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**Title** One-Stop Scriptures

**Author(s)** John A. Tvedtnes

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**Abstract** Review of *Words of Christ Restored for the Last Days* (1999), by Kenneth Lutes and Lyndell Lutes.

## ONE-STOP SCRIPTURES

John A. Tvedtnes

The price of this book exceeds what one might expect to pay for a volume of this size. Much of the cost undoubtedly went into the beautiful imitation leather binding with incised gold lettering and a ribbon to mark one's place. But the book is still overpriced.

The purpose of this book is to present to readers what the authors consider to be a restoration of Christ's words spoken anciently to his Jewish and Nephite disciples. The New Testament portion of the text includes all those sections (with necessary background verses included) of Christ's teachings from the four Gospels, with the changes to the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible found in the Joseph Smith Translation (JST). The text from the Book of Mormon version is borrowed from portions of 3 Nephi in which Christ speaks to the Nephites. The latter is merely a condensed version of 3 Nephi and, as such, adds nothing to what we already have.

While the authors divide the various books of the Bible and Book of Mormon into chapters, they do not indicate verses, which would be helpful for those who would like to identify the KJV reading. Even though presenting the material in paragraphs, the Luteses could have

Review of Kenneth Lutes and Lyndell Lutes. *Words of Christ Restored for the Last Days*. Midway, Utah: Lutes International, 1999. 251 pp., with index. \$21.85.

*inserted versification* (although the KJV and published JST sometimes differ).

I shall comment only briefly on the portions of the Book of Mormon reproduced by the Luteses, noting that they have failed to include portions of the Nephite record outside of 3 Nephi where Christ is directly quoted. One such passage is found in Moroni 2, in which Moroni fulfilled his father's promise by recording the words of Christ to which only passing reference is made in 3 Nephi 18:37. Other omissions include the words of Christ addressed to Jacob, beginning in 2 Nephi 10:7, and Christ's instructions to the twelve Nephite disciples in Mormon 9:22–25. The authors also omit "the words of Jesus Christ" revealed to Mormon and recorded in 3 Nephi 30:1–2 and Moroni 8:8 as well as Mormon's quotation of Christ's words in Moroni 7:33–34. The words of Jesus to Moroni (Ether 4:6–19) and his citation from Jesus' instructions to "our fathers" (Moroni 10:23) are likewise not included. Also missing is the conversation between Jesus and the brother of Jared in Ether 3.

The authors do not really make it clear whether they are trying to include all of Christ's words from the New Testament or only the ones that have been changed in the JST, although I suspect it is the latter. Otherwise, it would have been appropriate to include the words of Christ in Acts 20:35, 1 Corinthians 11:24–25, and 2 Corinthians 12:9. Still, they should have included the JST modifications to Jesus' words in Acts 22:10, 18. Had I done a book like this, I, at least, would have included Doctrine and Covenants 45:16–75, which the Lord told Joseph Smith was something he had said to his disciples in Jerusalem.

Unfortunately, the authors are not precise. When it comes to the JST, they presume that all changes made by Joseph Smith to the KJV are "translation errors [that] have been corrected" (p. 10). This does not account for the fact that Joseph Smith sometimes revised his own changes, either giving a third reading, or reverting to the KJV reading. They would have benefited from being acquainted with the manuscripts and Joseph's marked Bible.

More important is the fact that the authors allowed errors to creep into the text. Indeed, I found an error on the very first page. In the account of Christ's baptism in Matthew 3:14, the authors show deletion of the word *forbad* in the KJV and addition of the word *refused* in the JST. But they leave out two other words that are found in both versions. The KJV reads as follows: "But John forbad *him, saying*," while the JST reads: "But John refused *him, saying*" (emphasis added). The authors leave out the words *him, saying*, which are found in both versions. They quote only part of the verse, a verse that does not, in fact, have any words from Jesus.

In "A Word of Explanation," the authors acknowledge that their text "shows selected deletions," but they seem to have established no clear criteria for such selections. Thus, for example, they show the JST substitution of *God* for *devil*, with a strikeover through the words *tempted of the devil* and the JST wording *with God* in bold letters (p. 11). The KJV words *the devil* are also crossed out in the fourth paragraph, but not in the third, where the JST substitution *the Spirit* is included in bold. This lack of consistency throws doubt on their research.

Generally speaking, I do not find books useful that merely recapitulate the scriptures, in part or in their entirety, and provide the reader with no further information. I have my own copy of the Joseph Smith Translation published years ago by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (now Community of Christ), and also Paul A. Wellington's edition of *Joseph Smith's "New Translation" of the Bible*, which compares the published JST with the KJV in parallel columns. I also have Todd Andersen's *The Gospels Made Whole: One Complete Story of Jesus Christ*, in which he interweaves the KJV and other latter-day scriptures with the JST Gospels in their entirety, rather than just the selections used by the Luteses. So I would not find their book a useful addition to my library. But, although the buyer must be warned of errors and omissions in the text, I suppose a market exists for it among people who do not have these other books.