


The King James Bible and the Joseph Smith Translation

Kent P. Jackson

he Prophet Joseph Smith taught, “I believe the Bible, as it ought to be, as it came from the pen of the original writers.”¹ This statement tells us that the Bible is not “as it ought to be,” something that the Prophet emphasized in numerous ways throughout his life. And it tells us that the original documents—the words as first spoken and recorded by inspired men in their own languages—constitute the true and preferred texts of the Bible. The Prophet also stated, “We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly” (Articles of Faith 1:8), again making a distinction between original intent and modern translation.

The King James Version of the Bible is not the Bible. Like all modern versions, it is a *translation* of the Bible. The Bible, most precisely, would be the texts of the original authors in their original words. I make this distinction, as Joseph Smith did, so we can separate in our thinking the original thoughts and messages from the word choices, grammatical questions, organizing structures, and printing styles in which the Bible is embodied today.

In June 1830, Joseph Smith began working on what we now call the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible (JST). The Prophet and his contemporaries called it the New Translation, as it is also named in a revelation in the Doctrine and Covenants (D&C 124:89). Beginning with Genesis, the Prophet worked his way through every part of the Bible,

revising existing text and adding new material by inspiration from God. He left behind 446 pages of manuscripts of the New Translation, as well as his printed Bible on which he marked insertion and deletion points for the changes that are noted on the manuscripts. Joseph Smith's work on the Bible is one of the keystones of the Restoration and is a profound witness of the divinity of his prophetic calling. It is the source of much important revelation to the Church in the latter days. Two sections—Genesis 1–6 and Matthew 24—are canonized and included as scripture in the Pearl of Great Price (Book of Moses and Joseph Smith–Matthew). Throughout the pages of the New Translation, there are passages that clarify and enlighten, making the Bible alive with inspired additions and rewordings.²

The New Translation grows out of the King James Version. While the Prophet was working on the translation, he apparently had his King James Bible before him on the table or in his lap. He read from it to his scribes, who carefully recorded the words they heard from his lips. In some cases, he simply read the words as they were written on the page. In other cases, he spoke words that were different from what was printed, dictating revisions large and small and sometimes entire new passages with no corresponding parallel in his printed Bible. On some occasions, he simply stated the chapter and verse numbers, followed by a single word to be inserted.

This chapter will explore the relationship between the King James Bible and the Joseph Smith Translation. Much of what makes the KJV recognizable, and even iconic, is its external expression, such as its words, grammar, organization, and the way it is presented on the printed page. We will focus on how those features relate to Joseph Smith's New Translation. But in the process, we will also try to understand something of the relationship between the New Translation and the Bible "as it ought to be, as it came from the pen of the original writers."

CHAPTERS AND VERSES

Our Bibles today are divided into chapters and verses. Those divisions are not part of the original writings, nor are they ancient. But they were created in an effort to help readers navigate through the scriptures and have a common way of referencing.³ Stephen Langton divided the text of the Bible into numbered chapters early in the thirteenth century. Robert

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Estienne, also known as Stephanus, invented the verse divisions in the sixteenth century and set them within the framework of Langton's chapter divisions. His verses were brought into the English Bible with the Geneva edition of 1560, and they remain with us today. The publishers of the Geneva Bible were the first in English to turn each verse into a new and separate paragraph by indenting the beginning of the verse and capitalizing the first letter of the first word, even if it was in the middle of the sentence.

The preference of Joseph Smith and the early Latter-day Saints was for longer content-based paragraphs rather than short verses like we have in the Bible. The 1830 Book of Mormon had very large paragraphs created by compositor John H. Gilbert. These paragraphs were retained in all the editions published and prepared during the Prophet's lifetime. The Book of Commandments divided the revelations into paragraphs with numbers, and the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants did the same. But those paragraphs were much longer than the verses in the Doctrine and Covenants are now. For example, section 5 of today's Doctrine and Covenants has thirty-five verses. In the Book of Commandments, the same revelation had eleven verses, and in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, it had six. The earliest manuscripts and the earliest printing of the Book of Abraham have paragraphs much longer than today's verses.⁴ In the first printing of Abraham 1, for example, there are nine of these paragraph-length verses, in contrast to the thirty-one verses in the same chapter in the Pearl of Great Price today.⁵

When Joseph Smith dictated his Bible translation to his scribes, they recorded his words in continuous text, uninterrupted by paragraphs or verses. The earliest printings of excerpts were in the Church's newspapers. The material that we now call chapter 7 of the Book of Moses was divided into four large paragraphs when first printed in the *Evening and Morning Star*, in contrast to its sixty-nine verses in today's Pearl of Great Price.⁶ When the Prophet prepared the JST for publication in a book, verse breaks were added on the manuscripts, either by him or by others assisting him.⁷ Again, the paragraph-length verses were much larger than Stephanus's verses in traditional Bibles. For example, Genesis 1 in the King James Bible contains thirty-one verses, but in the Joseph Smith Translation, it is divided into only nine. And John 4 has fifty-four verses in the King James Bible but only twelve in the JST.

In later printings of all of these texts, the paragraph divisions created in the time of Joseph Smith were replaced with short verses like those in the Bible. The process began in 1867 when the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints printed the *Inspired Version*, an edited rendition of the New Translation in Bible format. The RLDS *Inspired Version* contains short, numbered verses, each with a paragraph indent and placed in two columns. The Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price all went through the same transformation in the following decades. The motivation to make the verses small and to begin each with a paragraph indent probably was to make the texts look more “scriptural,” that is, more like the Bible. Thus printed Bibles seem to have been the model for the format of printed Latter-day Saint scriptures.

Today, virtually all modern-language Bible translations preserve Stephanus’s verse divisions. They are now four and a half centuries old, and they have stood the test of time. But most Bibles have abandoned the practice of turning each verse into a little paragraph. Nowadays, the text is divided into paragraphs based on the internal content of the scripture, just as Joseph Smith divided the text of his Bible translation. In most Bible printings now, the verse beginnings are preserved, but they are shown with small superscripted numbers inside the paragraphs. Cambridge University Press’s King James edition in 2005 divides the text into long paragraphs that reflect the internal content, and the verse numbers are preserved with small superscripts.⁸ Thus Stephanus’s system of verses still lives, but the text is made clearer with paragraphs that better reflect the intent of the biblical authors.

PUNCTUATION AND SPELLING

The punctuation in our English LDS edition bears little resemblance to that of the King James Bible of 1611.⁹ Originally the work of the translators and editors in the print shop, the punctuation was changed in every printing for over a century and a half until Benjamin Blayney’s edition of 1769, the one we use today.¹⁰

Part of the Joseph Smith Translation consists of small revisions to existing KJV verses. But much is new material that has no counterpart in the printed Bible. In those cases, the Prophet dictated the text in full to his scribes, who wrote in longhand what he dictated. On the JST manuscripts,

(161)

earnest to my kindred, and if they give thee not a wife for
 my son, thou shalt be clear from my oath. And I came this day unto the
 well, and said, O Lord God of my master Abraham, if now thou wilt
 prosper my way which I go, behold I stand by the well of water; and
 it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw water,
 and I say to her, Give me I pray thee, a little water of thy pitcher
 to drink; and if she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will draw
 for thy camels; the same is the woman whom the Lord hath appointed
 out for my master son. and before I have done speaking in my
 heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoul-
 der; and she went down unto the well, and drew water. And she said
 unto her maid, Let me drink, I pray thee; and she made haste, and
 let down her pitcher from her shoulder and said, Drink, and
 I will give thee. And she said, Give also to my camels. And she made the cam-
 els drink also, and I asked her, and said, whose daughter art thou?
 and she said, the daughter of Bethuel, Nahors son, whom Melch-
 beor unto him. And I gave the ear rings unto her, to put into her
 ears; and the bracelets upon her hands. And I bowed down my head
 and worshipped the Lord, and blessed the Lord God of my master
 Abraham, who had led me in the right way to take my ^{brother's daughter} ~~brother~~
 unto his son. And if thou wilt deal kindly and truly
 with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me; that I may turn
 to the right hand, or to the left. Then Laban and Bethuel answered,
 and said, the thing proceedeth from the Lord, we cannot speak
 unto thee bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her
 and go, and let her be thy master son's wife, as the Lord hath
 spoken. And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard
 these words, he worshipped the Lord, bowing himself to the earth.
 and the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and vessels
 of gold, and raiment; and gave to Rebekah, he gave also to her
 brother, and to her mother precious things. And they did eat, and
 drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarry all
 night. And they arose up in the morning, and he said, Send
 me away ^{unto} my master, and her brother, and her mother
 said, let she abide with us at the least ten days; after
 that she shall go, and he said unto them, hinder me not,
 seeing the Lord hath prospered my way; send me away,
 that I may go ^{unto} my master, and they said, we will call the
 blessed word ^{unto} iniquity at her mouth. And they called Rebekah.

Old Testament Manuscript 2, page 59, showing Genesis 24:41-58; note insertion of verse numbers, creating six large verses where KJV has sixteen; capitalization and punctuation also added after dictation of text.

we can see that his scribes recorded his dictation virtually without punctuation.¹¹ Punctuation marks were added later in an endeavor to prepare the New Translation for publication. The results are uneven, and it is difficult to discern a consistent system. This does not appear to be the work of skilled editors.

Spelling in the King James Bible went through a process similar to that of the punctuation, changing in each edition until Blayney's. But for decades afterwards, there were printings that varied somewhat from Blayney's, especially in America. The Bible that underlies the Joseph Smith Translation was printed by the H. & E. Phinney Company of Cooperstown, New York. It is the edition that Joseph Smith had in hand and from which he read when he made his translation of the Bible. For the most part, the spelling in Phinney agrees with Blayney, but with some words it continues the modernization process beyond Blayney, making the spelling better fit the time in which Joseph Smith lived. Again, this is consistent with what KJV printers had been doing for over two hundred years. As we shall see, the Phinney edition did the same with some grammatical features as well.

Joseph Smith and his JST scribes are not a particularly good guide for us to understand the Prophet's feelings about spelling in the Bible. Each scribe exhibited his or her own peculiarities, and I suspect that the Prophet anticipated that typesetters better schooled in spelling would make it right.

ITALICS

Italics are used in the King James translation primarily (but not exclusively) to mark words that are necessary to make complete sentences in English but are not found in the original texts.¹² For example, in Hebrew, one says "She my sister" for "She *is* my sister," and "He my brother" for "He *is* my brother" (Genesis 20:5). Good English requires *is* in these instances, so the translators supplied the words but put them in italics to show that they were added. But translation between any two languages always requires the addition of extra words to best convey original meanings, so identifying the added words is never necessary. In fact, it is undesirable, because it draws attention to the very words that deserve it least. Italicizing such words was a fashion in Bible printing in the sixteenth century, and the KJV translators followed it.

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The attitude of early Latter-day Saints about the italicized words is clear. They viewed the italics as evidence of tampering with the Bible by uninspired hands. W. W. Phelps wrote with a bite that “the old and new testaments are filled with errors, obscurities, italics and contradictions, which must be the work of men.”¹³ Writing with obvious sarcasm, he contrasted the Bible with the Book of Mormon: “The book of Mormon, as a revelation from God, possesses some advantage over the old scripture: it has not been tinctured by the wisdom of man, with here and there an Italic word to supply deficiencies.”¹⁴ Another LDS writer stated, “Much has been said about the bad translations of the Bible. . . . Every school boy seems to know that when either of the sectarian translators failed in making the two ends of a sentence meet, he filled up the vacuity with *italic*, by which means God has been greatly helped towards expressing himself so as to be understood by the learned world.”¹⁵ Whereas these and other statements may show that early Church leaders were not as favorable toward the King James translation as Latter-day Saints are today, to be fair to the King James Bible, the statements show that the writers probably did not understand why and how the italics were used.

But evidence suggests that Joseph Smith did not care for the italicized words either. In the 446 pages of New Translation manuscripts, no effort was ever made to preserve the italics. Even verses reproduced verbatim from the King James are lacking the italics. The same is true for the several sections of the New Translation published in Church newspapers during the Prophet’s lifetime. In those printings, the King James italicized words are reproduced in regular type, with nothing to set them apart from any other words.¹⁶

The JST shows other evidence of how Joseph Smith regarded the italicized words. In the JST manuscripts, we see that a largely disproportionate number of JST changes are triggered by italicized words. It appears that Joseph Smith distrusted them, so they often became the starting point for changes made to the text. Some of the changes simply alter an italicized word to the same word in regular type. In other places, a different word was chosen. But sometimes the italicized word became the starting point for a more fundamental revision to the verse.¹⁷

Perhaps the translation practice of the Church today can serve as a guide for the value of the italicized words in the King James translation. When

the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price are translated from English into other languages, no attempt is made to identify in italics the words in the translations that do not come from the original English text.

GRAMMAR, USAGE, AND LANGUAGE

For all the variations that have come and gone over the years in the King James translation, the words themselves have remained remarkably constant. Aside from spelling and punctuation, a typical verse from 1611 will have the same words that are found in our 1769 edition, and exactly in the same places. But often the forms of the words will have changed, because until Blayney, editors changed the forms of words to coincide with contemporary usage. For example, the 1611 KJV uses both *stablish* and *establish* to translate the same Hebrew and Greek words. Editors in the eighteenth century attempted to standardize these to the more modern form, *establish*, though they missed some of them. Likewise, over the years, *amongst* was modernized to *among*,¹⁸ and *alway* was modernized to *always*. But even the careful Blayney didn't catch all of these words, and some of the older forms remain. The point here is that from 1611 to 1769, editors and publishers of the KJV, including Blayney, modernized the text to meet the needs of contemporary readers. After Blayney, some American publishers continued the process of modernizing the Bible. The Bible that Joseph Smith used for the JST was among the most modern of King James Bibles in print. It included even more changes in these words, and it modernized other words as well.

The single most common difference between Joseph Smith's H. & E. Phinney Bible and other editions is the form of possessive pronouns and indefinite articles before words that start with the letter *h*. Most of the time, the King James translators used the word *an* before words that begin with *h*, even when the *h* is pronounced. Thus we have *an hundred* (Genesis 5:28), *an heritage* (Psalm 127:3), and *an house* (Mark 3:19). Similarly, possessive pronouns before the same words usually use the old forms—*thine house* and *mine hand*. But by 1611, such forms were becoming obsolete. The King James translators were deliberately using archaic language, but they were inconsistent in it because it wasn't how they talked. Thus in the 1611 edition and today, we find both the obsolete forms and the modern forms—*thine*

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house and *thy house* and *mine hand* and *my hand*, sometimes in close proximity to each other (see Exodus 7:4, 5; Deuteronomy 6:7, 9; Mark 3:19, 25).¹⁹

In Joseph Smith's Phinney Bible, the articles and possessive pronouns are changed to forms consistent with the speech of modern readers: *a hundred*, *a heritage*, and *my hand*. There are hundreds of these modernizations in Joseph Smith's Bible that make it different from the Bible we use in the Church today.²⁰ Though Joseph Smith's Bible and related editions used the same words in the same places as other Bibles—carefully preserving the exact text of earlier King James editions—they used contemporary forms of King James words in many instances, in harmony with the appropriate usage of their own generation. Thus, without being a “new translation” or even a “revision,” the Bible Joseph Smith owned and used for the JST contains a more modern form of the King James text than the one we use today. It, and not ours, is the King James text that underlies the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible.²¹

The King James translators lived in an era of change in the English language, and they worked from earlier English Bibles published at a time when the language was evolving even faster. Thus, in addition to competing word forms, we also have competing forms of grammar. Blayney, working over a century and a half after the translators, attempted to impose order and consistency on the translators' work. But with some aspects of grammar, he reversed the process of modernization and applied grammatical rules that predate 1611 and that the KJV translators apparently did not intend to apply. He edited the KJV so the pronoun *ye* is always used for the second-person plural when it is the subject of the sentence. The word *you* is used for the second-person plural in all other cases. Jesus said, “Verily I say unto *you*, Whatsoever *ye* shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever *ye* shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matthew 18:18). The 1611 translators normally followed this pattern, but not always, because it wasn't how they talked. In the 1611 KJV, *ye* and *you* were used more interchangeably, and even before 1611, both forms were in common use in all cases. The word *ye* was in the process of dying out of the English language. The King James translation is consistent in its distinction between the plural forms and the singular. The word *thou* is the second-person singular when it is the subject of the sentence, and *thee* is used in all other cases. These words were also in the process of leaving

H. & E. PHINNEY'S STEREOTYPE EDITION.

THE

HOLY BIBLE,

CONTAINING THE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS:

TOGETHER WITH

THE APOCRYPHA:

TRANSLATED OUT OF THE ORIGINAL TONGUES,

AND WITH

THE FORMER TRANSLATIONS DILIGENTLY COMPARED AND REVISED.

WITH

Caine's Marginal Notes and References,

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

AN INDEX;

AN ALPHABETICAL TABLE

OF ALL THE NAMES IN THE OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS, WITH THEIR SIGNIFICATIONS;

TABLES OF SCRIPTURE WEIGHTS, MEASURES, AND COINS, &c.

COOPERSTOWN, (N. Y.)

STEREOTYPED, PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY H. & E. PHINNEY,

AND SOLD BY THEM AT THEIR BOOK-STORE, AND BY THE BOOKSELLERS GENERALLY

IN THE UNITED STATES;

1828.

Title page, H. & E. Phinney King James Bible, 1828; same edition that Joseph Smith used for New Translation of the Bible; note retention of most of text from 1611 title page but with omission of "by his Majesty's special command" (as in other American Bibles) and "appointed to be read in churches" (as in other Protestant Bibles).

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the language by 1611, and they too have now disappeared. The word *you* was already moving into all cases, singular and plural, and now *thee*, *thou*, and *ye* are extinct everywhere in English except in the King James Bible and in writings inspired by it.

The use of pronouns in the Book of Mormon is closer to the language of the King James *translators* than to the language of the King James *translation*. The Book of Mormon represents a stage of the English language when the distinction between *thee*, *thou*, *ye*, and *you* was falling apart, and all were collapsing into *you*. Thus, in many Book of Mormon passages, the words are used interchangeably.²² The variants do not reflect bad grammar on Joseph Smith's part or a frontier dialect of western New York. They represent a phase in the history of the English language that is more true to life than the language reflected in the King James Version.²³

We see the same kind of variety in the language of the Joseph Smith Translation. In many places, the Prophet replaced an old form with a new form, sometimes changing a word to a modern counterpart. He changed the extinct word *wot* to *know*, and he gave instructions that it be changed every time it appears.²⁴ He used *a* instead of *an* before words that begin with *b*. He changed *saith* to *said*, which both removes an obsolete form and revises the text from present to past tense to make the sentences more clear. He changed *that* and *which* to *who* when referring to humans. There are also places where *you* is used where the KJV would have *ye*, *thou*, or *thee*. In a few instances, verbal conjugations are in modern forms. In a passage from the Book of Moses, the Lord speaks to Moses of "this earth upon which *thou* standest" (Moses 1:40; emphasis added). In his final revision of the text, the Prophet changed this phrase to "this earth upon which *you* stand." In the same verse, he changed "and *thou* shalt write" to "and *you* shall write," and in the next verse, "like unto *thee*" is changed to "like unto *you*."²⁵ But the Prophet did not make changes like these universally. Most instances of such forms appear as they do in the King James Bible.²⁶ Modernizing the words and grammar was clearly not the highest priority in the JST, but we do find evidence for it in the manuscripts.

TEXT

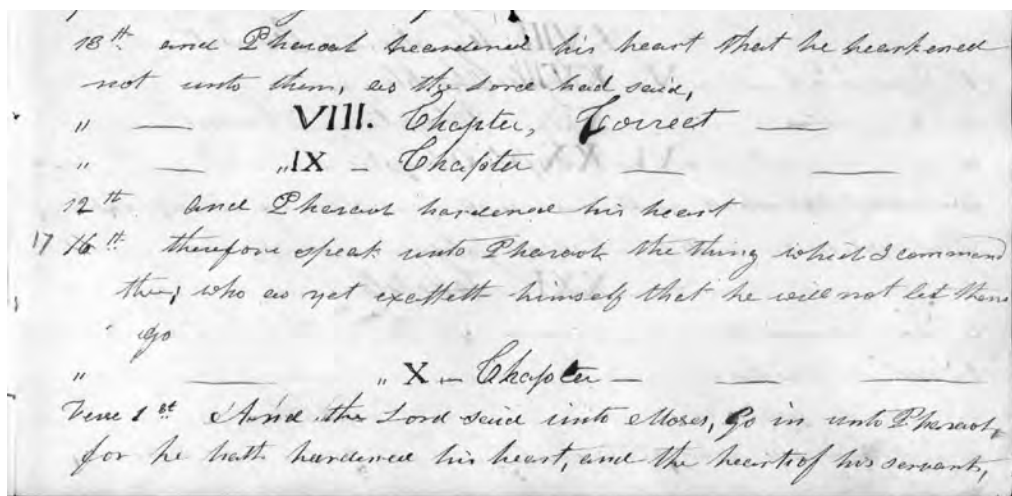
Joseph Smith never told us the reason behind any particular change he made to the text of the Bible. Thus we can only speculate about the types of

changes included in the New Translation.²⁷ It is likely that a significant portion of the JST restores text that was once in the Bible but later became lost. An angel told Nephi that many “plain and precious things” would be taken from the Bible before it would go forth to the world (1 Nephi 13:29), and thus it makes sense to assume that some lost text would be restored in the New Translation.²⁸ The Prophet taught that truths were lost even before the Bible was compiled,²⁹ so some JST corrections may reveal teachings or events that never were recorded in the Bible in the first place. In some places, Joseph Smith probably edited the text to bring it into harmony with truth found in other revelations or elsewhere in the Bible.³⁰

One might ask, is Joseph Smith’s New Translation a correction of the Bible, or is it a correction of the King James Version? In other words, do the changes respond to issues in the earliest known manuscripts and in any modern translation, or are they specific to the wording in the King James? The evidence shows that the most significant changes are corrections to the Bible, but there are many changes that address issues unique to the King James translation.

Among corrections specific to the King James Bible would be all the language modernizations noted above, including the changing of archaic grammar and vocabulary. Those changes are not needed for Bibles in other languages. In most cases, changes made at italicized words can be viewed as required specifically for the KJV and not for other Bibles, but often the text the Prophet added goes beyond the issues raised by the italics. Many changes are based specifically on awkward KJV wording. For example, in the KJV we read that “it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth” (Genesis 6:6), a particularly unhappy translation of good Hebrew words that mean God sorrowed, or was grieved, that he had created man. The JST correction (see Moses 8:25) is necessary for the King James but not for other Bible translations that provide better wording than the KJV. On the other hand, we read that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart so he would not let the Israelites go (Exodus 9:12). This is translated correctly from Hebrew, and thus the JST change responds to wording in the Hebrew text, and the Prophet’s correction would be necessary in any language.³¹ Likewise, the KJV translates correctly that “the evil spirit from God” came upon Saul to motivate him to kill David (1 Samuel 18:10), and thus the JST correction is

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Old Testament Manuscript 2, page 67, showing Exodus 7:13–10:1; note how each reference to God hardening Pharaoh's heart is changed to Pharaoh hardening his own heart.

needed in any Bible translation.³² The phrase "No man hath seen God at any time" (John 1:18) is found in the earliest Greek manuscripts and is translated correctly in the KJV. But the statement is false. It contradicts evidence in the Bible itself, where several instances are recorded of prophets seeing God. Joseph Smith's change would be needed in any Bible translation.³³

Many JST changes have the effect of transforming awkward or difficult KJV readings to sentences and phrases more easily understood. The Prophet changed "They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind" to "They brought him who had been blind to the Pharisees" (John 9:13). He changed "What do we?" to "What shall we do?" (John 11:47), and "The angel of the Lord came upon them" to "An angel of the Lord appeared unto them" (Luke 2:9). Many changes do not respond to problems with the KJV but simply make its wording more precise. In scores of passages, the pronouns *he* and *she* are replaced with the names of the people to whom those pronouns refer. "And *he* said" is changed to "And Abraham said unto the Lord" (Genesis 18:32),³⁴ and "*he* went up into the ship" (Luke 8:37) is changed to "Jesus went up into the ship."³⁵ Such rewording is not specific to special needs of the King James Bible.

Changes like these suggest that the Prophet Joseph Smith cared more about the message of the Bible than its wording. Throughout his career, he paraphrased or reworded Bible texts in his sermons and writings to suit the teaching needs of the occasion. From time to time, he criticized the wording of a passage in the King James Version. For him, the ideal of scriptural communication was the same as Nephi's, who glorified in plainness (see 1 Nephi 13:26–29). The Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible is a means by which God's word was made more "plain."

The New Translation's most important contributions are not specific to the King James Version but change the Bible at its most fundamental level, adding material to the text that is not dependent on verses already in printed Bibles. Genesis in the JST contains large sections of new text, including much of Genesis 1–6 (Book of Moses) and Genesis 48 and 50. Later in the Old Testament and throughout the New Testament, there are other sections of new text that go beyond printed verses. In such passages, we gain our greatest understanding of the relationship between the language of the King James Bible and the language of the Joseph Smith Translation. Those sections were not revealed to Joseph Smith in the original languages, Hebrew and Greek. They are revealed "after the manner of [Joseph Smith's] language" (D&C 1:24)—in English. But it is English that is specifically designed so the passages would serve as companions to the King James Bible. In most instances, the new material uses archaic pronouns and verbal conjugations, clearly patterned after the language of the King James translation. But the language does not give the impression of formality and antiquity as much as does the KJV. Both in vocabulary and in syntax, the wording is more contemporary, and thus the meaning is more clear. The New Translation was revealed in "plainness." The King James Bible appears to be its linguistic model, but as with the Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants, the primary objective of the language is to communicate the word of God to modern readers so they can understand.

LANGUAGE AND REVELATION

The strongest argument for the continued use of the King James translation by English-speaking Latter-day Saints is this convergence of language between it and the scriptures of the Restoration, a convergence that

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is particularly strong with the New Translation. One scholar has suggested that the JST “has served to maintain the centrality of the KJV” in Mormonism,³⁶ and indeed, the tie between the KJV and the JST means that the KJV will always be relevant, regardless of what translation one uses. Yet we should not overlook the power of the word in translation. Just as the KJV is not the original text, nor is the English Book of Mormon—and we should remember that a majority of Latter-day Saints today read the Bible and the Book of Mormon in languages other than English—so also will Joseph Smith’s Bible revision bless the lives of its readers when translated.

As for the King James Bible, it is true that there are other translations that make the words and messages of the Old Testament prophets more clear, and most modern New Testaments are based on Greek manuscripts that are more accurate than those that were available in 1611. But through the Restoration, all vital truth necessary for us has been made known, and we lack nothing of critical importance. This is as true in Spanish, Portuguese, and Tagalog as it is in English. Yet the King James Bible was one of the great tools of the Restoration, and its contributions were unique. It was in place when the Restoration began, it created a culture that prepared a significant portion of the world for the coming forth of the gospel, it was the only Bible that most English speakers knew, it provided the spiritual education for the earliest Latter-day Saints, and it supplied the religious vocabulary and language for the revelations of the Restoration. And, fortunately, it is a very fine piece of scholarship. It was translated by the best scholars of the day, and it is hard to imagine that anyone in their generation could have done better. The Joseph Smith Translation, which was revealed under its shadow, now builds on the KJV and blesses it. And like the other Restoration scriptures, the JST still connects with it today to form one of the scriptural foundations of the gospel.

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NOTES

1. *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.
2. See 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).
3. See the in-depth discussion on pages 95–103 of this volume.
4. In preparation for the Book of Abraham's first printing in the *Times and Seasons* in 1842, Joseph Smith's scribe Willard Richards divided the text into large paragraphs. See Brian M. Hauglid, *A Textual History of the Book of Abraham*, *Studies in the Book of Abraham* 5 (Provo, UT: Maxwell Institute, 2011), 150–51.
5. See *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 9 (March 1, 1842): 703–6; 3, no. 10 (March 15, 1842): 719–22.
6. See *Evening and Morning Star* 1, no. 3 (August 1832): [2–3].
7. These verse divisions, or at least some of them, were added as early as the summer of 1833. See Robin Scott Jensen, "Ignored and Unknown Clues of Early Mormon Record Keeping," in *Preserving the History of the Latter-day Saints*, ed. Richard E. Turley Jr. and Steven C. Harper (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2011), 147–55.
8. *The New Cambridge Paragraph Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
9. See the discussion on pages 103–8 of this volume.
10. See David Norton, *A Textual History of the King James Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 153–55.
11. There are some very occasional periods at the end of sentences when Sidney Rigdon was the scribe.
12. See the discussion on pages 108–12 of this volume.
13. *Evening and Morning Star* 2, no. 14 (July 1833): 106.
14. *Evening and Morning Star* 1, no. 8 (January 1833): [58].
15. *Times and Seasons* 4, no. 20 (September 1, 1843): 318; emphasis in original.
16. *Evening and Morning Star* 1, no. 3 (August 1832): 2–3 (Moses 7); 1, no. 10 (March 1833): 1 (Moses 6:43–68); 1, no. 11 (April 1833): 1 (Moses 5:1–16), 1–2 (Moses 8:13–30); Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of the Latter Day Saints (Kirtland, OH: F. G. Williams and Co., 1835), "Lecture First," 9 (Hebrews 11:1); "Lecture Second," 13–18 (Moses 2:26–29; 3:15–17, 19–20; 4:14–19, 22–25; 5:1, 4–9, 19–23, 32–40); *Times and Seasons* 4, no. 5 (January 16, 1843): 71–73 (Moses 1); see also Peter Crawley, *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church, Volume One, 1830–1847* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1997), 60–61 (Matthew 24).
17. In sections in which he did not dictate the text in full, the Prophet's standard practice was to mark words in his printed Bible that needed to be changed and then dictate the correction to his scribe, who wrote his correction on the manuscripts. Yet there are many crossed-out italic words in his Bible for which there are no

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corrections on the manuscript, sometimes even in chapters that the Prophet had identified on the manuscripts as “correct.” I suspect that these are not the work of Joseph Smith but perhaps of an assistant attempting to be useful, or of someone else during the ninety-eight years that Joseph Smith’s Bible was in private hands. In either case, the cross-outs demonstrate early suspicions about the use of italics in the King James Bible. For a statistical study of changes made at italicized words in the New Testament, see Thomas A. Wayment and Tyson J. Yost, “The Joseph Smith Translation and Italicized Words in the King James Version,” *Religious Educator* 6, no. 1 (2005): 51–64.

18. KJV editors in the eighteenth century modernized *amongst* to *among*, but they overlooked it in two places (Genesis 3:8; 23:9). The Phinneys (or their source) changed the second one but missed the first. For orthographic varieties in general, see Scrivener, *The Authorized Edition of the English Bible* (1611), *Its Subsequent Reprints and Modern Representatives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1884), 93–101.
19. See Scrivener, *The Authorized Edition*, 105–9.
20. Of the almost six hundred occurrences of the word *an* before *h*, it appears that the Phinneys (or their source) inadvertently missed only two: “an haven” at Genesis 49:13, and “an heritage” at Exodus 6:8.
21. In a comparison of over eleven hundred verses between the Phinney and Blayney Bibles, I found differences in about 40 percent of Old Testament verses and 30 percent of New Testament verses. The vast majority are punctuation or hyphenation differences. Differences in spelling and word usage make up a much smaller percentage. The use of italicized words is virtually identical. In the thousands of words compared, in only four places are there italics in Phinney and not in Blayney. Given the normal King James Version usage for italics, all four appear to be errors in Blayney and correct in Phinney. In one place, a word is italicized in Blayney but not in Phinney, apparently an error in Phinney.
22. The chief judge said to Korihor, “Art thou [second-person-singular subject] convinced of the power of God? In whom did ye [second-person-singular subject] desire that Alma should show forth his sign? Would ye [second-person-singular subject] that he should afflict others, to show unto thee [second-person-singular indirect object] a sign? Behold, he has showed unto you [second-person-singular indirect object] a sign; and now will ye [second-person-singular subject] dispute more?” (Alma 30:51). If this passage were in the current King James Bible, it would be rendered as follows: “Art thou convinced of the power of God? In whom didst thou desire that Alma should show forth his sign? Wouldst thou that he should afflict others, to show unto thee a sign? Behold, he hath showed unto thee a sign; and now wilt thou dispute more?”
23. See *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., 20 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), “ye,” “you”; Norton, *Textual History*, 111–13.
24. Old Testament Manuscript 2, page 69, line 17; Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith’s New Translation*, 699.
25. Old Testament Manuscript 2, page 3, lines 30–34; Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith’s New Translation*, 594. None of these changes from Moses 1:40–41 are in the current edition of the Book of Moses. See Jackson, *The Book of Moses*

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- and the *Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2005), 66.
26. Note the variety in the possessive pronoun: In Moses 6:32 we read, “all flesh is in my hands,” but in Moses 7:36 we read, “the workmanship of mine hands,” using the archaic form in one instance but not in the other.
 27. For an extended discussion of the possible types of changes in the JST, see Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation*, 8–11.
 28. There is some wording in the JST that I believe cannot be explained except as restoration of original text. See Kent P. Jackson, “Behold I,” *BYU Studies* 44, no. 2 (2005): 169–75; Jackson, “‘If . . . And’: A Hebrew Construction in the Book of Moses,” in *Bountiful Harvest: Essays in Honor of S. Kent Brown*, ed. Kristian S. Heal, Andrew C. Skinner, and Morgan W. Tanner (Provo, UT: Maxwell Institute, 2011).
 29. See *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1980), 1:245.
 30. There are “many things in the Bible which do not, as they now stand, accord with the revelation of the Holy Ghost to me.” Ehat and Cook, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 211; spelling and capitalization standardized.
 31. “And Pharaoh hardened his heart,” Old Testament Manuscript 2, page 67, line 33; Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation*, 691.
 32. The “evil spirit which was not of God,” Old Testament Manuscript 2, page 73, line 40; Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation*, 713.
 33. See Exodus 24:9–11; 33:11; Numbers 12:6–8; Isaiah 6:1; Amos 9:1. JST: “No man hath seen God at any time, except he hath borne record of the Son,” New Testament Manuscript 2, Folio 4, pages 105–6; Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation*, 443.
 34. Old Testament Manuscript 2, page 47, lines 5–6; Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation*, 651.
 35. New Testament Manuscript 2, Folio 3, page 65, lines 25–26; Faulring, Jackson, and Matthews, *Joseph Smith's New Translation*, 387; emphasis added.
 36. Gordon Campbell, *Bible: The Story of the King James Version, 1611–2011* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 157.