment or papyrus, and by the second century they began to be written in codices (books with leaves bound together—singular, *codex*) rather than on scrolls.[8]

Just as in the Hebrew tradition, the first system of division in the New Testament text was the paragraph, which naturally followed the rhetorical and grammatical particles in the text. One of the earliest systems of division in the New Testament is attested in the great Greek Bible manuscript Vaticanus, from the fourth century AD. In Vaticanus the scribes used a system in which the text was divided into sections corresponding to the break in sense. Those divisions were called in Greek *kephalaia*, which means "heads" or "principals." They were named and numbered in the margins and are the first attested form of a sort of chapter division in the New Testament. In Vaticanus, for example, the Gospel of Matthew was divided into 170 such units, with 62 in Mark, 152 in Luke, and 50 in John. The *kephalaia* were much smaller in length than the present-day chapters and are much closer to the paragraphs. In other Greek manuscripts, Acts, the

A page of Codex Alexandrinus, a fifth-century Greek manuscript that preserves almost the whole of Septuagint Old Testament and Greek New Testament, containing end of 2 Peter, upper left, and 1 John 1:1–2:9; large well-rounded Greek uncial script (all capital letters) does not have spaces between words but is written scriptio continua; *occasionally small letters are used at end of a line in order to fit whole word on line; text is divided into sense units, paragraphs (Greek* kephalaia*), with each paragraph indicated by a large letter in margin.*

epistles, and Revelation were similarly divided into chapters and smaller sections.[9]

As they did with the Old Testament, the King James translators indicated paragraph divisions in the New Testament with paragraph markers (¶). Often, but not always, their paragraph divisions coincide with ancient chapter divisions known from early manuscripts, but for some reason that mystifies scholars to the present day, they end at Acts 20:36.[10]

At the same time the *kephalaia* divisions in the New Testament were being made, rudimentary smaller divisions, indicated by simple forms of punctuation (sixth–eighth centuries), were beginning to be marked in the Greek texts that would eventually be reflected in the chapter and verse divisions after the thirteenth century.

TODAY'S CHAPTERS AND VERSES

Eventually the Christians developed a need for a more precise way of citing scriptural passages for the Old and New Testaments, especially in the creation of concordances. The Christians incorporated in their biblical texts the Jewish paragraph and verse divisions of the Old Testament and the medieval chapter system of the New Testament.

The creator of the system of chapters that is used to the present time was Stephen Langton (1150–1228), a professor of theology in Paris and later the archbishop of Canterbury.[11] Langton introduced his chapter numbers into the Latin Bible—the Vulgate—in 1205, from which they were transferred in the ensuing centuries to Hebrew manuscripts and printings of the Old Testament, as well as to Greek manuscripts and printed editions of the New Testament.

The system of verse divisions that has prevailed to the present was the work of a Parisian book printer, Robert Estienne (Latinized as Stephanus; 1503–59). In the printing of his fourth edition of the Greek New Testament in 1551, he added his complete system of numbered verses for the first time. For the Old Testament, Stephanus adopted the verse divisions already present in the Masoretic Text of the Hebrew Bible, and within Langton's chapters he assigned numbers to the verses. Following his own sense of logic as to the sense of the text, Stephanus took it upon himself, also within the framework of Langton's chapters, to divide and number the verses in the New Testament. His son reported that he did this work

as he regularly traveled between Paris and Lyon. Whereas he probably did much of the work in the overnight stays at the inns, his detractors spread the story that he did it while riding on his horse, and they attributed what they thought to be unfortunate verse divisions to slips of the pen when the horse stumbled. In 1555 Stephanus published the Latin Vulgate—the first whole Bible divided into numbered chapters and verses. Soon those divisions became standard in the printed editions of the scriptures in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and eventually in all of the modern languages. The first English Bible to have the numbered chapters and verses of Langton and Stephanus was the Geneva Bible in 1560.

Robert Estienne, better known as Stephanus (1503–59), French theologian and printer, created today's biblical verse divisions with publication of his 1555 Latin Vulgate.

Some have criticized Stephanus's verse divisions as seeming arbitrary, citing the fact that while they often coincide with a single sentence in English, sometimes they include several sentences, sometimes they divide a single sentence, and sometimes they separate direct quotations from the situation of the speaker. They almost always divide paragraphs into fragments and cut up complete thoughts (e.g., Luke 2:5, 31). But clearly the advantages of organizing the text for reading and finding passages far outweigh any disadvantages. Following the style of the Geneva and Bishops' Bibles, the King James translators created a new and separate paragraph for each verse by indenting the first word and capitalizing the first letter of the first word, even if it is in the middle of a sentence. For the casual reader, this can provide a rather serious obstacle, giving the false impression that the Bible is composed of a collection of disconnected sentences and phrases and making it difficult to see and understand any particular verse in its larger context. Consequently, a conscientious reader of the King James Version should always make a concentrated effort to see the bigger context of any particular verse of scripture, being aware that the chapter and verse divisions are artificial and subjective additions to the text that should not constrain us in the interpretation of the Bible. Most modern Bible translations preserve Stephanus's verses but do not

create separate paragraphs for each verse, dividing the chapters instead into paragraphs based on the internal content of the scriptural text.

PUNCTUATION

The earliest manuscripts of the Old Testament contained no punctuation. The Masoretes, working about a millennium after most of the original writers, formalized a system of punctuation that included sentence-ending marks and various marks within sentences to show major and minor breaks. The evidence suggests that in some cases the Masoretes may have made mistakes in sentence division, but on the whole they did an extraordinarily good job, and their work was a profound accomplishment. When the translators and editors of the King James Bible and its predecessors applied European punctuation, in most cases they honored the Masoretic sentence endings, because they kept the verse divisions of Stephanus from the previous century. Thus sentences in the King James Old Testament usually end where sentences end in the Masoretic Text. But within sentences, the English translators frequently subdivided the text differently.

In New Testament manuscripts, there was a special kind of "punctuation" for words that were deemed sacred. Christian scribes and copyists tended to abbreviate, or more precisely contract, certain sacred names. Whenever the names *God* and *Jesus* occurred, just to give two examples in English, these names were not written out in full but were regularly shortened to just the first and last letters with a stroke above them (e.g., $\overline{GD}$ = "God," $\overline{JS}$ = "Jesus").[12] This was not done to save space but rather because such names were regarded as endowed with some degree of holiness and were consequently revered. This practice may have been influenced by earlier Jewish scribal practices in the Hebrew Bible, where the name of God, *Yahweh*, was sometimes set off with a different script.

Rudimentary punctuation marks began to appear gradually in the sixth and seventh centuries, usually indicating breaks in sentences. It was not until the seventh century that marks for breathing and accents began to appear, and it was not until the ninth century that the continuous writing in the texts began to be broken into individual words.

The texts of the manuscripts Sinaiticus and Vaticanus contain a system of punctuation as indicated by a single point of ink on the level of
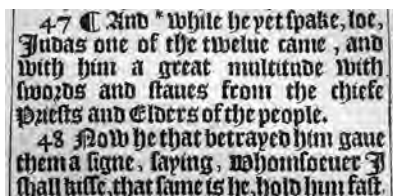
the tops of the letters, or occasionally by a small break in the continuous letters, or by a slightly larger letter, to indicate a pause in the sense of the text—a break that usually corresponds with a sentence. Later New Testament manuscripts from the sixth and seventh centuries developed a more complex system of marks, usually made by dots indicating a pause, a half-stop, and a full stop, and later a mark of interrogation, corresponding to the English usage of a comma, semicolon, period, and question mark. Occasionally there were slight spaces between words to indicate a break in the sense. Ninth-century manuscripts show that the scribes began to insert breaks between the words in their texts, and punctuation marks were more frequently put at the end of words rather than above the letters as before. It should be noted that any markings or spaces added to the original continuous writing of the earliest New Testament manuscripts involved a subjective act of interpretation by the scribe. There is evidence of ancient scribal disagreement in terms of punctuation and even word divisions. In addition, later scribes often went back and inserted marks of punctuation above the lines of earlier manuscripts (as in the case of Vaticanus) to reflect their own interpretations.

Therefore, the Greek texts used by the translators of the Bible into English, including Tyndale and the King James translators, already contained systems of word division, punctuation, breathings, and accents that certainly influenced the way the texts were interpreted and translated. The translators of each different English version had the ancient markings and divisions before them, but they variously punctuated their translations according to their understanding and interpretation of the text.[13]

The 1611 King James Bible was published by the firm of Robert Barker of London. Barker's family had been in the printing business for decades, and he had the distinction of being "Printer to the Kings most Excellent Maiestie," as is noted on the Bible's title page. With that designation, his company held the new Bible's franchise (sometimes with partners) into the 1630s, when the concession went to other printers, most often university presses. The origin of the punctuation in the 1611 KJV is not well understood. In large part it was determined by the translators, based on the Hebrew and Greek texts, earlier English versions, and the current usage of the time. But it likely also contains much influence from editors in Barker's shop. The punctuation in the 1611 edition was not done very
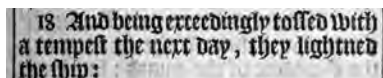
consistently. Readers today are often surprised to learn that the punctuation in our current KJV differs in thousands of places from that of the 1611 first edition. Note the following example from Matthew 26:47–48, with the 1611 text (left) compared with the text of the 1979 Latter-day Saint edition (right):

47 ¶ And * while he yet spake, loe, Judas one of the twelue came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staues from the chiefe Priests and Elders of the people.
48 Now he that betrayed him gaue them a signe, saying, whomsoeuer I shall kisse, that same is he, hold him fast.

47 ¶And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.
48 Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast.

Usually punctuation differences are inconsequential, but sometimes they affect the meaning. Note Acts 27:18, which also has a word difference, a spelling difference, and an italic difference:

18 And being exceedingly tossed with a tempest the next day, they lightned the ship:

18 And we being exceedingly tossed with a tempest, the next *day* they lightened the ship;

The edition of 1612 made punctuation changes, and every printing thereafter for a century and a half made more. Each printing house that published the Bible modified the punctuation in some way in virtually every edition, and thus of the numerous editions between 1611 and the late eighteenth century, none were identical. Mathew Carey, an American printer of the early 1800s, noted that the punctuation differences between various Bibles were "innumerable." He gave as an example Genesis 26:8, which had "eight commas in the Edinburgh, six in the Oxford, and only three in the Cambridge and London editions."[14] Variations like this were not infrequent. Benjamin Blayney's Oxford edition of 1769 made many punctuation changes, adding to the work of earlier editors.[15] Because it eventually became the standard KJV text, Blayney's punctuation remains with us today.

Absent in the King James translation are quotation marks, which did not appear commonly until long after 1611. Capital letters are used to show where a quotation begins, but the end of a quotation can only be determined from the context. That is not always easy, as is seen in Genesis 18:13–14: "And the Lord said unto Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah

laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old? Is anything too hard for the Lord?"[16]

The punctuation in today's KJV is generally systematic and quite consistently done. It uses periods to end sentences, colons and semicolons for major breaks within sentences, and commas for smaller breaks. On the whole, the colons, semicolons, and commas seem to have been applied according to the objectives of the translators and later editors, not necessarily with the intent of reflecting the punctuation in the Hebrew and Greek original texts.

By today's standards—and even by the standards of 1611 and 1769—the King James Version often feels overpunctuated, and readers sometimes find themselves tripping over its many tiny clauses that interrupt the flow of the text and occasionally make the meaning less clear. The punctuation is one of the features of the KJV that makes it feel old. But this is neither unexpected nor accidental; it was intended to be that way. When the translation was originally published and "Appointed to be read in Churches" (1611 title page), its creators filled it with punctuation, believing that the congregational reading for which it was primarily intended would be enhanced by the short clauses, each set apart by a pause. Had they known that the Bible's greatest use would eventually be with families in private homes, rather than in churches, perhaps they would have done otherwise.

SPELLING

The printing of the Bible in English contributed greatly to the standardization of English spelling. In Tyndale's day, there was much variety in spelling, and indeed Tyndale's own publications showed considerable inconsistency while at the same time contributing to establishing spelling norms. Early in the next century, when the King James translation appeared, English spelling was still in flux, and it differed in many instances from the spelling in use today, as can be seen in the comparison of the 1611 KJV of Isaiah 29:13–14 (left) and the LDS Blayney edition (right).

13 ¶Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near *me* with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

14 Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, *even* a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise *men* shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent *men* shall be hid.

Spelling conventions evolved rapidly in the seventeenth century, as is reflected in early printings of the KJV. Barker's 1611 first edition has the spellings "publique" (Matthew 1:19), "musicke" (Luke 15:25), and "heretike" (Titus 3:10), with three separate spellings for the same grammatical ending. Within a few decades, all of those were standardized to "-ick." Today it would be "-ic." At 1 Timothy 4:16 the 1611 edition reads, "Take heed unto thy selfe." Barker's 1630 edition uses "heede," and his edition of only four years later uses "heed" again. His edition of 1639 changes "selfe" to "self," but the spelling "thyself" (one word) was not standardized until the mid-eighteenth century. Spelling in the KJV began changing as early as in the second impression of 1611. It continued to evolve in later printings, but inconsistently in the hands of various publishers, who clearly had the intent to keep its spelling current with the times. It was not until Blayney's edition of 1769 that publishers considered the spelling standard and finalized (although not entirely consistent), when today's King James spelling was set in place.[17] Thus our current Bible has words and grammar from before 1611 but spelling from 1769.

How biblical names were spelled in English evolved over the centuries until the 1611 King James translation, when the spellings of most names were fixed. The 1611 printing had some inconsistencies (including the spelling of *Mary* as "Marie" in several places in Luke 1), but most variants were standardized by the 1629 Cambridge edition.[18] The spelling of names in the KJV is heavily influenced by the Latin Vulgate, and in many cases the spellings are far removed from how the ancient people actually pronounced their own names. Some examples include *Isaac*, pronounced

anciently "Yitz-haq" (Geneva, *Izhák*; Bishops', *Isahac*); *Isaiah*, "Ye-sha-ya-hu"; *John*, "Yo-ha-nan"; *James*, "Ya-a-qov"; and *Jesus*, "Ye-shu-a."[19]

The spelling of the Lord's name in the KJV Old Testament is a special case. The divine name that is written "the Lᴏʀᴅ" in today's King James translation is spelled with four letters in Hebrew—*yhwh*. It probably was pronounced *Yahweh* in ancient times.[20] The form of the name that is familiar to us is *Jehovah*, with spelling and pronunciation brought into English by William Tyndale in the early 1500s.[21] After the end of the Old Testament period, Jews and then Christians adopted a custom, based perhaps on an exaggerated reading of Exodus 20:7, that it was blasphemous to pronounce God's name. So in the place of *Yahweh* they used substitute words. As they read their Hebrew texts, when they came upon God's name they would not pronounce it but substituted in its place the word *'ădōnāy*, which means "my Lord(s)." Greek-speaking Jewish translators in the third century BC replaced the divine name with the common Greek noun *kyrios*, "lord." Most modern translations have continued the custom. In the King James translation, whenever God's name *Yahweh* appears in the Hebrew text, the translators have rendered it as "the Lᴏʀᴅ."[22] Capital and small capital letters are used to set the divine name apart from the common English noun *lord*. In the 1611 KJV, however, it appears that this system was not yet fully worked out until the printing was under way. In Genesis, all capital letters were used for the divine name. Beginning with Exodus, the large and small capital letters were used.

Readers of a 1611 King James Bible will also notice some differences that are not technically spelling differences but changes in the nature of some of the letters of the alphabet. The lowercase *s* (except at the end of a word) looks much like today's *f*, and the letters *u* and *v* were considered one letter. In the 1611 printing, *v* is used at the beginning of words, and *u* is used in other positions. In the black-letter example on the previous page (Isaiah 29:13–14), we have examples of the lowercase *s*, and we have *remoued* and *vnderstanding* for *removed* and *understanding*.

ITALICS

The use of italics in today's King James Bible has an interesting but complex history.[23] The practice of using different type within a text for various reasons seems to have begun in the early part of the sixteenth
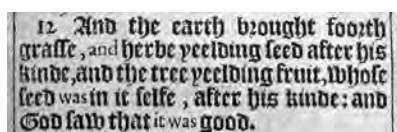
century. During the years 1534–35, Sebastian Münster and Pierre Robert Olivetan—who printed Latin and French translations of the Bible, respectively—were two of the earliest individuals to indicate by means of a different type words in the translation not represented precisely in the exemplar. The first English Bible to follow this practice was the Great Bible, which was printed in 1539 under the editorship of Miles Coverdale, who made use of both Münster's Latin and Olivetan's French translations. In this English translation, which was printed in black-letter type, Coverdale employed both brackets and a smaller font to indicate variant readings from the Latin Vulgate which were not in the Hebrew or Greek manuscripts.

William Whittingham's 1557 Geneva edition of the New Testament was printed in roman type and was the first English translation to use italic type for words not in the manuscripts. In his preface, he noted that he inserted those words "in such letters as may easily be discerned from the common text."[24] Three years later, Whittingham and other Protestant scholars at Geneva published the entire Bible in English—the Geneva Bible. Geneva's preface stated the following: "[When] the necessity of the sentence required anything to be added (for such is the grace and propriety of the Hebrew and Greek tongues, that it cannot but either by circumlocution, or by adding the verb or some word be [understood] of them that are not well practiced therein) we have put it in the text with another kind of letter, that it may easily be discerned from the common letter."[25] The 1560 Geneva Bible, printed in roman type, was the first edition of the entire Bible in English that used italics. In 1568 the Bishops' Bible followed the Geneva Bible in this practice, except that because it was printed in a black-letter type, the added words were printed in roman type.[26]

Like the Bishops' Bible, the 1611 King James Bible was printed in blackletter type and used a smaller roman font for words not represented in the original languages, as in this example from Genesis 1:12 in the 1611 KJV (left) and the current Blayney text (right).

12 And the earth brought forth grass, *and* herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed *was* in itself, after his kind: and God saw that *it was* good.

In 1618 the Synod of Dort explained some of the rules used for translating the KJV: "That words which it was anywhere necessary to insert into the text to complete the meaning were to be distinguished by another type, small roman."[27] Later editions of the KJV printed in roman type, including the LDS edition, have followed the lead of the Geneva Bible in using italics for those words not represented in the Hebrew or Greek manuscripts.

Some important observations should be made concerning italics in the King James translation. First, the primary use of italics is to identify words not explicitly found in the Hebrew or Greek manuscripts that are necessary in English to make the translation understandable. There are a number of examples of these elliptical constructions. Most instances of italics in the Bible are for the verb "to be" (for example, "I *am* the Lord thy God," Isaiah 51:15). Italics were often used to supply unexpressed but implied nouns (for example, "the dry *land*," Genesis 1:9, 10), possessive adjectives (for example, "*his* hand," Matthew 8:3), and other verbs (for example, "his tongue *loosed*," Luke 1:64). Sometimes in Greek conditional sentences, the subordinate clause (or protasis) is expressed, while the main clause (or apodosis) is implied. A noteworthy example is found in 2 Thessalonians 2:3: "Let no man deceive you by any means: *for that day shall not come*, except there come a falling away first." In this case, the subordinate clause of the condition is "except there come a falling away first," and the implied main clause, added in italics, is "for that day shall not come."[28]
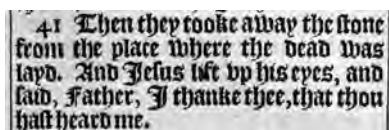
Second, a closer look at italics in the KJV reveals other uses, besides supplying unexpressed but implied words.[29] Some italics indicate that the words are poorly attested among the ancient manuscripts. An example of this is at John 8:7: "Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, *as though he heard them not*." The phrase "as though he heard them not" was not in a different type in the 1611 edition, but it was placed in italics in later editions, including the LDS edition. In this case, the Greek phrase is not in the earliest manuscripts of the New Testament, and subsequent editors of the KJV indicated their uncertainty about its authenticity by placing the words in italics.[30]

Another interesting example of this usage is at 1 John 2:23: "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [*but*] *he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also*." Since the 1611 edition, the KJV has set

apart the phrase "but he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also" in special type. The Greek phrase is in the earliest manuscripts but absent from many important later manuscripts. Because the words "hath the Father" precede and end the phrase, it seems that a scribe's eye inadvertently skipped from one instance of "hath the Father" to the other and accidentally omitted the phrase.[31] Thus, even though the phrase is not in many later manuscripts, it does seem to be original. Because the KJV translators did not have access to the early manuscripts which have this reading, the italics in 1 John 2:23 may be indicating that the phrase comes from the Latin Vulgate, similar to the practice of the Great Bible.[32] The famous Johannine Comma of 1 John 5:7–8 ("in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth") is not in any Greek manuscript before the sixteenth century nor in any Latin manuscript before the fourth century.[33] Yet this phrase does not appear in special type in the 1611 edition, nor in italics in the 1979 LDS edition. The phrase was placed in italics in the Cambridge 1873 edition and in subsequent editions based upon it.[34]

Third, there are many inconsistencies in the use of italics in the King James translation. The original KJV translators seem to have been fairly conservative in their use of italics, but their 1611 edition contained numerous inconsistencies, many of which continue today. For example, Hebrews 3:3 states, "this *man*," while the same construction in Hebrews 8:3 is rendered "this man."[35] Over the years, editors greatly expanded the practice of using italics, a process that continued until Blayney in 1769, who added many to the text. For instance, John 11 in the 1611 edition contains no italicized words, but in a 1638 edition it has fifteen italicized words, and in a 1756 edition it has sixteen.[36] The same chapter in the 1979 LDS edition has nineteen italicized words.[37] Note the example from John 11:41, in 1611 (left) and our current text (right):

41 Then they took away the stone *from the place* where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up *his* eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

Concerning this increased use of italics in later editions, F. H. A. Scrivener concluded, "The effect was rather to add to than to diminish

the manifest inconsistencies."[38] In today's edition, types of words that are italicized in one location are not necessarily italicized in another. For example, Acts 13:6 has "whose name *was* Bar-jesus," while the same construction in Luke 24:18 is rendered, "whose name was Cleopas." There is sometimes inconsistency within the same verse. Luke 1:27 contains both "a man whose name was Joseph" and "the virgin's name *was* Mary."[39]

Although the translators and editors were not consistent in their use of italics, "it appears that generally, though not always, their judgment was justified in their choice of italicized words."[40] The question remains, however, whether italicized words in the Bible are really necessary at all.[41] One scholar has proposed that "it is impossible to make any message in one language say exactly what a corresponding message says in any other," and because the words rendered in italics are necessary to make the English understandable, "they are not extraneous additions but are a legitimate part of the translation and need not be singled out for special notice." That is the case because the primary goal of any translator is "to transmit the meaning of the message, not to reproduce the form of the words."[42] With that in mind, publishers of the Bible in modern languages have abandoned the custom of using italics, and the King James Version is now almost unique in employing them.

THE LIVING KING JAMES BIBLE

In recent years, despite a general decrease in Bible reading in the Western world, there has been an increased interest in the fascinating history of the English Bible and the King James Version.[43] Although it is no longer the most widely used or the most influential Bible translation in English, the KJV is still in print and still sells well.

In 2005 the venerable Cambridge University Press published a new edition of the KJV that may eventually become the most important edition since Benjamin Blayney's of 1769. Cambridge University Press, the oldest printing establishment in the world, has been publishing the English Bible since 1591 and the King James Version since 1629. It is the press that prepared the text and set the type for the English Latter-day Saint edition that is still in use today. In the same spirit that led to the recent restorations of Michelangelo's paintings in the Sistine Chapel and Leonardo da Vinci's *Last Supper*, Cambridge's editor, David Norton, cautiously removed most of the well-meaning but often misguided "repairs" of earlier editors to restore

THE FIRST BOOK OF MOSES,
CALLED

GENESIS

1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. ²And the earth was without form, and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. ³And God said, 'Let there be light': and there was light. ⁴And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. ⁵And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

⁶And God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters'. ⁷And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. ⁸And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

⁹And God said, 'Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear': and it was so. ¹⁰And God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. ¹¹And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth': and it was so. ¹²And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. ¹³And the evening and the morning were the third day.

¹⁴And God said, 'Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night: and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years. ¹⁵And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth': and it was so. ¹⁶And God made two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. ¹⁷And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

²⁰And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven'. ²¹And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. ²²And God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth'. ²³And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

²⁴And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his

⁴the light from: Heb. *between the light and between the darkness*
⁵And the evening: Heb. *And the evening was, and the morning was*, &c.
⁶firmament: Heb. *expansion*

¹¹grass: Heb. *tender grass*

¹⁴the day: Heb. *between the night and between the day*

¹⁶to rule the day: Heb. *for the rule of the day*, &c.

²⁰moving: or, *creeping*
²⁰life: Heb. *soul*
²⁰ [fowl: Heb. *let fowl fly*]
²⁰open: Heb. *face of the firmament of heaven*

3

Genesis 1:1–24, New Cambridge Paragraph Bible, edited by David Norton for Cambridge University Press; note superscripted verse numbers within paragraphs based on content, quotation marks, modern spelling, 1611 punctuation made consistent, italics removed, 1611 marginal notes retained.

the KJV more fully to the text and intent of its 1611 creators. Where justifiable, the grammatical changes and word choices of the post-1611 editors were peeled back to reveal the grammar and words of the original. The original intent of keeping the KJV's spelling contemporary was applied, so the new edition is now standardized to modern spelling. The punctuation was taken back to the system of 1611 but simplified and made consistent, and quotation marks were added. All the italics were removed. Poetic sections were reformatted to reflect the poetic intent of the ancient prophets and psalmists, instead of prose, and the separate paragraphs for each verse were replaced with paragraphs based on the Bible's content.[44] Thus, despite the fact that the King James Bible is now four hundred years old, it is still very much alive.

Like the Prophet Joseph Smith, we Latter-day Saints believe the Bible "as it came from the pen of the original writers."[45] Modern languages, like English, were not part of the Bible "as it came from the pen of the original writers," nor were the chapters, verses, punctuation, spelling, and italics that we see in printings of the Bible today. But because very few Latter-day Saints can read the languages in which the Bible was first written or have access to the earliest manuscripts, we need those medieval and modern tools that translators, scholars, editors, and printers have provided over the centuries that deliver the word of God to us on the printed page. Together, they were all designed to help us better read and understand the scriptures—to help us seek, that we may find (see Matthew 7:7).

Kent P. Jackson *is a professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University. He received a BA in ancient studies from BYU and an MA and PhD in Near Eastern studies from the University of Michigan. He is the author of books and articles on ancient and modern scriptures, Latter-day Saint history, and the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible.*

Frank F. Judd Jr. *is an associate professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University. He received a BA and MA in ancient Near Eastern studies from Brigham Young University and an MA and PhD in New Testament studies from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. His research interests include early scribes and manuscripts of the New Testament.*

David Rolph Seely *is a professor of ancient scripture at Brigham Young University. He received his BA in Greek and an MA in classics from Brigham Young University, and an MA and PhD in Near Eastern studies from the University of Michigan. He is a member of the international team of editors of the Dead Sea Scrolls and specializes in Hebrew Bible, New Testament, Book of Mormon, and temple studies.*

NOTES

1. For information about the process of canonization, see "Canon" in the Bible Dictionary in the LDS edition of the Bible. For a broad overview, see F. F. Bruce, *The Canon of Scripture* (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988).

2. See 4 Esdras 14:44–46; and Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.38–42.

3. For the sake of brevity, we will not deal here with the Apocrypha. See "Apocrypha" in the Bible Dictionary in the LDS Bible and also C. Wilfred Griggs, "Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:55–56.

4. Basic information on the writing and divisions of the Old Testament text can be found in Ernst Würthwein, *The Text of the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995), 1–44. For the New Testament, see Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman, *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 4th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1–51. For illustrations of biblical texts, see also Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).

5. The Mishnah (ca. AD 200), in *Megillah* 4.4, already speaks of verses and specifies how many verses the reader may read in Hebrew before the interpreter translates into Aramaic.

6. Since the text was completely written in capital letters in *scriptio continua*, that is, without word spacing, the continuous nature of the text could sometimes cause the reader to misread if he did not divide the words correctly. To give an oft-used example, if the following phrase is written *scriptio continua*, it can be interpreted in ways which have very different meanings: GODISNOWHERE. One reading could be GOD IS NOW HERE, and another could be GOD IS NOWHERE, which has a very different sense. One can therefore see how someone reading a text in *scriptio continua* might occasionally misread a verse.

7. Sometimes a scribe would leave a short break after a passage or insert a horizontal stroke in the margin to mark a sense division in the text, although such reading aids are rare. Additionally, two dots were often placed over certain vowels (most often *iota* and *upsilon*) to denote when they were not to be read as part of a diphthong so as to help the reader make sense of potentially ambiguous places in the text.

8. See Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament*, 12–13.

9. See Metzger and Ehrman, *Text of the New Testament*, 34–36.

10. Metzger and Ehrman note that the paragraph divisions end in Sinaiticus in Acts 15. *Text of the New Testament*, 34.

11. Langton was famous in English history for his role in encouraging King John to agree to the terms of the Magna Carta in 1215.

12. In total, almost twenty different words were regularly contracted in early New Testament manuscripts: *man*, *king*, *David*, *Isaiah*, *God*, *Jerusalem*, *Jesus*, *Israel*, *world*, *Lord*, *Moses*, *heaven*, *father*, *spirit*, *cross*, *Savior*, *son*, and *Christ*.

13. See Scrivener, *A Plain Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament*, 4th ed., ed. Edward Miller (London, 1894), repr. (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 1997), 1:48–49.

14. Mathew Carey, "Autobiography of Matthew Carey," *New England Magazine* 6 (January–May 1834): 232; Carey, "Preface" in his 1801 quarto Bible. The 1611 edition had only four commas in Genesis 26:8, and the Latter-day Saint edition has six.

15. See David Norton, *A Textual History of the King James Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 153–55.

16. Modern quotation marks would render the passage as follows:
    And the Lord said unto Abraham, "Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, 'Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?' Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

17. See Norton, *Textual History*, 62–114.

18. See Norton, *Textual History*, 84–85.

19. Neither Hebrew nor Greek has a "J" sound.

20. See David Noel Freedman and M. P. O'Connor, "*YHWH*," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, trans. David E. Green (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986), 5:500–21. Variations in the name include *Yah*, *Yaw*, and *Yahu*.

21. Tyndale's 1530 Pentateuch is the earliest attestation of *Jehovah* in print in English. See David Daniell, *William Tyndale, A Biography* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994), 284–85. See also "Jehovah" in Tyndale's "A Table Expounding Certain Words," following Genesis in his 1530 Pentateuch, in Daniell, ed., *Tyndale's Old Testament: Being the Pentateuch of 1530, Joshua to 2 Chronicles of 1537, and Jonah* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 82.

22. In four exceptions it is rendered "JEHOVAH" because of special emphasis given to the name in the text (see Exodus 6:3; Psalm 83:18; Isaiah 12:2; 26:4).

23. For more on the history of italics, see Dewey M. Beegle, *God's Word into English* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1960), 112–19; Jack Lewis, "Italics in English Bible Translation," in *The Living and Active Word of God: Studies in Honor of Samuel J. Schultz*, ed. Morris Inch and Ronald Youngblood (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 255–66; and Walter F. Specht, "The Use of Italics in English Versions of the New Testament," *Andrews University Seminary Studies* 6 (1968): 88–93.

24. Alfred W. Pollard, ed., *Records of the English Bible* (London: Oxford University Press, 1911), 276–77, spelling modernized.

25. Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, 281–82; spelling modernized.

26. Some editions followed the Great Bible in printing added words in small black-letter type and with brackets.

27. Pollard, *Records of the English Bible*, 339.

28. See F. F. Bruce, *1 & 2 Thessalonians* (Waco, TX: Word, 1982), 166; and Abraham J. Malherbe, *The Letters to the Thessalonians* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 418.

29. For more examples of different types of italicized words in the KJV, see John Eadie, *The English Bible* (London: Macmillan, 1876), 2:280–87; Scrivener, *Authorized Edition*, 64–71; and Specht, "Use of Italics," 93–96.

30. See Bruce, *The Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), 415; Alfred Plummer, *The Gospel According to John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1893), 184–85; and Specht, "Use of Italics," 94.

31. See Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 641; and Raymond E. Brown, *The Epistles of John* (New York: Doubleday, 1982), 354.

32. The 1611 edition rendered the phrase in small roman type but did not place the word *but* in brackets. The brackets in the 1979 LDS edition seem to be a way that later editions of the KJV drew attention to the fact that among those manuscripts that have the phrase, the word *but* is absent in the Latin and the Greek but is supplied in the English to connect the phrase to the first clause in 1 John 2:23.

33. See Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 647–49.

34. See Scrivener, *Authorized Edition*, 69.

35. For more examples from the 1611 edition, see Scrivener, *Authorized Edition*, 69–71.

36. See also Eadie, *English Bible*, 280.

37. Specht concluded, "In 1769, the Oxford edition by Benjamin Blayney made more corrections and further extended the use of italics, probably beyond the limits that the original famous 47 revisers would have approved." Specht, "Use of Italics," 92.

38. Scrivener, *Authorized Edition*, 71.

39. For more on inconsistencies, see Eadie, *English Bible*, 280–87; Lewis, "Italics in English Bible Translations," 267–69; and Specht, "Use of Italics," 96–102.

40. Bible Dictionary in the LDS edition of the Bible, 708.

41. Early LDS Church leaders, including Joseph Smith, seem to have viewed the use of italics in the Bible with suspicion. See pages 202–4 in this volume.

42. William L. Wonderly, "What about Italics?" *Bible Translator* 6 (1956): 114, 116.

43. From time to time, modern facsimiles of the 1611 edition have been made available, including *The Holy Bible, 1611* (Columbus, OH: Vintage Archives, 2000). This is a photographic reproduction of an original 1611 edition. Some other "facsimile" editions are actually modern books in which the type has been reset and the text is in roman type rather than in the original black-letter type. The following three publications all appear to have been made from an 1833 roman-type printing of the 1611 text: *The Holy Bible: 1611 Edition King James Version* (Nashville: Nelson, [1982]); *The Holy Bible, 1611 Edition* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005); and *The Holy Bible Quatercentenary Edition: An Exact Reprint in Roman Type Page for Page, Line for Line, and Letter for Letter of the King James Version Published in the Year 1611* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

44. *The New Cambridge Paragraph Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and *The Bible: King James Version with the Apocrypha, Edited with an Introduction by David Norton* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2006). See Norton, *Textual History*, 131–64, 198–361.

45. *The Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph*, ed. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 256.