



1-31-1995

## Sidney B. Sperry

Journal of Book of Mormon Studies

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### BYU ScholarsArchive Citation

Studies, Journal of Book of Mormon (1995) "Sidney B. Sperry," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*: Vol. 4 : No. 1 , Article 2.

Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/jbms/vol4/iss1/2>

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**Title** Sidney B. Sperry

**Author(s)**

**Reference** *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 4/1 (1995): ix-xi.

**ISSN** 1065-9366 (print), 2168-3158 (online)

**Abstract** Brief biography of Sidney B. Sperry.



**Sidney Branton Sperry**

**1895-1977**

Most of the material in this biography appeared in the publication of Sidney Branton Sperry.

## Sidney B. Sperry

Sidney Branton Sperry was born in Salt Lake City on December 26, 1895, a son of Harrison and Josephine Titcomb Sperry.

In 1917 he was awarded a B.S. degree from the University of Utah with a major in chemistry. After graduating, he was employed as a chemist by the United States Bureau of Metallurgical Research. He filled a successful mission to the Southern States from 1919 to 1921, serving about twenty months as president of the South Carolina Conference. He returned home from his mission in 1921 and, on September 1 of that year, married Eva Lila Braithwaite. They became the parents of eight children.

Interrupting his seminary and institute teaching, he earned and was awarded a master of arts degree in Old Testament by the University of Chicago Divinity School (1926), and a doctorate by the University of Chicago Old Testament division of the Oriental Language and Literatures Department (1931). While working on his doctorate in 1926, Dr. Sperry was appointed director of the Institute of Religion at the University of Idaho. Following his doctorate he did postdoctoral work in archaeology at the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem (1931-32).

In 1932 at the end of his year abroad, Dr. Sperry joined the faculty of Brigham Young University. His specialized study was in the field of Old Testament language and literature. He also taught the New Testament and latter-day scriptures along with courses in Greek history, Roman history, and mathematics.

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Most of the material in this biography appeared in the publication of a former Sperry Symposium.

From 1948 to 1954, Dr. Sperry was director of the Division of Religion at Brigham Young University, and from 1954 to 1959 he was director of Graduate Studies in Religion.

In May 1962, Brigham Young University bestowed the Karl G. Maeser Distinguished Teaching Award upon him. He retired from Brigham Young University in 1971.

Dr. Sperry was a major contributor in the Know Your Religion series and gave speeches in both the Assembly Hall and the LDS Business College in Salt Lake City. He was an early participant in the education week programs conducted by Brigham Young University and gave lectures for such programs in Utah, Idaho, Nevada, California, Washington, and Alberta, Canada.

Dr. Sperry was widely known as an author. He wrote numerous articles for the *Improvement Era*, the *Millennial Star*, the *Instructor*, and the *Ensign*. He also prepared lessons or manuals for the Sunday School, the MIA, and the Relief Society general boards of the Church. He authored eighteen books, some of which are *Our Book of Mormon*, *The Voice of Israel's Prophets*, *Paul's Life and Letters*, the *Doctrine and Covenants Compendium*, and the *Book of Mormon Compendium*.

Dr. Sperry passed away on September 4, 1977. His funeral was held in the Joseph Smith Auditorium.