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**Title** The Earliest Textual Sources for Joseph Smith’s “New Translation” of the King James Bible

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**Abstract** Review of *Joseph Smith’s New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (2004), by Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews; also some commentary on *The Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts* (2005), by Kent P. Jackson.

# THE EARLIEST TEXTUAL SOURCES FOR JOSEPH SMITH'S "NEW TRANSLATION" OF THE KING JAMES BIBLE

Royal Skousen

## Introduction

In 1975, Brigham Young University published a significant first in Latter-day Saint research on the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible (hereafter referred to as the JST)—namely, Robert J. Matthews' *"A Plainer Translation": Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible—A History and Commentary* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1975). Matthews' work provided a careful examination of the manuscripts and other textual sources that had provided the basis for the publication of the JST (the Inspired Version of the Bible) by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (now renamed the Community of Christ) and stimulated an increased appreciation for the work that Joseph Smith had done in preparing his "New Translation" of the Bible. Matthews' efforts saw fruition in the

Review of Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds. *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts*. Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2004. x + 851 pp. \$99.95.

With some commentary on Kent P. Jackson. *The Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts*. Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2005. x + 180 pp., with index. \$19.95.

1979 publication of the King James Bible by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when it included citations from the JST in footnotes and in a specially prepared appendix (for longer citations). Now, within the last couple years, we have seen the publication of source materials for the JST, namely the joint work of Scott Faulring, Kent Jackson, and Robert Matthews in producing a careful transcript of the manuscripts for the JST. In addition, Jackson has used these materials to construct a text for the Book of Moses (the vision of Moses plus the initial part of the JST version of Genesis that has been canonized in the Church's scripture, the Pearl of Great Price). We can be especially thankful to the Community of Christ, as owners of the manuscript materials, for their continuing and crucial support for this project.

### Accessing the Sources

In an important sense, this work on the JST is part of a much larger movement within the last thirty years in Latter-day Saint scholarship—namely, the desire to produce in transcript all the foundational scriptural and historical documents of Mormonism. Although not coordinated, what we have been getting is access to all the original sources for the LDS scriptures as well as the documents dealing with Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet and revelator for nearly all of those scriptures. These transcripts provide an accurate record of how the sources actually read. They are not cleaned up grammatically, nor are they doctrinally massaged, unlike some of the previous publications of these original sources.

Besides the work on the JST, we can identify other key Latter-day Saint publications in the following areas:

#### 1. The Speeches and Papers of Joseph Smith

Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook. *The Words of Joseph Smith*. Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1980.

This volume presents the documentary sources for most of Joseph Smith's discourses during the Nauvoo period. Of particular value is the editors' presentation of the separate docu-

ments that serve as the textual sources for the highly significant King Follett Discourse that Joseph Smith gave near the end of his life. In Ehat and Cook there is no amalgamated text for this discourse; instead, the reader is allowed to analyze each of the separate accounts and evaluate how they differ in their representation of what Joseph said.

Dean C. Jessee. *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1984; revised edition, 2002.

Dean C. Jessee. *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2 vols. Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989, 1992.

Dean Jessee's extremely valuable work has provided transcripts of Joseph Smith's own histories, diaries, and letters, thus allowing the reader to see what Joseph actually wrote or dictated to his scribes. Such information has been particularly valuable in reconstructing Joseph Smith's history.

## 2. The Book of Mormon

Royal Skousen. *The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon: Typographical Facsimile of the Extant Text*. Provo, UT: FARMS and Brigham Young University, 2001.

Royal Skousen. *The Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon: Typographical Facsimile of the Entire Text in Two Parts*. Provo, UT: FARMS and Brigham Young University, 2001.

These two volumes, prepared by this reviewer, provide precise transcripts of the extant portions of the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon (about 28 percent of the current text) and the entire printer's manuscript, owned by the Community of Christ.

## 3. The Doctrine and Covenants

Prompted by the 200th anniversary of Joseph Smith's birth, the Church will be publishing the most extensive work done

thus far to assist scholars in examining Joseph Smith's papers,<sup>1</sup> including the earliest form of sections from the Doctrine and Covenants (which had to be omitted in Dean Jessee's earlier publications). In this regard, I should mention the groundbreaking work done by Robert Woodford in his PhD dissertation, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants" (Brigham Young University, 1974). His important findings will now reach a larger audience through the publication of transcripts of the sections of the Doctrine and Covenants.

#### 4. The Book of Abraham

There is ongoing work being done on the Book of Abraham, with transcripts and analysis by John Gee, Brian Hauglid, Michael Rhodes, and John Tvedtnes, in conjunction with FARMS.<sup>2</sup>

Ultimately, the primary sources for all the scriptures of the Church will, it appears, be made available to scholars. This is a wonderful development in scriptural research.

### Comments on the JST Transcription

The volume under review is a first-rate, accurate, and carefully constructed transcription of the JST that has involved years of work. For this review, I made an independent transcript of the first page of Moses 1 from the photographic reproduction of the first page of Moses 1 (on plate 2 following page 406). Then I compared my transcript against the editors' and found no substantive disagreements (only minor differences involving overwriting and partially missing letters or hyphens at the page margins). Although all transcriptions

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1. The Family and Church History Department in Salt Lake City is supervising this project, which should begin coming out in 2007. Over two dozen volumes are planned for the series.

2. Brian Hauglid, ed., *A Textual Study of the Book of Abraham: Manuscripts and Editions* (Provo, UT: FARMS, forthcoming).

probably have some as-yet-undiscovered errors, this transcription of the JST appears to be very reliable, and I therefore highly recommend it. Ultimately, a CD of the images and other related material will be made available from FARMS and the Religious Studies Center, which will also help in checking any unclear or especially interesting cases.<sup>3</sup>

I would like to mention two specific recommendations that might be implemented in a second edition of these JST transcripts:

1. *Provide a full typographical facsimile rather than the linear (diplomatic) transcript chosen by the editors.*

The editors state that “Our transcription is a facsimile of the manuscripts” (p. 51), which is essentially true except in one important respect: namely, supralinear insertions are not placed interlinearly in the transcript (as they are found in the actual manuscripts) but instead are inserted inline, with the use of angled brackets to show the inserted material and where it was inserted. Outside of this exception, everything else follows what one might expect for a typographical facsimile: initial and corrected readings, original spellings, and other accidentals such as punctuation and capitalization, with line breaks maintained. By making the transcript linear, the editors actually created more of a diplomatic transcript than a facsimile transcript.<sup>4</sup>

The basic motivation, it would seem, for making the entire transcript linear is to save space. Yet by choosing a better paper and with only a minor increase in the leading (but only where necessary), the supralinear insertions could be directly shown in the transcript. This would greatly facilitate the ability of the reader to immediately identify where insertions and similar corrections occur in the manuscripts, including places where the insertion was perhaps in the wrong place! Such a decision, of course, would have increased the thickness of the book but only slightly. It would appear that the editors went to some trouble to save page space, but then the publisher selected a thick, rough paper that ends up making the book enormously thick

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3. Cosponsored by FARMS and the Religious Studies Center at Brigham Young University, a CD with JST images and text will be forthcoming in 2006.

4. For the difference between the two, see chapter 6 of Mary-Jo Kline, *A Guide to Documentary Editing* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 132–51.

(2.3 inches thick for 864 pages). The selection of a more standard paper (and with an improved opacity) would lead to a volume that would be 1.6 inches thick, a saving of almost one-third in the thickness of the book. In other words, a more judicious control over the physical aspects of manufacturing the book would allow the editors to create an actual typographical facsimile rather than a diplomatic one.

2. *Provide in the headers for each transcription page an indication of the corresponding passage from the King James Bible.*

The verso and recto headers for any given spread in the printed transcript are always identical—namely, the headers give the name of the manuscript in all caps and on both pages but without any scriptural location. As a result, one has to look down the page (and sometimes to previous pages) to find what King James chapter is actually being covered on a specific page of the transcription. This problem is especially noticeable for those portions of the JST where photographs of the marked Bible are given on the verso of the page spread, with the corresponding recto giving the actual transcript. Sometimes for a given page spread, there is no clear indication of where the transcript is from. For instance, in looking at the page spread on pages 540 and 541 (with its heading “NEW TESTAMENT MANUSCRIPT 2, FOLIO 4”), we have no idea from this spread where we are in the New Testament. We are forced to turn to the previous page to discover that this part of the transcript is from page 140 of manuscript 2 and that that page corresponds to Hebrews 7:18–9:26. Maybe including something like “Hebrews 7–9” in the header on pages 540 and 541 of the transcript would help the reader more easily find a specific reference in the transcription.

### **On the Revelatory Nature of the JST and the Question of Its Canonization**

As described in this book under review, there has been some ambivalence among Latter-day Saints regarding the JST (even though the JST has frequently been referred to as the Inspired Version, following the RLDS terminology). Nonetheless, the Book of Moses and

the JST version of Matthew 24 are canonized in the Latter-day Saint scriptures. A further step towards acknowledging the value of the JST was the inclusion in the 1979 LDS Bible of some references to where the JST differs from the King James Bible. Over the years, some LDS researchers have advocated a full-scale acceptance of the JST, including some who have felt that the LDS Bible itself should incorporate the changes directly within the biblical text, thus replacing the King James text with the JST. One significant problem with this latter solution is that it could provide opponents of the Church with one more argument that Mormons are not Christians. From a practical point of view, it would be much better to consider the JST as representative of some of Joseph Smith's insights into the biblical text, but not to allow the JST to replace the traditional biblical text.

A related question is whether the JST should be accepted *in its entirety* as a revealed text from the Lord. The editors of the volume under review continually make statements to this effect, although never with any explicit argument. The assumption seems to be that since Joseph Smith was in charge, every change was under his direction and also inspired. Consider the following statements in the volume under review:

We have attempted to present the transcription with the dignity that the manuscripts deserve as revealed texts. (p. vii)

The Prophet Joseph Smith was instructed by the Lord to undertake a careful reading of the Bible to revise and make corrections in accordance with the inspiration that he would receive. (p. 3)

Some remarkable passages in the New Translation were revealed in doctrinal and grammatical clarity the first time and had little need for later refining. But other passages show that the Prophet struggled with the wording until he was satisfied that it was acceptable to the Lord. (p. 6)

It appears that the Prophet dictated most of the revisions to his scribes not long after the original dictation, when he

reviewed his work, corrected errors, added clarifications, and was inspired with additional insights. (p. 6)

Joseph Smith was called to provide a more accurate translation, and responding to divine inspiration, he made the necessary changes even if they corrected the words of ancient writers. (p. 10)

Because the Lord revealed the Joseph Smith Translation for the salvation of His elect, Latter-day Saints can embrace it as they do the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. (p. 11)

Additional statements can be found in Kent Jackson's *The Book of Moses and the Joseph Smith Translation Manuscripts* (here OT1 and OT2 refer to Old Testament manuscripts 1 and 2):

But OT1 is not the complete and final text of the Book of Moses, because that is found on OT2, on which Joseph Smith made further inspired corrections and additions. (p. 6)

Sometime after Genesis of OT2 was written, the Prophet revisited the manuscript to make further revisions. Some of those are editorial in nature and clarify and smooth out the words of the dictated text. But others are inspired additions and corrections that provide new insights or even change the meaning of what had been written before. Sidney Rigdon was the scribe for all but a very few of the corrections, recording the words dictated by the Prophet. (p. 9)

Behind these statements is the assumption that all the changes can be accepted as coming under the inspired direction of Joseph Smith. Yet when we turn from the JST to consider the two Book of Mormon manuscripts, we find that for some of the corrections made in the Book of Mormon text, the assumption that all Book of Mormon manuscript alterations are inspired must be firmly rejected. For instance, Oliver Cowdery emended the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon, especially when the original scribe was someone other than himself.

Yet in virtually all of these corrections in the Book of Mormon text, we can determine that the original reading was perfectly fine and in some instances even better than the correction made by Oliver.<sup>5</sup> Further, Joseph Smith himself made thousands of changes to the printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon in preparing for the publication of the second edition of the Book of Mormon (1837, Kirtland, Ohio), yet virtually none of these changes restore the original text and otherwise show no sign of being anything more than human editing of the Book of Mormon text. In other words, it is going to take much more work than simply declaring that later editing of the JST is inspired by the Lord. A case-by-case analysis will be necessary, much like what is being done currently in volume 4 of the Critical Text of the Book of Mormon. Kent Jackson (personal communication) has expressed his intent to do such an analysis, which I believe is absolutely crucial to a full understanding of the JST.

### Specific Problems with the JST Manuscripts

A critical text analysis of the JST should deal with the following examples of specific issues regarding changes within the JST manuscripts themselves:

1. There are late changes in the number of years that the patriarchs lived. In OT1, we have some later corrections in Oliver Cowdery's hand that appear to be quite secondary, such as Adam living a full one thousand years instead of the original "nine hundred and thirty years" (p. 97). For some of the other patriarchs we get other additions: 69 years more for Seth, 35 years more for Enos, 47 more years for Cainan, 50 years for Mahalaleel, 31 years for Methuselah (so he too reaches 1000 years, like Adam; see pp. 97–98, 110). The immediate question that arises here is: What is behind these changes and how consistently do they hold up throughout the genealogies? Jackson accepts them as part of the final text (in his text for the Book of Moses), but surely one must do more than just accept such changes. One must argue for them.

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5. For an example, see the discussion regarding the phrase "and it fell" under 1 Nephi 11:36 in *Analysis of Textual Variants of the Book of Mormon*, part 1 of volume 4 of the Critical Text of the Book of Mormon (Provo, UT: FARMS, 2004), 239–40.

2. One must be particularly suspicious of so many changes made in Sidney Ridgon's hand. Only after a careful analysis would it be possible to make some kind of evaluation regarding how significant these changes are and whether they should be accepted. Joseph Smith frequently allowed others a rather free hand in producing religious documents for the Church, as in the example of the Lectures on Faith that were included in the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants (in 1835). Recent research has been quite clear in demonstrating that the Lectures on Faith derive from Sidney Ridgon rather than Joseph Smith.<sup>6</sup>

3. There is also the question whether OT1 actually represents the text written down by scribes as Joseph Smith dictated the text (presuming that he did dictate it). It is also possible that OT1 is actually a copy of an earlier form of the text (much like the printer's manuscript of the Book of Mormon is a copy of the original manuscript). It would be valuable to analyze the text of OT1 from the perspective of whether any errors in OT1 might be due to mishearings (auditory errors) or misreadings (visual errors).

4. There is also a need for a systematic study of changes that might have been introduced by John Whitmer in copying OT1 to OT2—in other words, are these changes accidental or intentional? Some of these changes, possibly errors, were accepted, it would appear, by Joseph Smith in his later work on OT2.

5. Finally, there is a need for a computerized collation, with categorization of all the variants and who made them. Only with such a collation will one be able to systematically analyze and evaluate the multitude of changes in the JST manuscripts.

## Problems with the JST

In my mind, there are some serious difficulties in accepting the totality of the JST as a revealed text from the Lord. In many instances, the JST appears to represent Joseph Smith's commentary and explanation of difficult readings in the Bible. Instead of simply declaring that

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6. See Noel B. Reynolds, "The Case for Sidney Rigdon as Author of the *Lectures on Faith*," *Journal of Mormon History* 32/3 (2005): 1–41.

the entire JST is inspired, it would be better, I believe, to have a more open discussion of some of the difficulties that the JST presents to the researcher, especially when comparing the JST with other LDS canonized works.

Besides the difficulties in determining the actual text of the JST, there are more substantial problems that must be resolved before fully accepting the JST in its entirety as a revealed text from the Lord. Here I list some of these problems:

1. The first part of the JST looks like a word-for-word revealed text, in particular the vision of Moses and that first part of Genesis that has been canonized as the Book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price. The manuscript OT1, in many respects, looks much like the manuscripts for the Book of Mormon. But in switching to the New Testament and then in returning eventually to the Old Testament, Joseph Smith seems to have switched from providing a word-for-word revelation (much like the Book of Mormon) to making minor changes and relatively small additions to difficult readings in the Bible. It is not surprising that the more significant doctrinal items in the JST have, for the most part, already been canonized in the Pearl of Great Price (or indirectly accepted through various revelations found in the Doctrine and Covenants). Near the end of his work on the JST, Joseph resorted to marking up his Bible and having the scribes write only the changes in the associated manuscript. Even more secondary was his decision for the JST version of Isaiah 50 to have the text directly copied from the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon, thus leaving the corresponding page of his Bible totally unmarked for this chapter of Isaiah (pp. 820–23). And for that part of the JST, the text from the 1830 edition is slavishly copied, including all of the errors that had entered the Book of Mormon text during its earlier transmission:

**when I come** instead of **when I came**  
**their river** instead of **the river**  
**they die** instead of **they dieth**  
**waketh** instead of **wakeneth** (two times)  
**appointed mine ear** instead of **opened mine ear**

The original manuscript of the Book of Mormon is extant for each of these cases and reads according to the King James Bible. It is obvious that, as the work on the JST progressed, the revealed nature of the text was not sustained at the same level.

2. Two sections in the New Testament were translated twice, and they differ considerably in their specific language, although many of the changes are responses to the same perceived difficulties in the biblical text. Kent Jackson and Peter Jasinski have discussed this problem in a recent *BYU Studies* article.<sup>7</sup> The evidence clearly shows that the New Testament JST is not being revealed word-for-word, but largely depends upon Joseph Smith's varying responses to the same difficulties in the text.

3. After the work on what is now the Book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price, many of Joseph Smith's changes seem to be attempts at minimally changing the text to remove what are perceived as difficult or inappropriate readings:

- a. Pharaoh's heart is **not** hardened by the Lord (Exodus 4:21):

KJV

but **I** will harden his heart  
that he shall not let the people go

JST (OT2, p. 66)

and I will prosper thee  
but **Pharaoh** will harden his heart  
and he will not let the people go

The presumption here is that God himself would never influence Pharaoh to resist God's own command.

- b. Lot does **not** offer to turn his daughters over to the men of Sodom (Genesis 19:8):

KJV

behold now I have two daughters

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7. Kent P. Jackson and Peter M. Jasinski, "The Process of Inspired Translation: Two Passages Translated Twice in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible," *BYU Studies* 42/2 (2003): 35-64.

which have not known man  
 let me I pray you bring them out unto you  
 and do ye to them as is good in your eyes

JST (OT2, pp. 47–48)

behold now I have two daughters  
 which have not known man  
 let me I pray you plead with my brethren  
 that I may **not** bring them out unto you  
 and ye shall **not** do unto them  
 as seemeth good in your eyes

Here the text is minimally adjusted by inserting *not* twice, in an awkward attempt to salvage the reputation of Lot. Yet Lot serves as a contrastive foil to Abraham; earlier, for instance, Lot “pitched his tent toward Sodom” (Genesis 13:12) and eventually ends up living within the city. There is nothing particularly exemplifying about Lot and his family, including at least two married daughters who, with their families, perish in the destruction of the city (Genesis 19:14). And the events after Lot’s escape from the city suggest that Lot and his family are not worth emulating.

c. A holy kiss is a holy salutation (Romans 16:16):

KJV

salute one another with an holy **kiss**

JST (NT, p. 126)

salute one another with a holy **salutation**

A holy kiss seemed salacious, so the word *kiss* was euphemistically replaced by the nondescript word *salutation*. Interestingly, the holy kiss as a salutation was practiced early on in the British Mission by some of the members, with considerable enthusiasm by some of the young women towards George A. Smith, a member of the Twelve not yet married. Elder Smith was not pleased.<sup>8</sup>

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8. See James B. Allen, Ronald K. Esplin, and David J. Whittaker, *Men with a Mission: The Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in the British Isles, 1837–1841* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 159.

d. We should **not** be like serpents (Matthew 10:16):

KJV

be ye therefore wise as **serpents** and harmless as doves

JST (NT, p. 19)

be ye therefore wise **servants** and as harmless as doves

For Joseph Smith's time, snakes are considered evil rather than wise. One particular problem with the JST reading is that the change to *servants* seems to be motivated simply on the basis of the visual and auditory similarity between the two English words *serpents* and *servants*, as if the JST corrects an error that would have occurred in the transmission of the English text rather than the original Greek (or perhaps the Aramaic).

4. Sometimes a change appears to be based on a misunderstanding of the English, as in Hebrews 6:1:

KJV

therefore leaving the principles  
of the doctrine of Christ  
let us go on unto perfection  
not laying again the foundation of repentance  
from dead works  
and of faith toward God

JST (NT, p. 139)

therefore **not** leaving the principles  
of the doctrine of Christ  
let us go on unto perfection  
not laying again the foundation of repentance  
from dead works  
and of faith toward God

Here the author of Hebrews is referring to moving on from the first principles of the gospel (namely, faith and repentance, the milk of the gospel, as discussed at the end of the previous chapter, in Hebrews 5:12–14). The author is definitely not suggesting that we reject these fundamental principles of the gospel, but he is talking

about moving on to discuss the meat (“solid food”) of the gospel, as listed in the following verse (Hebrews 6:2): “of the doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands and of resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment” (all necessary parts of the gospel plan). Hebrews 6:1 is made considerably clearer in a modern translation that faithfully follows the Greek, such as (in this case) the New International Version:

therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ  
and go on to maturity  
not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts  
that lead to death  
and of faith in God

Part of the confusion that led to the JST change for Hebrews 6:1 is the word *principles*, which seems to have been misinterpreted as meaning principles in general, but the Greek implies the *beginning* principles. Interestingly, the 1979 LDS Bible has a footnote here saying that the Greek means “having left behind the beginning of the doctrine.” Even though the JST reading with the *not* is also given in this footnote, the translation from the Greek shows that there was no need to insert the *not*.

5. Entire books are declared to be correct, but only in OT2 (near the end of the work on the JST): Ruth, Ezra, Esther, Lamentations, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Malachi. Other books are declared virtually correct (with only a handful of changes):

Leviticus (all but chapters 12 and 21)  
Joshua (all but chapter 11)  
Judges (all but chapter 2)  
2 Samuel (all but chapters 12 and 14)  
1 Chronicles (all but chapters 10 and 21)  
Job (from chapter 3 to the end)

Joseph Smith definitely appears to be in a hurry to get this work done.

6. Secondary additions to the biblical text are left unchanged:

a. 1 John 5:7–8

for there are three that bear record **in heaven**  
**the Father the Word and the Holy Ghost**  
**and these three are one**  
**and there are three that bear witness in earth**  
the spirit and the water and the blood  
and these three agree in one

The text in bold derives from the Vulgate (the Latin translation made chiefly by Jerome) and is found nowhere else in the ancient textual sources for 1 John. The inserted text introduces a strong statement in favor of the doctrine of the Trinity and is clearly secondary. Erasmus later added this passage to his published Greek text of the New Testament, but only after some individuals had produced a New Testament Greek manuscript with this reading. This intrusive text ended up in the King James Bible.<sup>9</sup>

This passage has particular significance for evaluating the early part of the JST, namely that portion that is found in Moses 6:59–60. Here the JST has three occurrences of the triplet “water / spirit / blood,” the same language in the original text for 1 John 5:7–8, but there are no examples of the triplet “Father / Word (or Son) / Holy Ghost,” the secondary language that was not original to 1 John 5:7–8:

Moses 6:59–60

that by reason of transgression cometh the fall  
which fall bringeth death  
and inasmuch as ye were born into the world  
by **water** and **blood** and the **spirit** which I have made  
and so became of dust a living soul  
even so ye must be born again into the kingdom  
of heaven  
of **water** and of the **spirit** and be cleansed by **blood**

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9. For a thorough discussion, see Bruce Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1994), 647–49.

even the blood of mine Only Begotten  
 that ye might be sanctified from all sin  
 and enjoy the words of eternal life in this world  
 and eternal life in the world to come  
     even immortal glory  
 for by the **water** ye keep the commandment  
 by the **spirit** ye are justified  
 and by the **blood** ye are sanctified

In other words, Enoch's record of Adam's baptism seems to be related to the original language in 1 John 5:7–8, but not to the secondary text that was later added in the Latin.

b. John 5:2–4

now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool  
 which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda  
     having five porches  
 in these lay a great multitude of impotent folk  
     of blind halt withered  
**waiting for the moving of the water**  
**for an angel went down at a certain season**  
**into the pool**  
**and troubled the water**  
**whosoever then first after the troubling of the water**  
**stepped in**  
**was made whole of whatsoever disease he had**

The portion in bold is not in the oldest Greek manuscripts.<sup>10</sup> One should wonder why the Lord would send an angel to heal people in such a cavalier fashion. It seems extremely unfair, although the man that Jesus healed may have believed in such, given the following text which is found in all the textual sources:

John 5:5–7

and a certain man was there  
 which had an infirmity thirty and eight years

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10. For discussion, see Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 179.

when Jesus saw him lie and knew that  
he had been now a long time in that case  
he saith unto him  
wilt thou be made whole  
the impotent man answered him  
sir I have no man when the water is troubled  
to put me into the pool  
but while I am coming another steppeth down before me

Jesus does not respond to this man's complaint about not being able to move fast enough, but instead Jesus directly heals him. (It should be worth pointing out that there is no reference in the man's explanation about heavenly intervention. Perhaps the people waiting there simply believed that a sudden bubbling of the spring had special healing powers, especially for the first one who could take advantage of the bubbles.) The King James reading in verses 3–4 sounds like magic, not how the Lord actually works. Yet this passage was not altered in any way by Joseph Smith in the JST.

### Using the JST

Perhaps the best way to view the JST (providing we can figure out what was Joseph Smith's finally intended text for the JST) is to consider the current position of the JST in the Church. First, the most significant part has already been canonized (namely, as the Book of Moses in the Pearl of Great Price). Second, Joseph Smith's reordering of the events of the last days (the JST for Matthew 24) is also found in the Pearl of Great Price. Third, the 1979 LDS Bible provided footnotes for shorter changes in the JST and longer passages in an appendix. In other words, the 1979 LDS Bible is a compromise as far as the JST is concerned, and one that I would agree with for the most part. My suggestion would be to put all the approved JST readings in the biblical appendix and typeset them alongside the King James text in parallel columns; thus the reader could readily compare the two texts. Of particular significance, I believe, was the Church's decision to place none of the JST readings in the actual biblical text for the 1979 Bible. In

other words, the 1979 LDS Bible avoided the kind of text that is found in the RLDS Inspired Version of the Bible.

Another point to note is that not every JST change is referred to in the 1979 LDS Bible. For instance, the change of *serpents* to *servants* in Matthew 10:16 was ignored. Undoubtedly, the scriptures committee and Church leadership weighed the various readings and made a selection of what they considered the more valuable or helpful readings. This selectivity is not surprising. For instance, we have a whole book of Joseph Smith's discourses and statements during the Nauvoo period,<sup>11</sup> but only a few of those statements have been canonized. Yet virtually all of Joseph Smith's works are available for our study. Canonization is not a *sine qua non* for gospel study. I might mention here Joseph Smith's very provocative King Follett Discourse, which is available in various forms to Church members, but canonizing that discourse would be problematic for at least two reasons. First, we do not have a definitive reading for his entire discourse, only notes that listeners took down. Second, some ideas that Joseph taught in that discourse have not been officially sanctioned by the Church (such as the idea that little children will be resurrected as children *and remain so for eternity*). There is no need to canonize everything that Joseph Smith ever said. He himself said that not everything he declared was doctrine. (Of course, neither should we assume from this statement that all his inspired teachings have already been canonized.) The evidence from the JST manuscripts themselves clearly suggests that not everything in the JST is of equal value. The beginning work appears to involve a word-for-word revelation; the later work often reflects very human methods that were applied to alter the text (such as copying into Isaiah a defective text from the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon).

One last consideration is my hope that there would be a more open forum for discussing the JST. It is important that textual critics feel free to analyze the various readings and to consider each of them from a scholarly point of view. It is a mistake, I believe, to automatically assume that every change in the JST is inspired or that the final

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11. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Provo, UT: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1980).

version is in its entirety a revealed text. I myself believe that the long noncanonized additions to the biblical text are the most valuable and could well be revelatory, while the minor changes that involve altering simply a word or a phrase more often indicate a human reaction to perceived problems in the biblical text.