

Here we will look at the Books that Mormons consider scripture. I was in the L.D.C Church myself and I concluded that three of these books are not the word of God. Here I will show some of the reasons why I came to that conclusion.

L.D.S. STANDARD WORKS

The standard works of the L.D.S. church are the four books they call scripture: The Book of Mormon, The Pearl of Great Price, The Doctrine & Covenants and the Bible.

L.D.S. VIEW OF THE BIBLE

The L.D.S. Eighth Article of Faith states, “**We believe the Bible** to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.”

J. Reuben Clark, Jr., wrote the following on pg. 202 of his book On the Way to Immortality and Eternal Life:

“As to the Bible, the Prophet Joseph on another occasion (October 15, 1843) said: ‘I believe the Bible as it read when it came from the pen of the original writers. **Ignorant translators, careless transcribers, or designing and corrupt priests have committed many errors.**”

Mormon apostle James E. Talmage wrote this in Chapter 13 (pg. 248) of his book, Articles of Faith: (PDF pg. 267)

“The present is too late a time and the separating distance too vast to encourage the reopening of the question. The New Testament must be accepted for what it claims to be; and though, perhaps, many precious parts have been suppressed or lost, while some corruptions of the texts may have crept in, and errors have been inadvertently introduced through the incapacity of translators, the volume as a whole must be admitted as authentic and credible, and as an essential part of the Holy Scriptures.”

Mormon prophet Joseph Fielding Smith, on pg. 65 of his book, Answers to Gospel Questions, Vol. 2:

“There are no original manuscripts. Second, through the years scribes were busy making copies of the scriptures, and they inadvertently, or otherwise, made some changes. There is no original copy of any of the books of the Bible, known to man today; that eliminations could have occurred is very possible. Third, in later translations after the scriptures fell into the hands of Christian scholars who did not accept baptism by immersion, other errors could have occurred. Especially was this the case as it was revealed to Nephi by the angel of the Lord. On this point Nephi wrote: 1 Nephi 13:26 (Book of Mormon): ‘And after they go forth by the hand of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, from the Jews unto the Gentiles, thou seest the foundation of a great and abominable church, which is most abominable above all other churches; for **behold, they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord have been taken away.** And all this have they done that they might pervert the right ways of the Lord, that they might blind the eyes and harden the hearts of the children of men.’”

(end quote)

As you can see, although L.D.S. authorities believe the Bible to be the word of God, they do not believe that the Bible is accurate. Their statements show their ignorance of the subject. There are thousands of manuscripts validating the accurate transmission of the New Testament. As far as the Old Testament is concerned, the Dead Sea Scrolls contain a portion of every book in the Old Testament (with the exception of Esther). The entire book of Isaiah was found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. These manuscripts verify that our Hebrew text today has not changed. Keep in mind that the Dead Sea Scrolls date back to a time before the Lord Jesus Christ was born. If the text was corrupt in Jesus' time period, He certainly would have known about it. Jesus seemed to consider the text reliable.

Matthew 5:18

"For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, **not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished.**"

Matthew 24:35

"Heaven and earth will pass away, **but My words shall not pass away.**"

Luke 24:25-27

"And He said to them, 'O foolish men and slow of heart **to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!** Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into His glory?' And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures."

John 5:39

"You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me..."

Jesus said "not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass away from the Law, until all is accomplished." (Mt. 5:18)

How could Jesus make such a statement about the scripture if the text was corrupt already?

Jesus said His words would not pass away. Are we now, to believe that Jesus was wrong, and His words have passed away?

Jesus told the apostles they were foolish for not believing ALL that the prophets spoke. Then, beginning with Moses and all the prophets, Jesus explained the Scriptures concerning Himself. Does this sound like He believed they could not trust the Scriptures?

Jesus said the Old Testament testified of Him, and although men might search the Scriptures for eternal life, they were unwilling to come to Him. This would be an unfair statement if the text were corrupt.

Are we now, to believe that even though the Dead Sea Scrolls verify the accuracy of the text in Jesus' day, we cannot trust them now, even though Jesus trusted in them?

Are we now, to ignore the thousands of manuscripts giving evidence that shows the accuracy of the New Testament simply on the word of Mormon leaders who have no evidence to back up their statements?

The Inspired Version of the Bible by Joseph Smith, Jr.

I recognize that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints does not use this Bible on a regular basis. I have had the experience of Mormons referring to this publication, after I pointed out that the Bible disagrees with L.D.S. doctrine. The fact remains that the prophet and founder of the L.D.S. church produced this "inspired version"

When I first received a copy of the Inspired Version, the first thing I noticed was that the verses do not always line up with verses in the Holy Bible. That is because Smith added text to the Bible wherever he saw fit. This should present problems for the person who stops and considers it. Bible translators constantly go back to the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts to check the accuracy of the text. There is no manuscript evidence whatsoever to support the additions Joseph Smith made to the Bible.

Even if we assumed that God indeed told Smith to revise certain passages, would God have him put words into other people's mouths? Smith's revisions have people saying things that, as far as we know, they never said. He also added a prophecy in the Book of Genesis.

Look in a regular Holy Bible: the fiftieth chapter of Genesis ends with verse 26. Smith's Inspired Version continues the chapter on until verse 38. That is because Smith added a prophecy. As far as I can tell, he is prophesying himself as coming in the future. I do know that it is not right to add to what God has already established as Scripture:

Proverbs 30:5-6

"Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His words lest He reprove you, and you be proved a liar."

Deuteronomy 4:2

"You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that
you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."

Following is a comparison of the King James Version of the Holy Bible, and the Joseph Smith Inspired Version. (PDF pg. 79-80)

Verse	King James Version (Genesis 50:24-26)	Inspired Version (Genesis 50:24-38) ^{A33}
24	And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.	And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die, and go unto my fathers; and I go down to my grave with joy. The God of father Jacob be with you, to deliver you out of affliction in the days of your bondage; for the Lord hath visited me, and I have obtained a promise of the Lord, that out of the fruit of my loins, the Lord God will raise up a righteous branch out of my loins; and unto thee, whom my father Jacob hath named Israel, a prophet; (not the Messiah who is called Shilo;) and this prophet shall deliver my people out of Egypt in the days of thy bondage.
25	And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.	And it shall come to pass that they shall be scattered again; and a branch shall be broken off, and shall be carried into a far country; nevertheless they shall be remembered in the covenants of the Lord, when the Messiah cometh, for he shall be made manifest unto them in the latter days, in the Spirit of power; and shall bring them out of darkness into light; out of hidden darkness, and out of captivity unto freedom.
26	So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.	A seer shall the Lord my God raise up, who shall be a choice seer unto the fruit of my loins.
	END OF CHAPTER	ADDITIONAL TEXT:
27		Thus saith the Lord God of my fathers unto me, A choice seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins, and he shall be esteemed highly among the fruit of thy loins; and unto him will I give commandment that he shall do a work for the fruit of thy loins, his brethren.
28		And he shall bring them to the knowledge of the covenants which I have made with
		thy fathers; and he shall do whatsoever work I shall command him.

29		And I will make him great in mine eyes, for he shall do my work; and he shall be great like unto him whom I have said I would raise up unto you, to deliver my people, O house of Israel, out of the land of Egypt; for a seer will I raise up to deliver my people out of the land of Egypt; and he shall be called Moses. And by this name he shall know that he is of thy house; for he shall be nursed by the king's daughter, and shall be called her son.
30		And again, a seer will I raise up out of the fruit of thy loins, and unto him will I give power to bring forth my word unto the seed of thy loins; and not to the bringing forth of my word only, saith the Lord, but to the convincing them of my word, which shall have already gone forth among them in the last days;
31		Wherefore the fruit of thy loins shall write, and the fruit of the loins of Judah shall write; and that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together unto the confounding of false doctrines, and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, and bringing them to a knowledge of their fathers in the latter days; and also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord.
32		And out of weakness shall he be made strong, in that day <u>when my work shall go forth among all my people, which shall restore them, who are of the house of Israel, in the last days.</u>
33		And that seer will I bless, and they that <u>seek to destroy him shall be confounded; for this promise I give unto you; for I will remember you from generation to generation; and his name shall be called Joseph, and it shall be after the name of his</u>
		father; and he shall be like unto you; for <u>the thing which the Lord shall bring forth by his hand shall bring my people</u> unto salvation.
		And the Lord sware unto Joseph that he

34		would preserve his seed for ever, saying, I will raise up Moses, and a rod shall be in his hand, and he shall gather together my people, and he shall lead them as a flock, and he shall smite the waters of the Red Sea with his rod.
35		And he shall have judgment, and shall write the word of the Lord. And he shall not speak many words, for I will write unto him my law by the finger of mine own hand. And I will make a spokesman for him, and his name shall be called Aaron.
36		And it shall be done unto thee in the last days also, even as I sworn. Therefore, Joseph said unto his brethren, God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, and unto Isaac, and to Jacob.
37		And Joseph confirmed many other things unto his brethren, and took an oath of the children of Israel, saying unto them, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.
38		So Joseph died when he was an hundred and ten years old; and they embalmed him, and they put him in a coffin in Egypt; and he was kept from burial by the children of Israel, that he might be carried up and laid in the sepulcher with his father. And thus they remembered the oath which they sware unto him.
		END OF CHAPTER

The Book of Mormon

For some reason some Mormons look to both the North American and South American continents for archaeological evidence that will confirm writings found in the Book of Mormon. Looking for such Book of Mormon evidence in South America is looking in the wrong place; and it's important to remember that we are not looking for some obscure village, but rather a great nation. The lack of any evidence for the Book of Mormon made more of an impact on me when I realized how big the nation was that was supposed to have disappeared without a trace.

First, I would like to show just where we should begin our search for evidence of the people mentioned in the Book of Mormon. Next, I will show just how big the nation was that these people supposedly grew into, and some of the things they had.

In the preface of the Book of Mormon we are told that Joseph Smith was led to some gold plates by an angel; Smith later translated these plates into the Book of Mormon. The full story is also found in the book Pearl of Great Price, in the section entitled “Joseph Smith History 1:34” (also called “Joseph Smith 2, (PDF LDS Scripture pg. 15 1:34”).

“He said there was a book deposited, written upon gold plates, giving an account of the former inhabitants of this continent, and the source from whence they sprang. He also said that the fullness of the everlasting Gospel was contained in it, as delivered by the Savior to the ancient inhabitants...”

At the beginning of this chapter, in verses 3-5, we are told this incident took place in Manchester, New York. The angel told Joseph (while in New York) that these gold plates told "of the former inhabitants of this continent". Therefore, we know to search for evidence of these former inhabitants on the North American Continent. There are some logical questions to ask when searching for this evidence. How big was this nation? What sort of possessions and tools did they have and use that we should look for? We can look to the Book of Mormon to supply us with these answers.

Ether 10:25 (PDF LDS Scripture pg. 524)

“And they did make all manner of tools to till the earth, both to plow and to sow, to reap and to hoe, and also to thrash.”

Ether 9:16-19 (PDF LDS Scripture pg. 521)

“ 16) And the Lord began again to take the curse from off the land ,and the house of Emer did prosper exceedingly under the reign of Emer; and in the space of sixty and two years they had become exceedingly strong, insomuch that they became exceedingly rich— 17)Having all manner of fruit, and of grain, and of silks, and of fine linen, and of gold, and of silver, and of precious things; 18) And also all manner of cattle, of oxen, and cows, and of sheep, and of swine, and of goats, and also many other kinds of animals which were useful for the food of man. 19) And they also had horses, and asses, and there were elephants and cureloms and cumoms; all of which were useful unto man, and more especially the elephants and cureloms and cumoms...”

There were so many people; they spread out upon the face of the land. They had buildings, machinery, and metals, including steel (Jarom 1:89). There were so many people, they could be found from coast to coast (Helaman 3:8). Not only were there people from coast to coast, but there were also building as well (Mormon 1:7). They built ships, Temples, and synagogues (Helaman 3:14). There were wars in which as many as 10,000 people died in a single battle (Mormon 6:11). There was a money system, which included lots of different types of coins (Alma 11:4-19).

It is hard to imagine that a group of people large enough to be spread from “coast to coast”, a people who built ships, buildings, machinery, and more, could disappear and not leave any trace. “We are able to cite archaeological evidence for the things written in The Holy Bible, evidence that dates as far back in time as this time frame in the Book of Mormon.”

It stands to reason that if the Book of Mormon is true or has any historical significance at all that there would be some confirmation of it by archaeology. Out of all of the research and study done on this continent there has not been a single thing found in archaeological diggings that connects to the Book of Mormon. In fact, the geography of the land — its mountains, rivers, and valleys —has never been matched with this or any other continent.

The Book of Mormon mentions silk, steel, horses and other such things that are known not to have been here during pre-Columbian times (see “letter from Smithsonian” next page) Inside the Book of Mormon we are told of several sets of ancient plates that contained the history of the people in America from 600 BC to 421 AD. I find it interesting that no one knows where any of these plates are. None of these plates has ever been found.

Some members of the L.D.S. church claim that archaeology has confirmed the Book of Mormon. One of the more well-known claims is that the Smithsonian Institution (the world’s largest museum and research complex) has found proof and is using the Book of Mormon as a guide to study America. This claim became so well known that the Smithsonian was forced to prepare a letter in response to the many inquiries received concerning this. I wrote the Smithsonian myself and have included the letter here.

Following is a reprint of a letter I received from the Smithsonian Institution when I wrote them regarding the Book of Mormon.



Information from the National Museum of Natural History
SMITHSONIAN

INSTITUTION WASHINGTON, D.C. 20560

“Your recent inquiry concerning the Smithsonian Institution's alleged use of the Book of Mormon as a scientific guide has been received in the Smithsonian's Department of Anthropology.

The Book of Mormon is a religious document and not a scientific guide. The Smithsonian Institution has never used it in archaeological research and any information that you have received to the contrary is incorrect. Accurate information about the Smithsonian's position is contained in the enclosed "Statement Regarding the Book of Mormon," which was prepared to respond to the numerous inquiries that the Smithsonian receives on this topic.

Because the Smithsonian regards the unauthorized use of its name to disseminate inaccurate information as unlawful, we would appreciate your assistance in providing us with the names of any individuals who are misusing the Smithsonian's name. Please address any correspondence to:

Anthropology Outreach Office

Department of Anthropology

National Museum of Natural History MRC 112 Smithsonian Institution
Washington, DC 20560

PREPARED BY

THE DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, 1996”

“STATEMENT REGARDING THE BOOK OF MORMON

The Smithsonian Institution has never used the Book of Mormon in any way as a scientific guide. Smithsonian archaeologists see no direct connection between the archaeology of the New World and the subject matter of the book.

The physical type of the American Indian is basically Mongoloid, being most closely related to that of the peoples of eastern, central, and northeastern Asia. Archaeological evidence indicates that the ancestors of the present Indians came into the New World - probably over a land bridge known to have existed in the Bering Strait region during the last Ice Age - in a continuing series of small migrations beginning from about 25,000 to 30,000 years ago.

Present evidence indicates that the first people to reach this continent from the East were the Norsemen who briefly visited the northeastern part of North America around A.D. 1000 and then settled in Greenland. There is nothing to show that they reached Mexico or Central America.

One of the main lines of evidence supporting the scientific finding that contacts with Old World civilizations if indeed they occurred at all, were of very little significance for the development of American Indian civilizations, is the fact that none of the principal Old World domesticated food, plants, or animals (except the dog) occurred in the New World in pre-Columbian times. American Indians had no wheat, barley, oats, millet, rice, cattle, pigs, chickens, horses, donkeys, camels before 1492. (Camels and horses were in the Americas, along with the bison, mammoth, and mastodon, but all these animals became extinct around 10,000 B.C. at the time when the early big game hunters spread across the Americas.)

Iron, steel, glass, and silk were not used in the New World before 1492 (except for occasional use of unsmelted meteoric iron). Native copper was worked in various locations in pre-Columbian times, but true metallurgy was limited to southern Mexico and the Andean region, where its occurrence in late prehistoric times involved gold, silver, copper, and their alloys, but not iron.

There is a possibility that the spread of cultural traits across the Pacific to Mesoamerica and the northwestern coast of South America began several hundred years before the Christian era. However, any such inter-hemispheric contacts appear to have been the results of accidental voyages originating in eastern and southern Asia. It is by no means certain that even such contacts occurred; certainly there were no contacts with the ancient Egyptians, Hebrews, or other peoples of Western Asian and the Near East.

No reputable Egyptologist or other specialist on Old World archeology, and no expert on New World prehistory, has discovered or confirmed any relationship between archaeological remains in Mexico and archaeological remains in Egypt.

Reports of findings of ancient Egyptian Hebrew, and other Old World writings in the New World in pre-Columbian contexts have frequently appeared in newspapers, magazines, and sensational books. None of these claims has stood up to examination by reputable scholars. No inscriptions using Old World forms of writing have been shown to have occurred in any part of the Americas before 1492 except for a few Norse rune stones which have been found in Greenland.”

(End of Letter from the Smithsonian Institute)

I would like to conclude the thoughts concerning archaeology and the Book of Mormon with this quote from the **Encyclopedia of Mormonism, Volume 1:**

“ARCHAEOLOGY

“Archaeological data from the ancient Near East and the Americas have been used both to support and to discredit the Book of Mormon. Many scholars see no support for the Book of Mormon in the archaeological records, since no one has found any inscriptional evidence for, or material remains that can be tied directly to, any of the persons, places, or things mentioned in the book (Smithsonian Institution).”

Not only do we lack archaeological evidence, but the Book of Mormon also gives false information about events that took place in other areas, as well.

I would like to share two examples of this here. The Holy Bible and history agree that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. This can be verified in Grolier's Multimedia Encyclopedia and Matthew 2:1; but the Book of Mormon claims Jesus was to be born at Jerusalem. Alma 7:10 reads, "And behold, he shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers..." (PDF LDS Scripture pg. 242)

The second example I will mention is found in the Book of Mormon: 1 Nephi 2:8: "And it came to pass that he called the name of the river, Laman, and it emptied into the Red Sea; and the valley was in the borders near the mouth thereof." (PDF LDS Scripture pg. 22)

The problem with this verse is that there is no river “Laman” that empties into the Red Sea. In fact, there is no river at all that empties into the Red Sea.

Encyclopaedia Britannica, Multimedia Disc

“At the Strait of Mandeb the channel is kept open by blasting and dredging. **No water enters the Red Sea from rivers**, and rainfall in the desert climate is scant; but the evaporation loss, in excess of 80 inches (2,000 mm) per year, is made up by an inflow of water through the eastern channel of the Strait of Mandeb from the Gulf of Aden.”

International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia, Electronic Database

“The Red Sea has a length of 1,350 miles and an extreme breadth of 205 miles. **It is remarkable that while it has no rivers flowing into it** and the evaporation from its surface is enormous, it is not much saltier than the ocean, from which it is inferred that there must be a constant influx of water from the Indian Ocean through the Straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, together with an outflow of the more saline water beneath the surface.”

Doctrine & Covenants contains known false prophecies.

Examples shown were D&C Section 84 and 87.

This leads to the logical conclusion that Doctrine & Covenants is not the word of God.

The Pearl of Great Price contains the Book of Abraham, which is a proven fraud. The Book of Abraham was supposedly translated by Joseph Smith, from some papyrus that he had acquired. But the papyrus that Smith used to supposedly translated the Book of Abraham — papyrus which had conveniently disappeared — resurfaced. Although the L.D.S. church hoped this was a very significant find, it turned out that the papyrus substantiated fraud. Rather than the text we see in the Pearl of Great Price, the papyrus is actually an Egyptian book concerning the dead. For a detailed documented examination, I would refer the reader to the book: **Mormonism: Shadow or Reality** by Sandra and Jerald Tanner, pages 294-369

I will just include a couple of quotes here.

Michael Dennis Rhodes, **BYU Studies**, Vol. 17, No. 3, pg.274

“Conclusion

“Although we can, with the help of other similar texts, reconstruct the text and figures of the Joseph Smith Hypocephalus with a fair degree of accuracy, we are still far from completely understanding the message which the Egyptians meant to convey by it. The text of the hypocephalus itself seems to be an address to Osiris, the god of the Dead, on behalf of the deceased, Sheshonk. As is the case with most Egyptian text (especially religious text), it is full of references to matters either obscure or unknown to us, although undoubtedly clear to the Egyptians. Needless to say, much work is still to be done before we can fully understand the import of the Joseph Smith Hypocephalus, and hypocephali in general. Unfortunately, there has been little or no work done on them since the end of the last century. I hope, however, that I have been able to contribute to our knowledge of this interesting group of texts.”

Mormonism: Shadow or Reality, by Jerald and Sandra Tanner, pg. 332

“Naomi Woodbury, a Mormon who studied Egyptology, had this to say which is found in ‘**A Journal of Mormon Thought**’ **Autumn 1968**, page 8: ‘I myself studied Egyptian hieroglyphics at UCLA several years ago in hope of resolving some of the problems connected with the Book of Abraham in Joseph Smith’s favor. Unfortunately, as soon as I learned the language well enough to use a dictionary I was forced to conclude that Joseph Smith’s translation was mistaken, however sincere it might have been. Facsimile No. 2 in the Pearl of Great Price contained enough readable writing to convince me that it had purely Egyptian significance.

This was a disappointment to me, but the discovery has given me more time to restructure my thinking about Joseph Smith and the Book of Abraham than most of your readers will yet have had. My faith in the Church rests on personal feelings, but it has to find a place in historical facts as well.

‘After the appearances of the photographs of the papyri...I made some attempts to translate the “Book of Breathing(s)” text, with the help of...a book, which included...a fairly good text of the Book of Breathings....It belongs to a kind of literature, which is alien to Christianity and our Church...

‘Let us not lose sight of what I think is the primary importance of this papyri find. It can free us from our dilemma about excluding Negroes from the Priesthood. Perhaps our Father in Heaven intended the papyri to come to light now for just this purpose.’” (End Quote)

I find it interesting that Naomi justifies the idea that a so-called prophet of God, translating God’s written word, under God’s authority, entirely mistakes an Egyptian book on the dead to in fact be the Book of Abraham, by suggesting that God only brought this mistake to anyone’s attention (a hundred years or so later) to allow the Negro to have the priesthood. That is a pretty major mistake for God and His prophet to make.

Mormonism: Shadow or Reality, by Jerald and Sandra Tanner, pg. 321

“Improvement Era, Vol. 16, pg. 615

“ ‘More than fifty years ago the Egyptologist Samuel A.B. Mercer made this observation concerning Joseph Smith’s work in the Egyptian language:

“All scholars came to the same conclusion, viz: That Smith could not at all correctly translate any Egyptian text, as his interpretation of the facsimiles show. Any pupil of mine who would show such an absolute ignorance of Egyptian as Smith does, could not possibly expect to get more than zero in an examination in Egyptology....

“I speak as a linguist when I saw that if Smith knew Egyptian and correctly interpreted the facsimiles which you submitted to me, then I don’t know a word of Egyptian, and Erman’s Grammar is a fake, and all modern Egyptologists are deceived.””