

## ANSWER TO EVIDENCES FOR THE BOOK OF MORMON

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The Book of Mormon was published in 1830 purporting to have been miraculously translated by Joseph Smith from golden plates. The book claims to be part of the Bible and the word of God. Ultimately the book is believed in on the authority of prophet leaders of the Mormon Church, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints despite the fact that the Mormon scriptures teach that a prophet can go astray and give instructions for the removal of an apostate or lying or fallen prophet (Doctrine and Covenants, 107:81-83). The Mormon faith is really faith in men that they are telling the truth that they speak for God. When you treat the word of man as the word of God it is man you follow.

\* “If Smith had written the Book of Mormon he would have needed to learn it off by heart in order so as to be able to remember what to tell the scribes to write when he pretended to translate through the seer stone when he stuck his face in the hat. That was an impossible feat so Smith did not do this.”

No evidence is given that there were no notes in the hat or that Smith could not have reached inside when the scribe was not looking to turn the pages. We know that most of Smith’s revelations were dictated (Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, Autumn 1966, page 35). He was capable of learning a fair amount of material off by heart to regurgitate it as a revelation. Perhaps he was looking out the side of the hat at pages attached to the wall?

Perhaps Smith sometimes sat in the sight of the secretary but there was a curtain or something between them so nobody could see his feet. There could have been a hole in the hat and Smith could have been reading a manuscript lying on the floor and turning it with his foot. But nevertheless in the early stages Smith would have had to learn off the “translation” to convince the secretary that he was seeing the translation in the stone. When Smith and his God took no precautions to disprove anybody who would think magic tricks were happening it shows that either God was not involved or God is as bad as Smith. Mormons answer that even if certain forms of conjuring were ruled out people would still be saying it could have been magic and thinking of ways how it might have been done. But still the more magic methods are ruled out the better.

Smith often “translated” from behind a curtain which made it easier for him to produce the Book of Mormon by dictation for he could have had a page in front of him and when the plates were rarely present he did not need the curtain and the stones he used to see the text did not need the plates to be exposed for the text appeared on them. A magician always uses needless props – for example, if a magician can really make a rabbit appear out of thin air what does he need the hat for? They always serve some purpose. Smith had a hat and a curtain which evidently proves he was up to something.

There are proofs that Smith or somebody he knew wrote the Book of Mormon. The Book of Mormon claims to be an abridgment but yet in several places there is needless repetition and makes many silly statements that are so obvious they are not worth making. It contains verbatim chunks out of the King James Bible with errors and all. It contains explicit prophecies about Jesus and his life that were too detailed to have been written before they happened. It contains plagiarised verses from the New Testament. It says there were many things taken away from the Bible by the Catholic Church and that it replaces many of these things but one can’t see what the Catholic Church would find so offensive about detailed prophecies of Christ which is the major difference between the Bible which is not that explicit and the Book of Mormon! The Book of Mormon claims to be the word of God and yet it confesses that mistakes have been made even on the Title Page and throughout the book (Mormon 9:33; 1 Nephi 19:6). This suggests that there was an interference with the original that appeared on the Urim and Thummim.

The Book of Mormon conflicts with archaeology and repeats the same plot over and over again and contains plots and sentences stolen from the King James Bible of 1611. It has parallels with nineteenth century books like View of the Hebrews and other items. View of the Hebrews has had an influence on nearly every major historical statement in the Book of Mormon. Smith thought that the book was scientific and historical but it was seldom right. Most people thought the book had authority in his day. The Book of Mormon is a product of the nineteenth century. Smith used several sources to create it. The work of the Tanners shows that Alma 40 has lots of phrases in it that were copied from chapter 32 of The Westminster Confession of Faith (see The Case Against Mormonism, Vol 2, page 71).

\* “If Smith wrote the Book of Mormon then why could he not reproduce the lost 116 pages comprising the Book of Lehi? This is unanswerable so the Book of Mormon is the word of God.”

Smith dictated the translation to a scribe from behind a curtain. This argument is very weak. Maybe Smith himself burned the original after dictating it to his scribe.

Smith himself claimed that he could not reproduce for the original pages could turn up and be different to what he translated. He said the Devil would see to it that evil persons would change the lost manuscript or forge a new one to discredit his translation powers. The Devil never did this. He then said that God told him to translate a different part of the plates instead which covered the same period as the missing pages. The reason was that the replacement for the Book of Lehi would have to be different to that book so that the altered or forged manuscript of Lehi would not discredit it when it happened. The wording of the stories in both books would be different and there would be some different stories but they would share the main structure. For example, both would mention Lehi and co being driven out of Jerusalem and coming to America on a ship.

Why God who is supposed to be all-powerful couldn't help Smith find the manuscript is bizarre!

One wonders why it never occurred to Satan to create a manuscript that had more than just different words from the real 116 pages but a totally different story or at least one with some major changes in it. For example, the new Lehi could have Lehi's son Sam being slain in Jerusalem contradicting the other account saying that Sam went with Lehi and his family to America.

What Smith said lacks credibility in every way and shows he was untruthful and that his witnesses to his plates were going to believe in him no matter what the real truth was. The reason Smith could not reproduce Lehi was because he might have been memorising what he had written in secret and sticking notes full of reminders in his hat to assist him in remembering what he had learned which were promptly burned after the translation session. Or he could have been using slips of paper with the book written on them and then destroying them in case he would get caught. He probably destroyed the notes as soon as they were used in case hostile neighbours would happen upon them. He did not need them once the "translation" was on paper.

This way of working would have spelled disaster should the manuscript be lost.

It may have been that Smith put the story he had learned off into King James Bible language as he went along so he had no notes to fall back on if anything was lost. The Book of Mormon has a limited and short vocabulary which made this easy and also was intended to appeal to churchgoers so that it would sound like the Bible. This would have led to differences between what he told the secretary to write and what he had learned off. Perhaps when Smith had to think hard and carefully he just called, "And it came to pass", to keep the pace up as well as he could while he struggled. That would explain the nauseating and endless repetition of this useless phrase throughout the whole book. God knew that poor Martin Harris had enough to pay for without paying a typesetter to work with that which shows it is a mark of inauthenticity. Smith said that God took the plates from him after the 116 pages were lost. God had no need to do that. He had only to cut off the power to translate. Smith talked foolishness just to cover up for the fact that he had to plan the whole thing from start to finish again.

The Book of Lehi was the 116 pages of the Book of Mormon that were lost and never retranslated for Smith said God forbade it because the new translation would be different from the old manuscript should it turn up for evil persons would change the old one. Funny that God never thought of allowing Smith to reproduce it when it was safe to for such a time had to come up. God didn't know either that Abigail Harris had burned the pages during an argument about them with her husband Martin who had agreed to mortgage his farm to pay for the publication of the Book of Mormon.

Mormon was the author of the Book of Lehi for he abridged it. Soon after these pages were stolen we find Mormon, according to the Words of Mormon, discovering all of a sudden other plates, the small plates of Nephi that he and Smith were able to use instead of Mormon's abridgement. These small plates contained an abridgement of Lehi by Nephi – an alternative! Obviously, up to then Smith was claiming that there was only one golden Bible that was abridged and had to invent a new one as an excuse for translating the time period covered in the Book of Lehi over again but which was different in many ways from the lost 116 pages.

\* "Joseph Smith knew that he could not expect to make much money out of the printing of the Book of Mormon".

I agree with this but he did like to be important. He had worked as a treasure-hunter before that so could it be that he wanted to inflate his credentials with the Book of Mormon? He had nothing to lose for Martin Harris was paying for the publication.

\* "The miraculous origin of the Book of Mormon shows that it is the word of God."

The Book of Mormon itself warns that the Devil can fool us very well and that God will allow those who want to be deceived to be deceived by the perfect deception. Mormons agree with the scriptural doctrine of St Paul that God does allow the Devil to do this. We must remember that the Jews Jesus contended with were supposed to be evil crafty hypocrites though they lived good lives so you never know who is behind a miracle because you don't know for sure who

may be deceived. So it follows that unless the Mormon Church can prove that Jesus Christ and Joseph Smith were paragons of record-breaking holiness, which cannot be done, it has no business believing in their miracles. The Mormon Church reports several miracles and revelations that happen to the ordinary people but does not assign them any scriptural status and says that any ones that divert even slightly from Mormon doctrine are from the Devil. This puts Mormonism in the same league as the Roman Catholic Church which also says it believes in miracles that are not obligatory for faith in the same way as belief in the Bible or the statements of the Church while using the charism of infallibility would be. This is a double standard pure and simple. And it leads to the double standard of rejecting miracles which may not be refutable – don't forget a miracle can be irrefutable and still be untrue like when the tracks are covered well – just because they are unorthodox. This is a denial that miracles point to true doctrines for it judges the doctrine not by miracles that are real but judges miracles by the doctrine. In that case you should not need miracles. The doctrine says it can stand alone, miracles are challenging the doctrine on this so though they may look like they stand up for the doctrine they are really saying it is all nonsense. It is no answer to say that we believe in the doctrine because of the miracles of the past which verified them and so these miracles outweigh any miracle that contradicts it both in number or in credibility or one or the other. But there must be millions of miracles that we have never heard of and many miracles that have been refuted inadequately so nobody has the right to say that. It is just a bigoted religious bias. Also a miracle reported by people we can interview and test with our modern science has more weight than anything done in the past including the resurrection of Jesus. We perceive how deeply miracles produce arrogance and know-it-all attitudes and we are positively confident that whatever does miracles it is not a God of love.

There were far more witnesses to a Shaker scripture than the Book of Mormon therefore if any book should be believed it should be the former. The Mormons say, "The Shakers had several witnesses to a magic book and roll from Heaven later which became a new Bible. But their book was full of errors so it was not from God. The Shakers were different from the first Mormons for they had had years of conditioning to have mystical experiences. Martin Harris had been a Shaker to some extent but that is no proof that he would have lied or deluded himself about the Book of Mormon. First, he did not see the Shaker magic book and roll in visions and secondly nobody could blame him if he believed in it because of all the witnesses and thirdly not all Shakers believed in the book. Moreover, most of the witnesses of the holy book came to doubt their own visions and most of the Shakers lost faith in it."

The Mormons only assume there is no error in the Book of Mormon. There is plenty. And if visions come from Heaven to verify lies then how can we trust the visions in relation to the Book of Mormon?

There is no proof that all the Shakers were conditioned. Many Shakers never saw visions. The Book of Mormon witnesses had been involved with Smith for a long time before they had their visions and it was certainly their intent and will to receive visions and they had attempted to have them. The Mormon Church says that many visionaries thought afterwards that they had made a mistake. But what about the hundreds of Book of Mormon visionaries who Brigham Young said, said the same thing? The Church then says the Shaker book got a bad name among most Shakers. But that only proves that some of the revelations were dubious or that the errors were only mistaken for errors. Perhaps all the book needed was a good clean up. Most of the book is just as good as the Book of Mormon. If you cut pieces off the book and select some witnesses to the Shaker book who never denied their testimony you get as good a book as the Book of Mormon. I am surprised that the Mormon Church denigrates the miraculous origin of the Shaker book for the witnesses were doubting the visions they had for the apostles doubted Jesus a lot and the Book of Mormon has the Nephites having loads of stupendous miraculous experiences and rapidly falling into something deeper than doubt: denial. Yet this religion says the witnesses to the Book of Mormon didn't doubt as if that was important!

Mormons say that Harris' testimony to the Book of Mormon must be accepted for there is no evidence that he ever denied it. But respected Mormon, Phineas H Young in a letter to Brigham Young stated that Harris had claimed that his testimony to the Shaker scripture revealed by angels and spirits from Heaven but not to him was stronger than that of the Book of Mormon. This is an admission that his visions of the plates were imaginary for he never had visions to verify the Shaker book. The Mormon boast that Harris never denied his own visions of the plates is countered by the fact that he never denied his testimony to the Shaker book either. The Church replies that Harris testified to the truth of the Book of Mormon after that so he must have been misunderstood. But Harris never ever retracted his statement that his faith in the Shaker book was more convincing and his testifying to the Book of Mormon does not mean that he was taking back what he said about the Shaker book.

The Mormons sometimes say that Harris' belief in the Shaker book is not a problem for the Shakers encouraged belief in alleged revelation from Heaven even the Book of Mormon. But the Book of Mormon claimed to be unique and the Shaker Book drastically contradicted its doctrine including denying the Book of Mormon doctrine that Christ would come again physically for Shakers taught that the second coming of Jesus is spiritual and hidden and in his Church. Harris knew that. When he testified to the Shaker book being the truth he was repudiating the Book of Mormon implicitly but just as clearly as it would be if he was doing it explicitly.

Conclusion

The main evidences for the authenticity of the Book of Mormon are spurious.

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