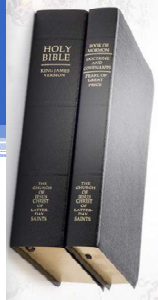


The Book of Mormon , part 1

Is it the most correct book?
How does it compare with
the Bible?



Teacher, Yvon Prehn

Our study of the Book of Mormon

- What does the Mormon Church say about it?
- Is what they say true?
 - First we'll look at the book, itself—we'll be discussing content in later lessons
- Evaluation and contrast with the Bible
 - History, who and how
 - Manuscript evidence
 - Archeology, anthropology, theology—next lesson
- First how to approach this study and battlefield of our minds



How to approach the study

- Pray for critical thinking, discernment
- We have an innate tendency to believe people
- Powerful: www.mormon.org
 - Can all these people be wrong?
- Yes for both spiritual and human reasons
- Spiritual
 - Satan, angel of light, 2 Cor. 11:14
 - At the same time.....
 - Heart deceitful, Jer. 17:9
 - Discernment takes WORK & TIME —but it is essential



Battle is in our minds

- **1 Peter 5:8:** Be alert and of sober **mind**. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.
- **2 Corinthians 4:4** The god of this age has blinded the **minds** of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
- **Romans 8:6** The **mind** governed by the flesh is death, but the **mind** governed by the Spirit is life and peace.
- **Romans 1:28** Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved **mind**, so that they do what ought not to be done.



How to think correctly

- **Romans 12:2:** Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your **mind**.
- **Ephesians 4:22-24** You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the **attitude of your minds**; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.
- **Colossians 3:2** Set your **minds** on things above, not on earthly things.
- **Philippians 4:7** And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your **minds** in Christ Jesus.
- **Practical application: Let God's Word fill your mind—the only source of truth**
 - Listen, read, study, memorize, meditate on it

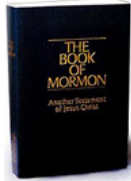
Human reasons we believe lies

- "Group think"
 - "**Groupthink** is a psychological phenomenon that occurs within groups of people. It is the mode of thinking that happens when the desire for harmony in a decision-making group overrides a realistic appraisal of alternatives. Group members try to minimize conflict and reach a consensus decision without critical evaluation of alternative ideas or viewpoints." Wikipedia
- "Say it loud."
- Feelings given as the determination of truth
- Truth is what corresponds to reality, see lesson on it
- ***Cannot determine motive, evaluate truth
- **Value honest, respectful disagreement, challenge**



Mormon view

- I told the brethren that the *Book of Mormon* was the most correct of any book on earth, and the keystone of our religion, and a man would get nearer to God by abiding by its precepts, than by any other book. Joseph Smith, History Of The Church
- The Book of Mormon is the word of God, like the Bible. It is Holy Scripture, with form and content similar to that of the Bible. Both books contain God's guidance as revealed to prophets as well as religious histories of different civilizations. While the Bible is written by and about the people in the land of Israel and surrounding areas, and takes place from the creation of the world until shortly after the death of Jesus Christ, the Book of Mormon contains the history and God's dealings with the people who lived in the Americas between approximately 600 BC and 400 AD.
 - From www.mormon.org



Conclusions by Mormons

- There is no clash in the principles revealed in the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants; and there would be no clash between any of the doctrines taught by Joseph the Prophet and by the brethren now, if all would live in a way to be governed by the Spirit of the Lord.
- No Latter-day Saint, no man or woman, can say the Book of Mormon is true, and at the same time say that the Bible is untrue. If one be true, both are; and if one be false, both are false.
 - Brigham Young, *Journal Of Discourses*



From www.mormon.org



John answered...

Yes, Mormons do believe the Bible to be Holy Scripture. Sadly, there are many different Bibles out there and they teach different principles. Because different Bibles teach Christ's doctrine in different ways, we need the Book of Mormon to correct the confusing bits of doctrine found in the Bible.



Richard answered...

Yes, we believe the Bible to be the word of God. The problem is that it has been translated and edited so many times that some doctrine has been lost. We believe that the Book of Mormon fills in any of those gaps and that between the two we have the fullness of God's Gospel.

Evaluation: how it came to be

- Did Joseph Smith translate the golden plates sitting at a table?
- "In writing for your father I frequently wrote day after day, often sitting at the table close by him, he sitting with his face buried in his hat, with the stone in it, and dictating hour after hour with nothing between us." Emma Hale Smith



Rev. Emily Stenning, *Emma, 1873-82*, *Diary*, 1844, p. 20.

Martin Harris testimony

"I will now give you a description of the manner in which the Book of Mormon was translated. Joseph Smith would put the seer stone into a hat, and put his face in the hat, drawing it closely around his face to exclude the light; and in the darkness the spiritual light would shine. A piece of something resembling parchment would appear, and on that appeared the writing. One character at a time would appear, and under it was the interpretation in English. Brother Joseph would read off the English to Oliver Cowdery, who was his principal scribe, and when it was written down and repeated to Brother Joseph to see if it was correct, then it would disappear, and another character with the interpretation would appear. Thus the Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God, and not by any power of man."

"I, as well as all of my father's family, Smith's wife, Oliver Cowdery and Martin Harris, were present during the translation He [Joseph Smith] did not use the plates in translation"



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A method Smith had previously used

- Isaac Hale**, the father of Emma Hale Smith, stated in an 1834 affidavit: "*The manner in which he pretended to read and interpret, was the same as when he looked for the money-diggers, with a stone in his hat, and his hat over his face, while the Book of Plates were at the same time hid in the woods.*"
- In 1826, four years before the publication of the Book of Mormon, Joseph was arrested, jailed, and examined in court in Bainbridge, New York on the charge of being "a disorderly person and an impostor" in connection with his use of a peep stone to search for buried treasure. While the evidence indicates he was found guilty of this charge, the young Joseph was apparently released on the condition that he leave the area. from www.18rr.org



Origin of the message, important

- *It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the LDS Church wishes to distance itself from the compelling evidence that Joseph Smith both discovered and produced the Book of Mormon in a context of magic/divination/ clairvoyance*
- Divination (div-i-nay-shun): "Discovery of what is hidden or obscure by supernatural or magic means." OED From: www.ibr.org
- "But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let them be under God's curse!" **Galatians 1:8**



Contrast: origin of the Bible

- 2 Pet. 1:17 For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. . . .¹⁹ We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰ Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. ²¹ For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.
- 2 Timothy 3: 16: All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.



Textual history BOM vs. Bible

- Book of Mormon: Written by one man 1820s, a man with a criminal record for fraud
- No original golden plates
- Manuscript changes substantial: 3,913 of them in grammar, meaning, words,
 - <http://www.utlm.org/onlinebooks/3913intro.htm>
- Bible, 40 authors over 1600 years
- Thousands of manuscripts
- Same story, same core text over thousand of years with what we have today



More confirmation for the textual trustworthiness of Biblical documents than any other ancient texts

- **Dead Sea Scrolls:** Discovered in 1947 in Qumran, a village about twenty miles east of Jerusalem on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea
- They include manuscripts or fragments of every book in the Hebrew Bible except the Book of Esther, all of them created nearly one thousand years earlier than any previously known biblical manuscripts.
- Dating
 - Manuscript evidence: from 3rd century BC into first century AD
 - Verified by Carbon 14 dating
 - Archeological Dating: Pottery and coins from 150 BC to about 100 AD.




Significance of Dead Sea Scrolls

- Old Testament: When compared with Medieval Mss. 95% identical, and the 5 % minor spelling and scribal error (prior scribal traditions of accuracy)
- Shows that "corruption" did not happen
- New Testament fragments in DSS
- Fragments found from Mark, Acts, Romans, 1 Timothy, 2 Peter, James, **prior to 100 AD, most dated 50-70 AD**
- Significance: EARLY DATES! No time for mythological embellishment
- This was not a Christian community

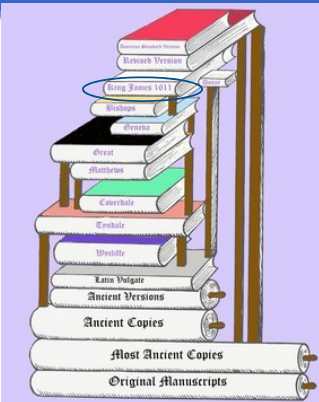
Author	Date Written	Earliest Copy	Approximate Time Span between original & copy	Number of Copies	Accuracy of Copies
Haley	55-113 A.D.	850 A.D.	750 yrs	7	---
Plato	427-347 B.C.	900 A.D.	1200 yrs	7	---
Demosthenes	384-321 B.C.	1100 A.D.	800 yrs	8	---
Herodotus	480-425 B.C.	900 A.D.	1300 yrs	8	---
Suetonius	75-160 A.D.	850 A.D.	800 yrs	8	---
Thucydides	460-400 B.C.	900 A.D.	1300 yrs	8	---
Caesar	100-44 B.C.	900 A.D.	1000 yrs	10	---
Virgil	70-19 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1000 yrs	20	---
Aristophanes	450-385 B.C.	900 A.D.	1200 yrs	10	---
Caesar	100-44 B.C.	900 A.D.	1000 yrs	10	---
Plato	427-347 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1500 yrs	20	---
Aristotle	384-322 B.C.	1100 A.D.	1400 yrs	49	---
Sophocles	496-406 B.C.	1000 A.D.	1400 yrs	193	---
Home (Iliad)	800 B.C.	400 B.C.	500 yrs	648	95%
New Testament	1st Cent. A.D. (50-100 A.D.)	2nd Cent. A.D. (c. 130 A.D. f.)	less than 100 years	5000	99.5%

The more manuscripts that are found, the more precise our translations, e.g. current translations more accurate than King James

Codex Sinaiticus
From mid 300s
Discovered in 1844
Greek, minimal differences between this and DSS, current Bibles




- KJV a copy of copies
- Current trans, go back to more ancient, plus additional grammatical studies
 - From Thompson Chain Reference
- **Conclusion: our Bible more accurate today than in the past**



Conclusion

- Content truth aside for now
- Book of Mormon
 - Dubious historical and textual accuracy
- Bible
 - The most complete, accurate, verified textual accuracy of any historical document
- Challenge to demonstrate inaccuracies of translation and editing
- “We . . . have the prophetic message as something completely reliable” 2 Peter 1:19



Questions

1. Go around the group and give your name and favorite game-watching food.
2. What did you know about the Book of Mormon before this class?
3. What did you learn about the difference between the Bible and the Book of Mormon?
4. How could this help you in a discussion with a Mormon?