



**Come Follow Me 2020**  
**TITLE PAGE & INTRO**







BOOK OF MORMON 2020

# Come, Follow Me — For Individuals and Families

Living, Learning, and Teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ





## Conversion Is Our Goal

The aim of all gospel learning and teaching is to deepen our conversion and help us become more like Jesus Christ. For this reason, when we study the gospel, we're not just looking for new information; we want to become a "new creature" (2 Corinthians 5:17). This means relying on Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ to help us change our hearts, our views, our actions, and our very natures.

But the kind of gospel learning that strengthens our faith and leads to the miracle of conversion doesn't happen all at once. It extends beyond a classroom into an individual's heart and home. It requires consistent, daily efforts to understand and live the gospel. True conversion requires the influence of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost guides us to the truth and bears witness of that truth (see John 16:13). He enlightens our

minds, quickens our understandings, and touches our hearts with revelation from God, the source of all truth. The Holy Ghost purifies our hearts. He inspires in us a desire to live by truth, and He whispers to us ways to do this. Truly, "the Holy Ghost . . . shall teach [us] all things" (John 14:26).

For these reasons, in our efforts to live, learn, and teach the gospel, we should first and foremost seek the companionship of the Spirit. This goal should govern our choices and guide our thoughts and actions. We should seek after whatever invites the influence of the Spirit and reject whatever drives that influence away—for we know that if we can be worthy of the presence of the Holy Ghost, we can also be worthy to live in the presence of Heavenly Father and His Son, Jesus Christ.



Because Sunday School is taught only twice a month, Sunday School teachers may choose to skip or combine outlines to keep up with the weekly schedule. This may also be necessary on weeks when regular Church meetings are not held because of stake conference or other reasons. During these weeks you are invited to continue to study the Book of Mormon at home.

## Do I Need to Follow the Schedule?

The schedule will help you finish reading the Book of Mormon by the end of the year. In addition, following the same schedule as others in your ward can lead

to meaningful experiences at church. But don't feel bound by the schedule; it is simply a guide to help you pace yourself. The important thing is that you are learning the gospel individually and as a family.







Immerse yourself in the glorious light of the Restoration. As you do, general conference next April will be not only memorable; it will be unforgettable.

*Russell M Nelson, General Conference, Oct. 2019*





You may wish to ponder important questions such as, “How would my life be different if my knowledge gained from the Book of Mormon were suddenly taken away?”

*Russell M Nelson, General Conference, Oct. 2019*





**President Russell M Nelson, General Conference, October 2017**



Scripture Time  
**SCRIPTURE**

Scripture  
**TIME**  
Scripture  
Time



# BOOK OF MORMON

AN ABRIDGMENT OF THE HISTORY TAKEN FROM THE ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPT

Wherefore, it is an abridgment of the original history of the people of the house of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile, and also by the spirit of prophecy sealed up, and hid up unto the Lord, to come forth by the gift and power of God, due time by way of the hand of Moroni, and hid

## THE TESTIMONY OF THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH

The Prophet Joseph Smith's own words about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon are:  
"On the evening of the . . . twenty-first of September [1823] . . . I betook myself to prayer and supplication to Almighty God. . . .  
"While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in my room, which continued to increase until the room was brighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor.  
He had on a loose robe of most exquisite whiteness. It was a whiteness which could be made to appear so exceedingly white and brilliant. His face was naked, and his arms also, a little above the wrist; so, also, were his legs, a little above the ankles. His head and feet were also bare. I could discover that he had no other clothing on but a sash beyond description, and his countenance truly like lightning.  
His robe was exceedingly light, but not so very bright as immediately before his person. When I first looked upon him, I was afraid; but the Lord called me by name, and said unto me that he had written the words of the book for me to do.

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Testimony of Eight Witnesses . . . . .  
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Illustrations . . . . .  
1 Nephi . . . . .  
2 Nephi . . . . .  
Jacob . . . . .  
Enos . . . . .

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Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come: That we, through the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this record, which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, their brethren, and also of the people of Jared, who came from the tower of which hath been spoken. And we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, and not of man. And we also testify before we know of a surety that the work is true. And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates; and they are with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we should bear record that these things are true. And it is marvelous in our eyes. Nevertheless, the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear testimony of these things. And we know that if we are faithful in Christ, we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found finally in the heavens. And the honor be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen.

OLIVER COWDERY  
DAVID WHITMER  
MARTIN HARRIS

## A BRIEF EXPLANATION ABOUT THE BOOK OF MORMON

The Book of Mormon is a sacred record of peoples in ancient America and was compiled upon metal plates. Sources from which this record was compiled include the following:

1. The Plates of Nephi, which were of two kinds: the small plates and the large plates. The former were more particularly devoted to spiritual matters and the ministry and teachings of the prophets, while the latter were occupied mostly by a secular history of the peoples concerned (1 Nephi 9:2-4). From the time of Mosiah, however, the large plates also included items of major spiritual importance.
2. The Plates of Mormon, which consist of an abridgment by Mormon from the large plates of Nephi, with many commentaries. These plates also contained a continuation of the history by Mormon and additions by his son Moroni.
3. The Plates of Ether, which present a history of the Jaredites. This record was abridged by Moroni, who inserted comments of his own and incorporated the record with the general history under the title "Book of Ether."
4. The Plates of Brass brought by the people of Lehi from Jerusalem in the beginning, . . . down to the commencement of the reign of King Zedekiah; and also the prophecies of the holy prophets' writings from these plates, citing Isaiah and other prophets, which appear in the Book of Mormon.

## THE TESTIMONY OF EIGHT WITNESSES

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CHRISTIAN WHITMER  
JACOB WHITMER  
PETER WHITMER, JUN.  
JOHN WHITMER

HIRAM PAGE  
JOSEPH SMITH  
HYRUM SMITH  
SAMUEL H. SMITH



# THE BOOK OF MORMON

AN ACCOUNT WRITTEN BY  
THE HAND OF MORMON  
UPON PLATES  
TAKEN FROM THE PLATES OF NEPHI

Wherefore, it is an abridgment of the record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites—Written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile—Written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of prophecy and of revelation—Written and sealed up, and hid up unto the Lord, that they might not be destroyed—To come forth by the gift and power of God unto the interpretation thereof—Sealed by the hand of Moroni, and hid up unto the Lord, to come forth in due time by way of the Gentile—The interpretation thereof by the gift of God.

An abridgment taken from the Book of Ether also, which is a record of the people of Jared, who were scattered at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, when they were building a tower to get to heaven—Which is to show unto the remnant of the house of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever—And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD, manifesting himself unto all nations—And now, if there are faults they are the mistakes of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment-seat of Christ.

TRANSLATED BY JOSEPH SMITH, JUN.

“I wish to mention here that the title-page of the Book of Mormon is a literal translation, taken from the very last leaf, on the left hand side of the collection or book of plates, which contained the record which has been translated, the language of the whole running the same as all Hebrew writing in general; and that said title page is not by any means a modern composition, either of mine or of any other man who has lived or does live in this generation.”

*Joseph Smith, Jr., History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, ed. B. H. Roberts, 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1932–1951), 1:71.*

Daniel H. Ludlow, “The Title Page,” in *First Nephi, The Doctrinal Foundation*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate Jr. (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1988), 19–34.





**What is the Book of Mormon?**

**Who wrote the book?**

**Who is it written to?**

**Why was it written?**

**How was it written?**

**How did it come to us?**

**What is the purpose of the book?**

**What attitude should I approach the book with?**

**What else does it include?**



Let's put the text all together...

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## Who wrote it?

What?

Why?

What else?

The Book of Mormon, an account written by the hand of Mormon, upon plates taken from the plates of Nephi - Wherefore, it is an abridgment of the record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites—Written to the Lamanites, who are a remnant of the house of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile—Written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of prophecy and of revelation—Written and sealed up, and hid up unto the Lord, that they might not be destroyed—To come forth by the gift and power of God unto the interpretation thereof—Sealed by the hand of Moroni, and hid up unto the Lord, to come forth in due time by way of the Gentile—The interpretation thereof by the gift of God. An abridgment taken from the Book of Ether also, which is a record of the people of Jared, who were scattered at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, when they were building a tower to get to heaven—Which is to show unto the remnant of the house of Israel what great things the Lord hath done for their fathers; and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever—And also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations—And now, if there are faults they are the mistakes of men; wherefore, condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment-seat of Christ.

To Whom?

How?

Purpose?

How should we receive it?



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## INTRODUCTION

The Book of Mormon is a volume of holy scripture comparable to the Bible. It is a record of God's dealings with ancient inhabitants of the Americas and contains the fulness of the everlasting gospel.

The book was written by many ancient prophets by the spirit of prophecy and revelation. Their words, written on gold plates, were quoted and abridged by a prophet-historian named Mormon. The record gives an account of two great civilizations. One came from Jerusalem in 600 B.C. and afterward separated into two nations, known as the Nephites and the Lamanites. The other came much earlier when the Lord confounded the tongues at the Tower of Babel. This group is known as the Jaredites. After thousands of years, all were destroyed except the Lamanites, and they are among the ancestors of the American Indians.

The crowning event recorded in the Book of Mormon is the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ among the Nephites soon after His resurrection. It puts forth the doctrines of the gospel, outlines the plan of salvation, and tells men what they must do to gain peace in this life and eternal salvation in the life to come.

After Mormon completed his writings, he delivered the account to his son Moroni, who added a few words of his own and hid up the plates in the Hill Cumorah. On September 21, 1823, the same Moroni, then a glorified, resurrected being, appeared to the Prophet Joseph Smith and instructed him relative to the ancient record and its destined translation into the English language.

In due course the plates were delivered to Joseph Smith, who translated them by the gift and power of God. The record is now published in many languages as a new and additional witness that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God and that all who will come unto Him and obey the laws and ordinances of His gospel may be saved.

Concerning this record the Prophet Joseph Smith said: "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."

In addition to Joseph Smith, the Lord provided for eleven others to see the gold plates for themselves and to be special witnesses of the truth and divinity of the Book of Mormon. Their written testimonies are included herewith as "The Testimony of Three Witnesses" and "The Testimony of Eight Witnesses."

We invite all men everywhere to read the Book of Mormon, to ponder in their hearts the message it contains, and then to ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ if the book is true. Those who pursue this course and ask in faith will gain a testimony of its truth and divinity by the power of the Holy Ghost. (See Moroni 10:3-5.)

Those who gain this divine witness from the Holy Spirit will also come to know by the same power that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world, that Joseph Smith is His revelator and prophet in these last days, and that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the Lord's kingdom once again established on the earth, preparatory to the Second Coming of the Messiah.



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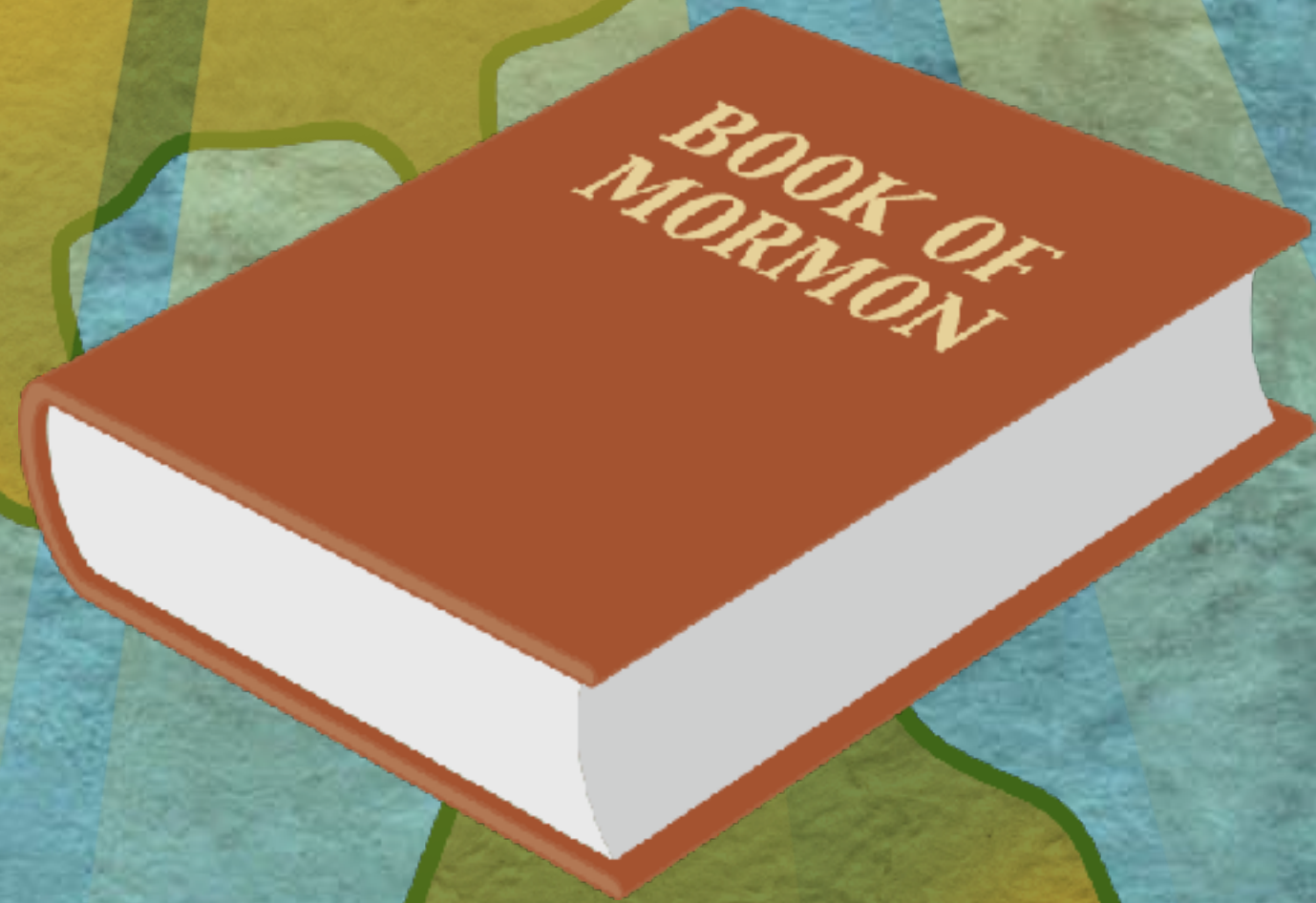
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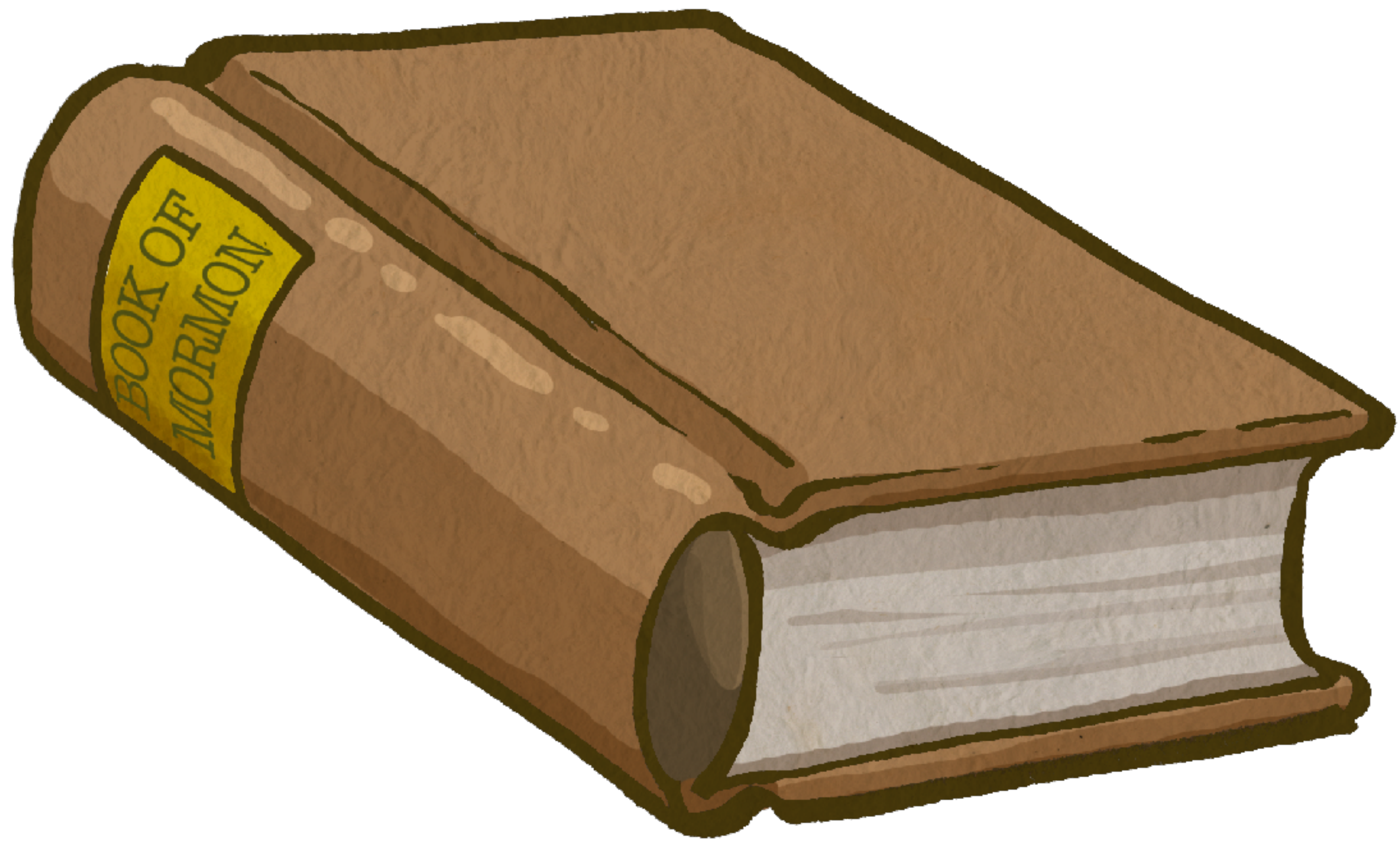
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GREG KOFFORD BOOKS

# The Lost 116 Pages



Reconstructing the  
Book of Mormon's Missing Stories

Don Bradley

**LDS**  
PERSPECTIVES  
PODCAST

January 2018 - Episode 74







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The Book of Mormon comprises fifteen main parts or divisions, known, with one exception, as books, usually designated by the name of their principal author. The first portion (the first six books, ending with Omni) is a translation from the small plates of Nephi. Between the books of Omni and Mosiah



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# Plates of Mormon

Lehi - King Benjamin

Small Plates of Nephi

Lehi - King Benjamin

Words of Mormon (insert)

Mosiah - Mormon 7

Mormon 8-9 (Moroni)

Ether (Moroni)

Moroni and Title Page

Sealed Portion

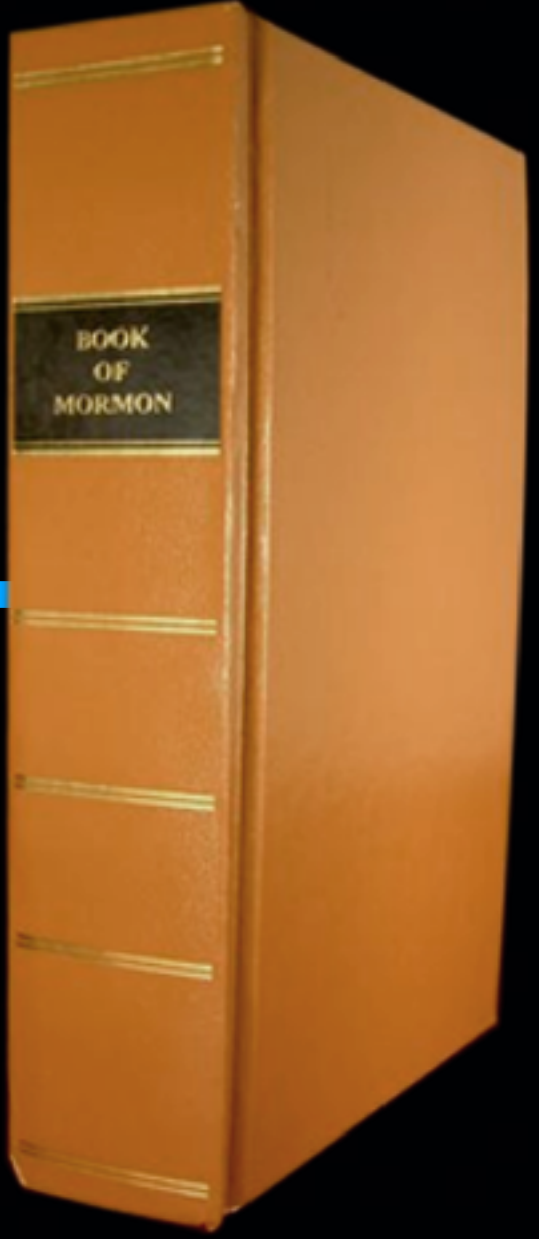
ABRIDGED

ABRIDGED

ABRIDGED

Translated by Joseph Smith

Published



Large Plates of Nephi



24 Gold Plates of Ether



Brass Plates from Jerusalem



The framed structure was covered by four layers of cloth and skin (Ex. 26:1–14).

The table for the bread of the Presence (Ex. 25:23–30)

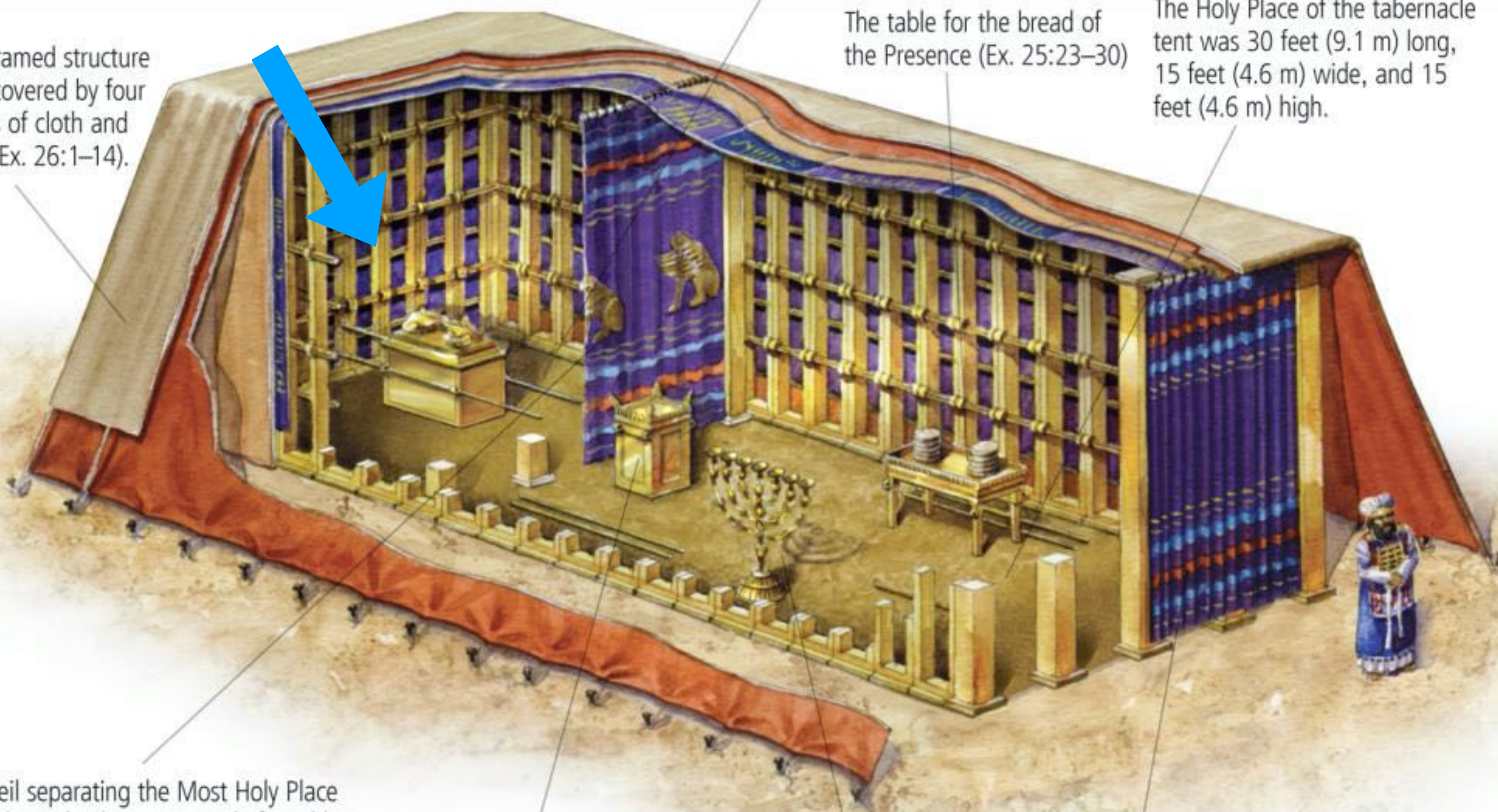
The Holy Place of the tabernacle tent was 30 feet (9.1 m) long, 15 feet (4.6 m) wide, and 15 feet (4.6 m) high.

The veil separating the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place was made from blue, purple, and scarlet dyed yarns woven with fine twined linen and embroidered with cherubim (Ex. 26:31–33). It hung on four golden pillars.

The altar of incense (Ex. 30:1–5; 37:25–29)

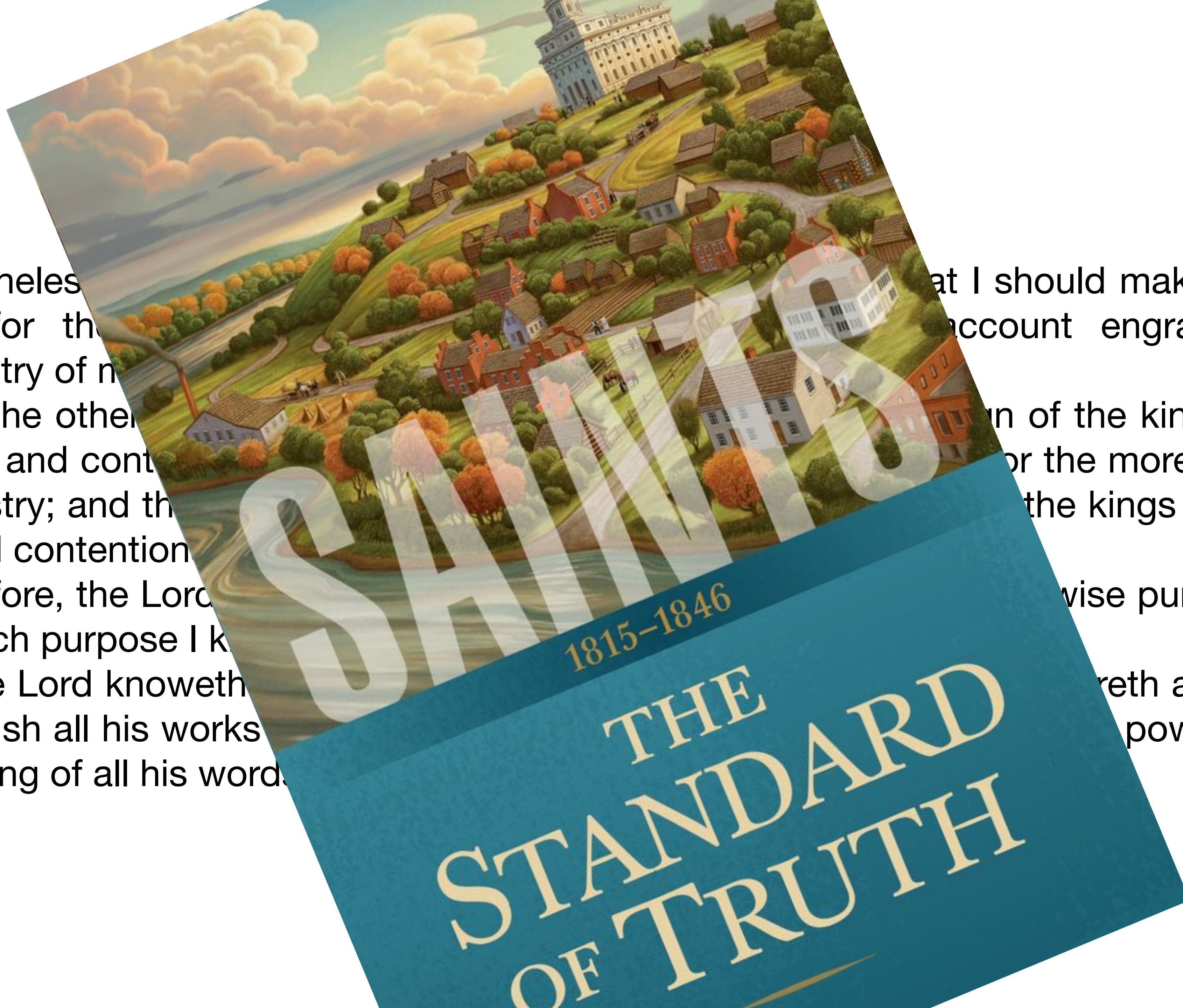
The golden lampstand (Ex. 25:31–40; 37:17–24)

The veil that formed the entrance to the tabernacle was similar to the veil separating the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, except that cherubim were not





3 Nevertheless  
plates, for the  
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4 Upon the other  
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the ministry; and th  
wars and contention  
5 Wherefore, the Lord  
him, which purpose I k  
6 But the Lord knoweth  
accomplish all his works  
the fulfilling of all his words



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account engraven of  
of the kings, and  
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## Words of Mormon 1:3-5

3 And now, I speak somewhat concerning that which I have written; for after I had made an abridgment from the plates of Nephi, down to the reign of this king Benjamin, of whom Amaleki spake, I searched among the records which had been delivered into my hands, and I found these plates, which contained this small account of the prophets, from Jacob down to the reign of this king Benjamin, and also many of the words of Nephi.

4 And the things which are upon these plates pleasing me, because of the prophecies of the coming of Christ; and my fathers knowing that many of them have been fulfilled; yea, and I also know that as many things as have been prophesied concerning us down to this day have been fulfilled, and as many as go beyond this day must surely come to pass—

5 Wherefore, I chose these things, to finish my record upon them, which remainder of my record I shall take from the plates of Nephi; and I cannot write the hundredth part of the things of my people.



# Plates of Mormon

Lehi - King Benjamin

- Lost Manuscript

## Small Plates of Nephi

Lehi - King Benjamin

- Inserted directly
- Written in first-person

Words of Mormon (insert)

Mosiah - Mormon 7

Mormon 8-9 (Moroni)

Ether (Moroni)

Moroni and Title Page

Sealed Portion

ABRIDGED

ABRIDGED



Large Plates of Nephi



24 Gold Plates of Ether

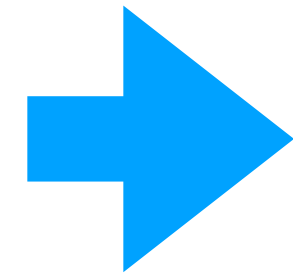


Brass Plates from Jerusalem

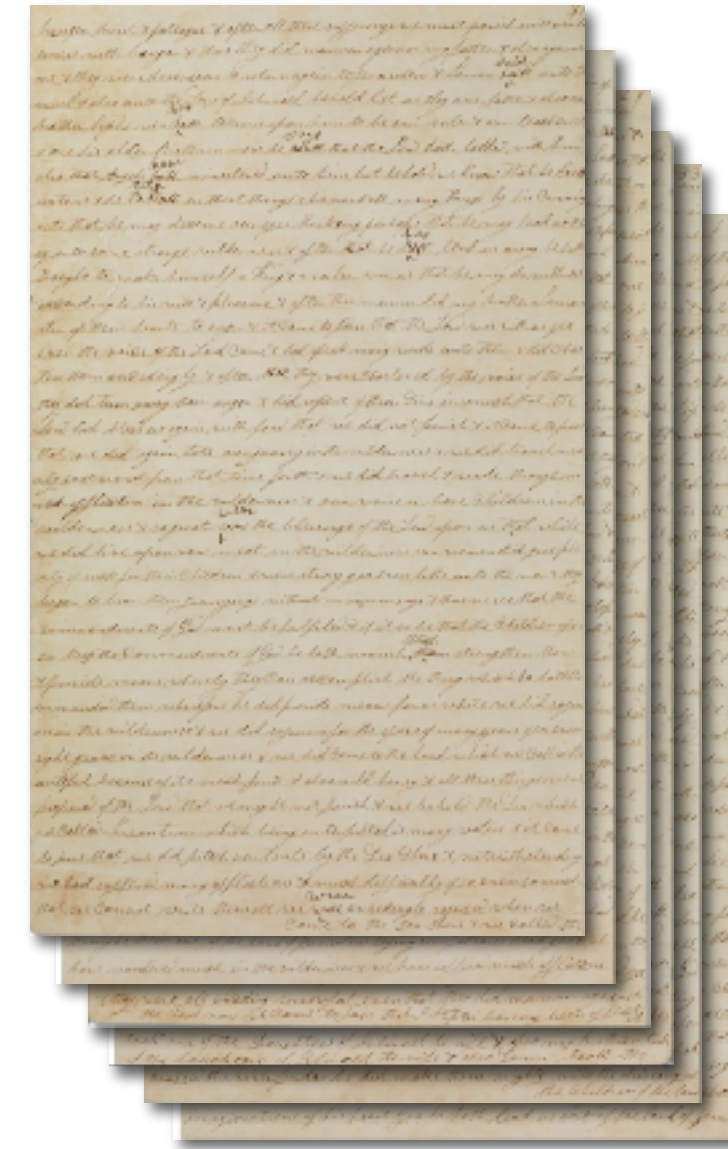
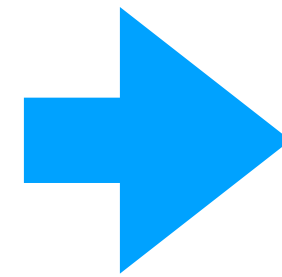




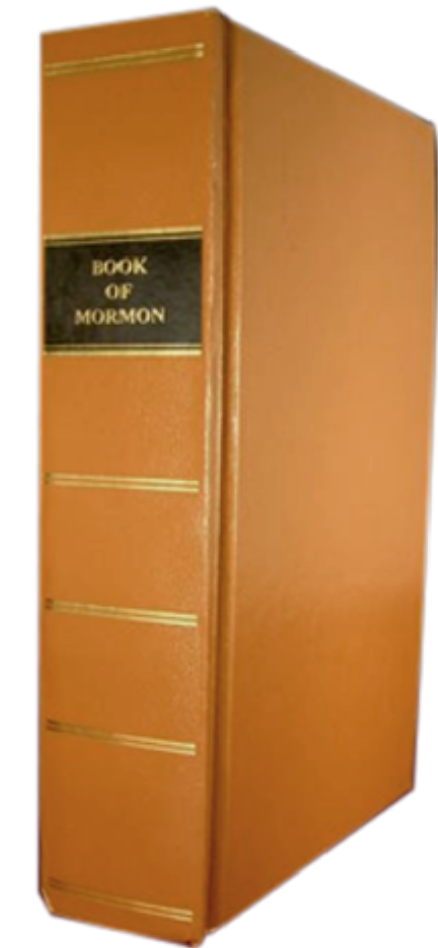
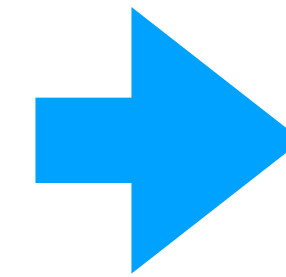
**Original Record**



**Original Manuscript**



**Printers Manuscript**



**Published Book**



**The Book of  
Mosiah Chapter**

the Book of Mosiah Chapter





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Trustee-in-Trust for

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints  
Salt Lake City, Utah, U. S. A.

First Edition published in  
1830

First issued, as divided into chapters and verses  
with references

By ORSON PRATT, in  
1879

First issued in double-column pages, with  
chapter headings, chronological data,  
revised foot-note references,  
pronouncing vocabulary  
and index, in  
1920

## BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

Three classes of Record Plates are indicated on the title-page of The Book of Mormon, namely:

1. *The Plates of Nephi*, which, as the text of the Book makes clear, were of two kinds—(a) the Larger Plates; (b) the Smaller Plates. The former were more particularly devoted to the secular history of the peoples concerned, while the latter were occupied mostly by sacred records.
2. *The Plates of Mormon*, containing an abridgment from the Plates of Nephi, made by Mormon, with many commentaries and a continuation of the history by himself, and with further additions by Moroni, son of Mormon.
3. *The Plates of Ether*, containing a history of the Jaredites, which account was abridged by Moroni, who inserted comments of his own, and incorporated the record with the general history under the title, Book of Ether.

To these may be added another set of plates, which are of frequent mention in the Book of Mormon, namely:

4. *The Brass Plates of Laban*, brought by the people of Lehi from Jerusalem, and containing Hebrew Scriptures and genealogies, many extracts from which appear in the Nephite records.

The Book of Mormon comprises fifteen main parts or divisions, known, with one exception, as books, each designated by the name of its principal author. Of these, the first six books, namely, First Nephi, Second Nephi, Jacob, Enos, Jarom, and Omni, are translations from the corresponding sections of the Smaller Plates of Nephi. Between the books of Omni and Mosiah, we find *The Words of Mormon*, connecting the record of Nephi, as engraved on the Smaller Plates, with Mormon's abridgment of the Larger Plates for the periods following. *The Words of Mormon* constitute a brief explanation of the preceding portions of the record, and a preface to the parts following.

The body of the Book, from Mosiah to Mormon, chapter 7, inclusive, is the translation of Mormon's abridgment of the Plates of Nephi. The latter part of the Book of Mormon, from the beginning of Mormon, chapter 8, to the end of the volume, was engraved by Mormon's son, Moroni, who first proceeded to finish the record of his father's life, and then made an abridgment of the Jaredite record, as the Book of Ether. Later he added the parts known to us as the Book of Moroni.

The period covered by Book of Mormon annals extends from B. C. 600 to A. D. 421. In or about the latter year, Moroni, the last of the Nephite historians, sealed the sacred record, and hid it up unto the Lord, to be brought forth in the latter days, as predicted by the voice of God through his ancient prophets. In A. D. 1827, this same Moroni, then a resurrected personage, delivered the engraved plates to Joseph Smith.





KING  
**MOSIAH**

**Book of Mormon in 8 Minutes**

LAMANITES  
Nephi

NEPHITES  
Zarahemla



A person wearing a black hooded robe is shown from the chest up, holding a sword. The background is a bright, fiery scene with orange and yellow flames. The text is overlaid on the image.

# Fires of Faith

THE COMING FORTH OF THE

*King James Bible*

[BYUTV.ORG](http://BYUTV.ORG)









**JUDAH**

**ISRAEL**

**ASSYRIA**





**HOLY  
BIBLE**

**JUDAH**

**EGYPT**





A. FRIBERG



# BOOK OF MORMON

AN Abridgment of  
THE HISTORY  
TAKEN FROM THE

Wherefore, it is an abridgment of the records of the people of the house of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile, and also by the spirit of prophecy, sealed up, and hid up unto the Lord, to come forth by the gift and power of God, due time by way of the mouth of Moroni, and hid

## THE TESTIMONY OF THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH

The Prophet Joseph Smith's own words about the coming forth of the Book of Mormon are:  
"On the evening of the . . . twenty-first of September [1823] . . . I betook myself to prayer and supplication to Almighty God. . . .  
"While I was thus in the act of calling upon God, I discovered a light appearing in my room, which continued to increase until the room was brighter than at noonday, when immediately a personage appeared at my bedside, standing in the air, for his feet did not touch the floor. He had on a loose robe of most exquisite whiteness. It was a whiteness which could be made to appear so exceedingly white and brilliant. His feet were naked, and his arms also, a little above the wrist; so, also, were his legs, a little above the ankles. His head and neck were also bare. I could discover that he had no other clothing on but a sash beyond description, and his countenance truly like lightning. His countenance was exceedingly light, but not so very bright as immediately before his person. When I first looked upon him, I was afraid; but the Lord called me by name, and said unto me that he had written the words of the book for me to do."

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Testimony of Eight Witnesses . . . . .  
Testimony of the Prophet Joseph . . . . .  
Brief Explanation . . . . .  
Illustrations . . . . .  
1 Nephi . . . . .  
2 Nephi . . . . .  
Jacob . . . . .  
Enos . . . . .

## INTRODUCTION

The Book of Mormon is a record of the people of the Americas and contains the prophecy and revelation which were given to the prophet Joseph Smith in 1820. The book was written by the prophet Joseph Smith and his scribes, and is a record of the words of the Lord as given to the prophet. The book was written in the English language, and is a record of the words of the Lord as given to the prophet. The book was written in the English language, and is a record of the words of the Lord as given to the prophet. The book was written in the English language, and is a record of the words of the Lord as given to the prophet.

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OLIVER COWDERY  
DAVID WHITMER  
MARTIN HARRIS

## A BRIEF EXPLANATION ABOUT THE BOOK OF MORMON

The Book of Mormon is a sacred record of peoples in ancient America and was compiled upon metal plates. Sources from which this record was compiled include the following:

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4. The Plates of Brass brought by the people of Lehi from Jerusalem in the beginning, . . . down to the commencement of the reign of King Zedekiah; and also the prophecies of the holy prophets and other writings from these plates, citing Isaiah and other prophets, which appear in the Book of Mormon.

## THE TESTIMONY OF EIGHT WITNESSES

Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come: That Joseph Smith, Jun., the translator of this work, has shown unto us the plates of which hath been spoken, which have the appearance of gold; and as many of the leaves as the said Smith has translated we did handle with our hands; and we also saw the engravings thereon, all of which has the appearance of ancient work, and curious workmanship. And this we bear record with words of soberness, that the said Smith has shown unto us, for we have seen and heard, and know of a surety that the said Smith has got the plates of which hath been spoken. And we give our names unto the world, to witness unto the world that which we have seen. And we lie not, God bearing witness unto us.

CHRISTIAN WHITMER  
JACOB WHITMER  
PETER WHITMER, JUN.  
JOHN WHITMER

HIRAM PAGE  
JOSEPH SMITH  
HYRUM SMITH  
SAMUEL H. SMITH



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OLIVER COWDERY  
DAVID WHITMER  
MARTIN HARRIS

## THE TESTIMONY OF EIGHT WITNESSES

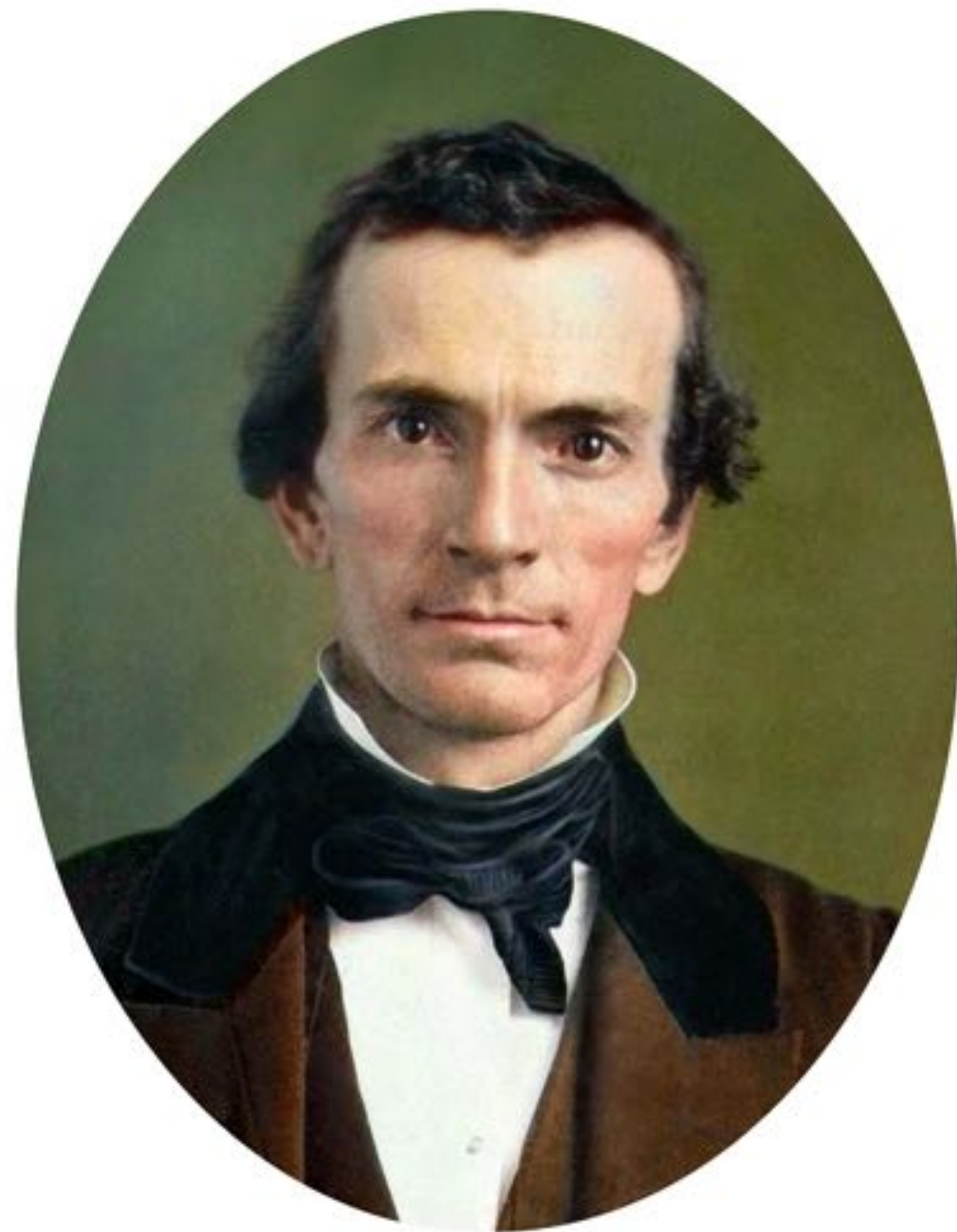
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CHRISTIAN WHITMER	HIRAM PAGE
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JOHN WHITMER	SAMUEL H. SMITH

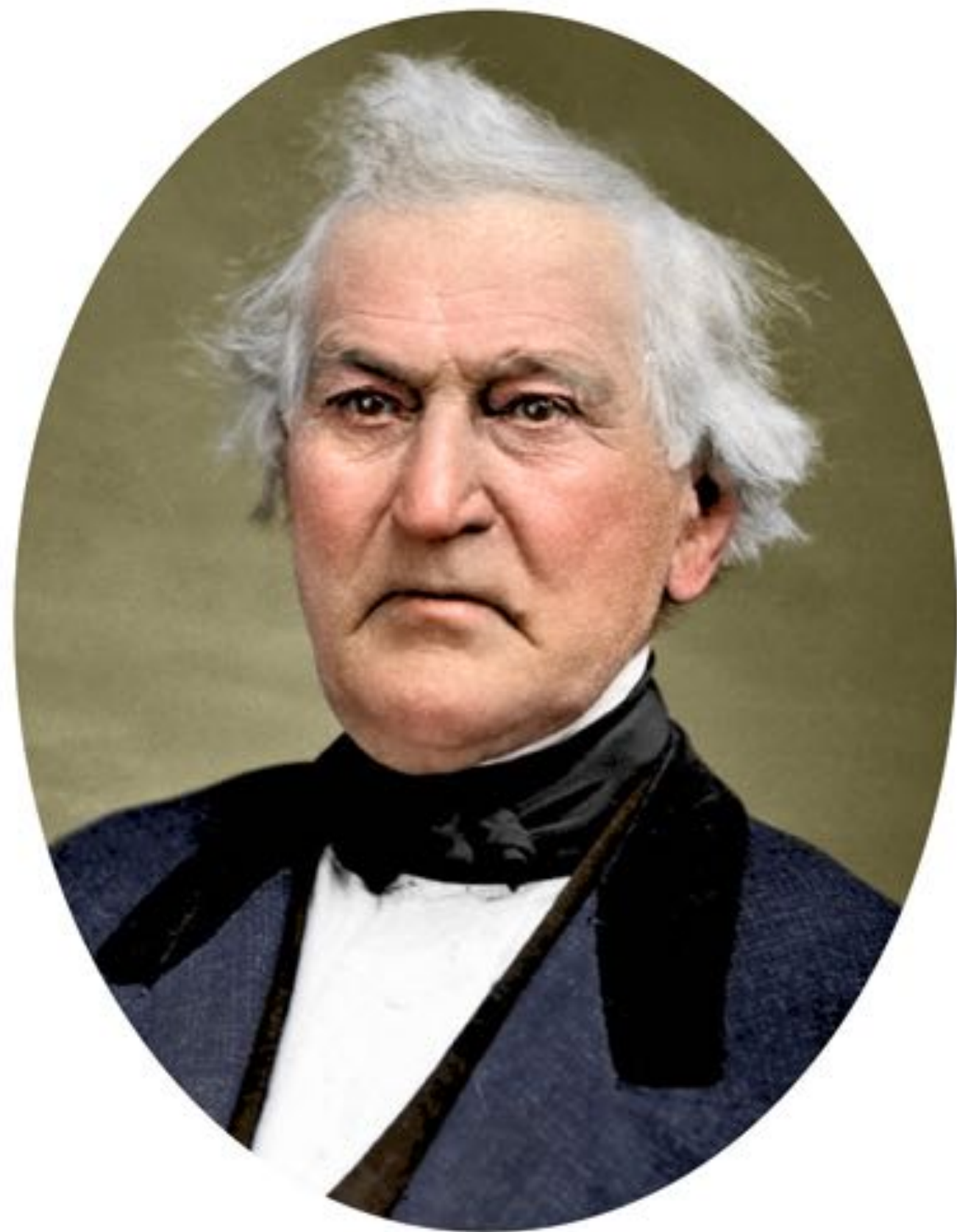
## 2 Nephi 27:12

Wherefore, at that day when the book shall be delivered unto the man of whom I have spoken, the book shall be hid from the eyes of the world, that the eyes of none shall behold it save it be that three witnesses shall behold it, by the power of God, besides him to whom the book shall be delivered; and they shall testify to the truth of the book and the things therein.





OLIVER COWDERY

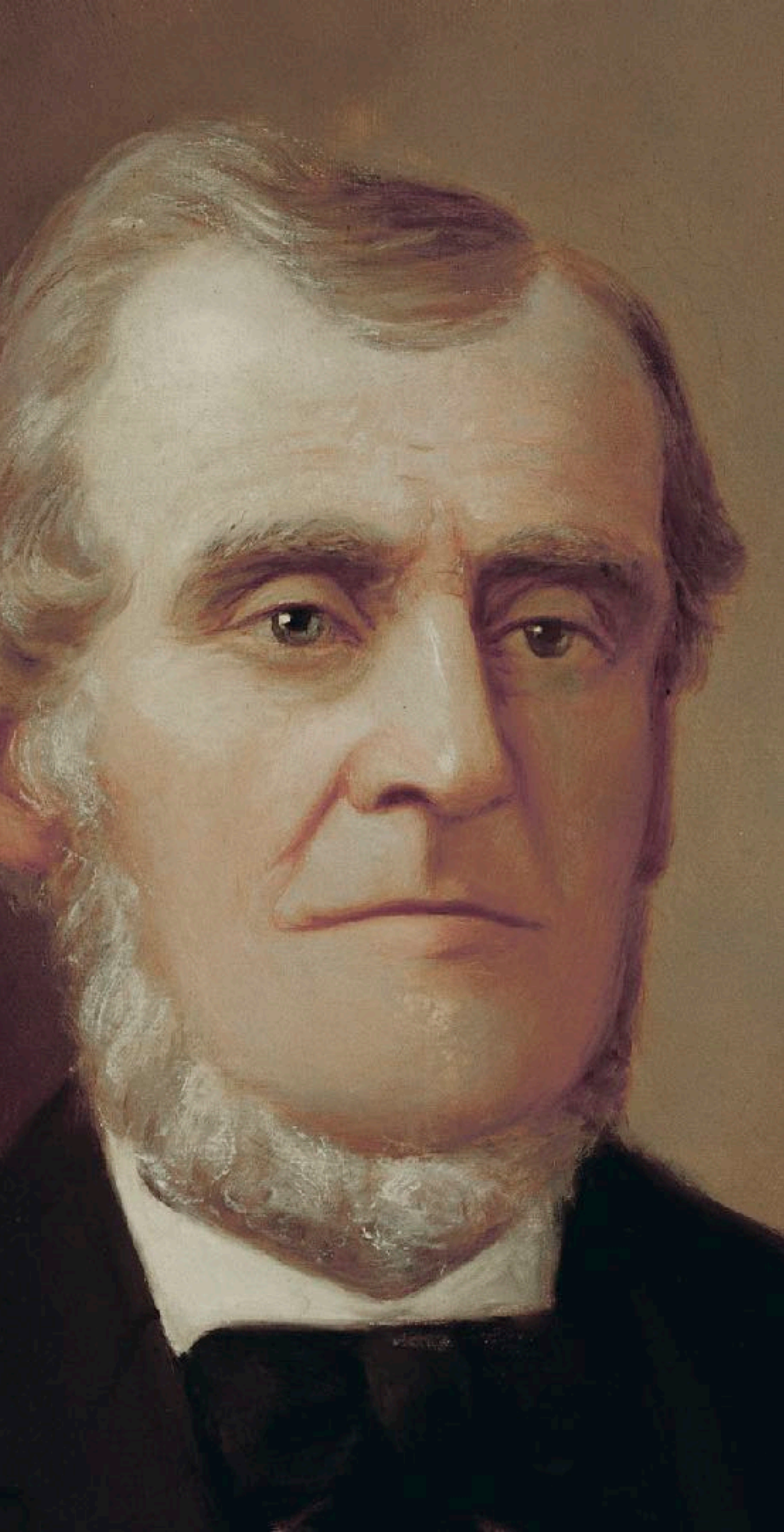


DAVID WHITMER



MARTIN HARRIS

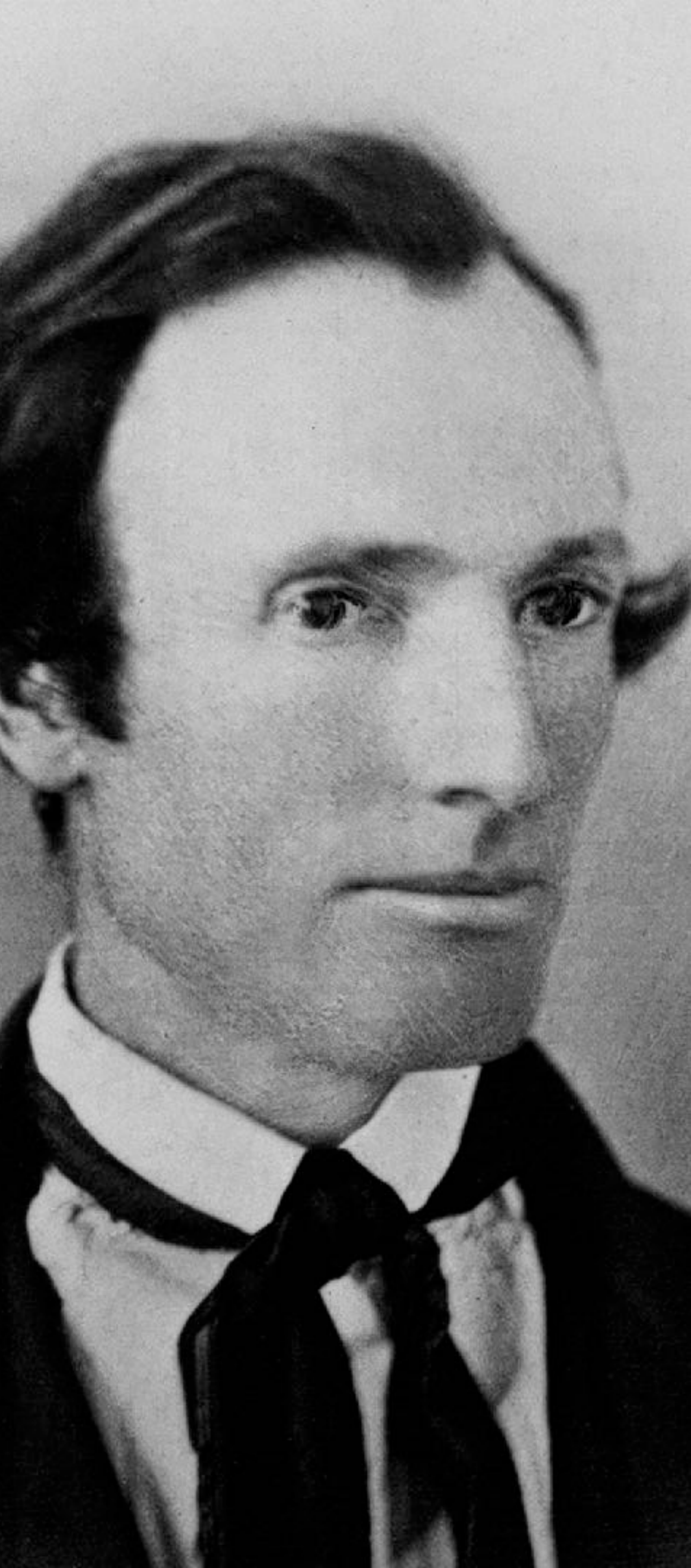




On his death bed (1875), Harris said: "The Book of Mormon is no fake. I know what I know. I have seen what I have seen and I have heard what I have heard. I have seen the gold plates from which the Book of Mormon is written. An angel appeared to me and others and testified to the truthfulness of the record, and had I been willing to have perjured myself and sworn falsely to the testimony I now bear I could have been a rich man, but I could not have testified other than I have done and am now doing for these things are true."

*Martin Harris on his death bed. Cited by George Godfrey, "Testimony of Martin Harris," from an unpublished manuscript copy in the possession of his descendants, quoted in Eldin Ricks, The Case of the Book of Mormon Witnesses [Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1971], 65–66.*





"Jacob, I want you to remember what I say to you. I am a dying man, and what would it profit me to tell you a lie? I know," said he, "that this Book of Mormon was translated by the gift and power of God. My eyes saw, my ears heard, and my understanding was touched, and I know that whereof I testified is true. It was no dream, no vain imagination of the mind—it was real"

*Jacob F. Gates in March 1912 Improvement Era publishes a recollection of his father, Jacob Gates. Jacob Gates, Sr. met with Oliver Cowdery in 1849, and shares this testimony:*





“It having been represented by one John Murphy, of Polo, Caldwell County, Mo., that I, in a conversation with him last summer, denied my testimony as one of the three witnesses to the ‘Book of Mormon.’

“To the end, therefore, that he may understand me now, if he did not then; and that the world may know the truth, I wish now, standing as it were, in the very sunset of life, and in the fear of God, once for all to make this public statement:

“That I have never at any time denied that testimony or any part thereof, which has so long since been published with that Book, as one of the three witnesses. Those who know me best, well know that I have always adhered to that testimony. And that no man may be misled or doubt my present views in regard to the same, I do again affirm the truth of all my statements, as then made and published.

“‘He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear’; it was no delusion! What is written is written, and he that readeth let him understand.”

*"David Whitmer Proclamation, 19 March 1881," quoted in Early Mormon Documents 5:69 - Quoted in "True to the Book of Mormon—The Whitmers," Ensign, Feb. 1989*



Many Christians in Harris's day believed it was dangerous or impossible to witness the divine with the physical senses. This belief was rooted in stories from the Bible. For example, in the Old Testament, Israelites who peered into the ark of the covenant without proper authorization were destroyed. God's presence was typically hidden behind a veil or a cloud of smoke to shield the eyes of those who were not spiritually prepared. One of Joseph Smith's early revelations affirmed similarly that humans cannot see God with their "natural eyes" without being consumed. They could, however, witness his glory with "spiritual eyes" if they were changed or "quickenened by the spirit of God."



Martin Harris considered the witnesses' experience with the angel and the ancient record to be just such an encounter with the divine, similar to Joseph Smith's visions. Conscious of the stern warnings of scripture, he often spoke of the inadequacy he felt at the time he witnessed the plates. Over the years, he employed a variety of phrases to describe his extraordinary encounter. When pressed by various interviewers to clarify whether he actually saw the plates, he spoke both of seeing them with "a spiritual eye," emphasizing the unusual and sacred quality of the experience, and also with his physical senses. "As sure as you are standing there and see me," he insisted on one occasion, "just as sure did I see the angel with the golden plates in his hand." David Whitmer, similarly described both the spiritual and physical dimensions of the witnesses' experience. "Of course we were in the spirit when we had the view, for no man can behold the face of an angel, except in a spiritual view," he explained, adding, "but we were in the body also, and everything was as natural to us, as it is at any time."



Tithing

Treasure Seeking

United Firm ("United Order")

Vigilantism

Vision, The (D&C 76)

Wards and Stakes

Washing of Feet

Witnesses of the Book of Mormon

Word of Wisdom (D&C 89)

Young Women Organizations

Zion/New Jerusalem

Zion's Camp (Camp of Israel)

# Witnesses of the Book of Mormon

The first edition of the Book of Mormon featured two testimonials: one written by a group of three witnesses and another by a group of eight. Three witnesses (Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris) declared an angel of God appeared to them and showed them the Book of Mormon plates and they heard the voice of the Lord pronounce that Joseph Smith's translation had been accomplished "by the gift and power of God." This experience took place in June 1829 near the home of Peter Whitmer Sr. in Fayette, New York. An additional eight witnesses (members of the Smith and Whitmer families) declared that Joseph Smith himself showed them the plates and allowed each to "heft" the ancient artifact and examine its engravings. Several others had direct experiences with the plates or otherwise witnessed Joseph Smith's translation of





## THE TESTIMONY OF THREE WITNESSES

Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come: That we, through the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this record, which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, their brethren, and also of the people of Jared, who came from the tower of which hath been spoken. And we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us: wherefore we know of a surety that the work is true. And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates; and they have been shown unto us by the power of God, and not of man. And we declare with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we beheld and saw the plates, and the engravings thereon; and we know that it is by the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, that we beheld and bear record that these things are true. And it is marvelous in our eyes. Nevertheless, the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear record of it; wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, we bear testimony of these things. And we know that if we are faithful in Christ, we shall rid our garments of the blood of all men, and be found spotless before the judgment-seat of Christ, and shall dwell with him eternally in the heavens. And the honor be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, which is one God. Amen.

OLIVER COWDERY  
DAVID WHITMER  
MARTIN HARRIS

## THE TESTIMONY OF EIGHT WITNESSES



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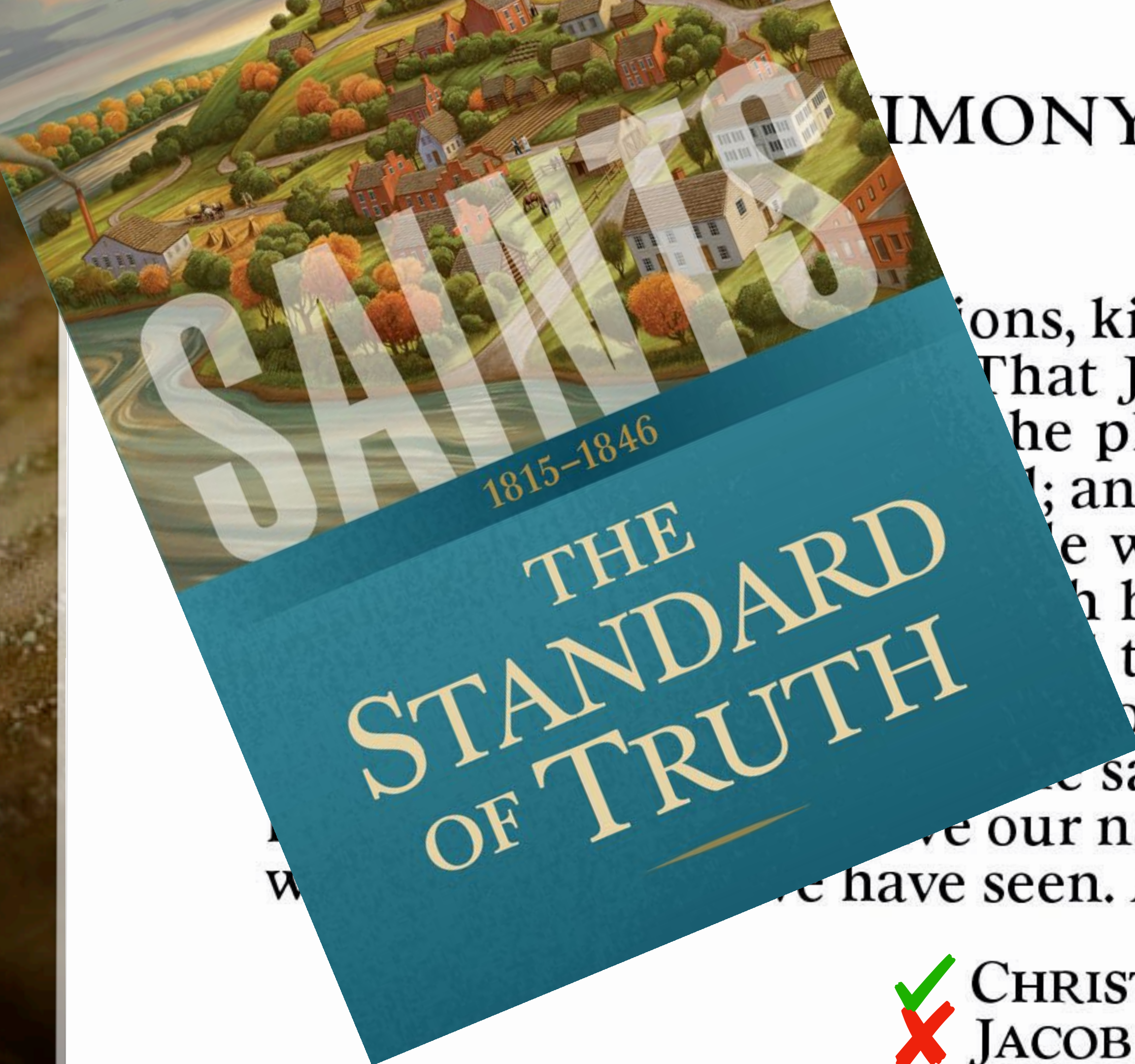
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JACOB WHITMER  
PETER WHITMER, JUN.  
JOHN WHITMER

HIRAM PAGE  
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## TESTIMONY OF EIGHT WITNESSES

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- |   |                     |   |                    |
|---|---------------------|---|--------------------|
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| ✗ | JACOB WHITMER       | ✓ | JOSEPH SMITH, SEN. |
| ✓ | PETER WHITMER, JUN. | ✓ | HYRUM SMITH        |
| ✗ | JOHN WHITMER        | ✓ | SAMUEL H. SMITH    |

✗ Excommunicated

✓ Died in the faith



# BOOK OF MORMON

AN ABRIDGMENT OF  
THE HISTORY AND  
GENEALOGY  
TAKEN FROM THE  
ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS  
BY  
JACOB WITTMER

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Testimony of Eight Witnesses . . . . .

Testimony of the Prophet Joseph . . . . .

Brief Explanation . . . . .

Illustrations . . . . .

1 Nephi . . . . .

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Jacob . . . . .

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Wherefore, it is an abridgment of the history and genealogy also of the Lamanites—Written to the house of Israel; and also to Jew and Gentile, and sealed up, and hid up unto the Lord, that they might come forth by the gift and power of God, at the due time by the hand of Moroni, and hid up unto the Father.

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## INTRODUCTION

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4. The Plates of Brass brought by the people of Lehi from Jerusalem in the beginning, . . . down to the commencement of the reign of King Zedekiah; and also the prophecies of the holy prophets' writings from these plates, citing Isaiah and other prophets.
5. Various other parts or divisions, known as "plates," which appear in the Book of Mormon.

The crowning event recorded in the Book of Mormon is the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, who came down from heaven for the redemption of the human race. His atoning sacrifice and resurrection are the central events of the story. It is through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ that we are saved from our sins and are given the gift of eternal life. It is also through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ that we are able to stand before the Father in our own righteousness. It is through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ that we are able to inherit the kingdom of God and to dwell with him and his Father forevermore. It is through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ that we are able to have the joy which comes from the Father, and to have the same joy which the Father has with the Son and the Holy Ghost. It is through the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ that we are able to have the same joy which the Father has with the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

## A BRIEF EXPLANATION ABOUT THE BOOK OF MORMON

The Book of Mormon is a sacred record of peoples in ancient America and was compiled upon metal plates. Sources from which this record was compiled include the following:

1. The Plates of Nephi, which were of two kinds: the small plates and the large plates. The former were more particularly devoted to spiritual matters and the ministry and teachings of the prophets, while the latter were occupied mostly by a secular history of the peoples concerned (1 Nephi 9:2–4). From the time of Mosiah, however, the large plates also included items of major spiritual importance.
2. The Plates of Mormon, which consist of an abridgment by Mormon from the large plates of Nephi, with many commentaries. These plates also contained a continuation of the history by Mormon and additions by his son Moroni.
3. The Plates of Ether, which present a history of the Jaredites. This record was abridged by Moroni, who inserted comments of his own and incorporated the record with the general history under the title "Book of Ether."
4. The Plates of Brass brought by the people of Lehi from Jerusalem in the beginning, . . . down to the commencement of the reign of King Zedekiah; and also the prophecies of the holy prophets' writings from these plates, citing Isaiah and other prophets.
5. Various other parts or divisions, known as "plates," which appear in the Book of Mormon.

## THE TESTIMONY OF THREE WITNESSES

Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come: That we, through the grace of God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, have seen the plates which contain this record, which is a record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, their brethren, and also of the people of Jared, who came from the tower of which hath been spoken. And we also know that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us; before we know of a surety that the work is true. And we also testify that we have seen the engravings which are upon the plates; and they are with words of soberness, that an angel of God came down from heaven, and he brought and laid before our eyes, that we should bear record that these things are true. And it is marvelous in our eyes. Nevertheless, the voice of the Lord commanded us that we should bear testimony of these things. And we know that if we are faithful in obedience to the commandments of God, and shall dwell with him in glory, we shall inherit the kingdom of God, and shall be found in his love, and shall dwell with him and his Father forevermore. Amen.

OLIVER COWDERY  
DAVID WHITMER  
MARTIN HARRIS

## THE TESTIMONY OF EIGHT WITNESSES

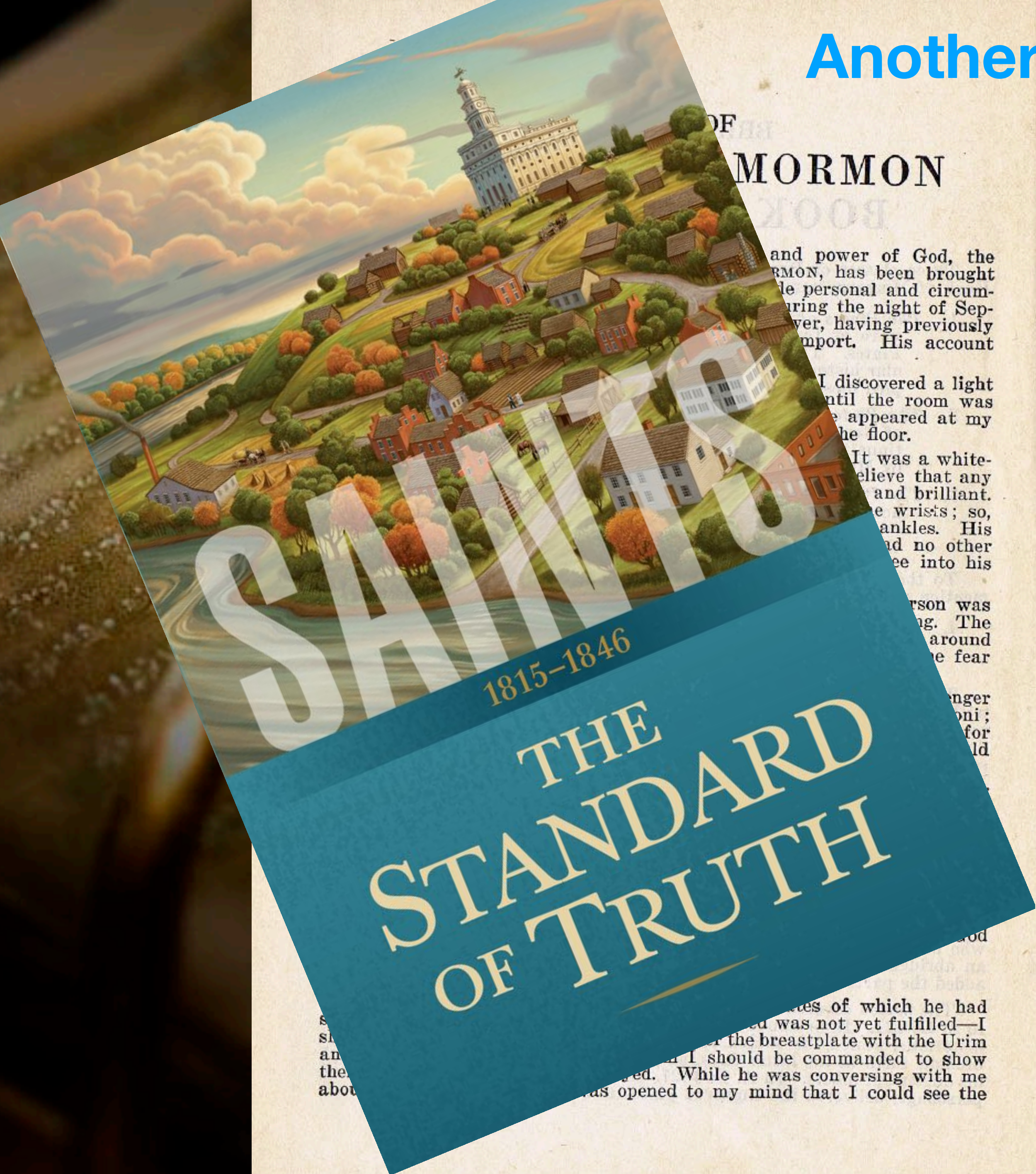
Be it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come: That Joseph Smith, Jun., the translator of this work, has shown unto us the plates of which hath been spoken, which have the appearance of gold; and as many of the leaves as the said Smith has translated we did handle with our hands; and we also saw the engravings thereon, all of which has the appearance of ancient work, and we know of a surety that the said Smith has got the plates of which hath been spoken. And we give our names unto the world, to witness unto all men that which we have seen. And we lie not, God bearing witness to that which we have seen. Amen.

CHRISTIAN WHITMER  
JACOB WHITMER  
PETER WHITMER, JUN.  
JOHN WHITMER

HIRAM PAGE  
JOSEPH SMITH  
HYRUM SMITH  
SAMUEL H. SMITH



# Another shameless plug for "Saints!"



## OF THE MORMON BOOK

and power of God, the MORMON, has been brought to the personal and circum- scribing the night of Sep- tember, having previously reported. His account

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... of which he had ed was not yet fulfilled—I of the breastplate with the Urim and I should be commanded to show the ed. While he was conversing with me as opened to my mind that I could see the

place where the plates were deposited, and that so clearly and distinctly that I knew the place again when I visited it.

"After this communication, I saw the light in the room begin to gather immediately around the person of him who had been speaking to me, and it continued to do so, until the room was again left dark, except just around him, when instantly I saw, as it were, a conduit open right up into heaven, and he ascended until he entirely disappeared, and the room was left as it had been before this heavenly light had made its appearance.

"I lay musing on the singularity of the scene, and marveling greatly at what had been told to me by this extraordinary messenger; when, in the midst of my meditation, I suddenly discovered that my room was again beginning to get lighted, and in an instant, as it were, the same heavenly messenger was again by my bedside.

"He commenced, and again related the very same things which he had done at his first visit, without the least variation; which having done, he informed me of great judgments which were coming upon the earth, with great desolations by famine, sword, and pestilence; and that these grievous judgments would come on the earth in this generation. Having related these things, he again ascended as he had done before.

"By this time, so deep were the impressions made on my mind, that sleep had fled from my eyes, and I lay overwhelmed in astonishment at what I had both seen and heard. But what was my surprise when again I beheld the same messenger at my bedside, and heard him rehearse or repeat over again to me the same things as before; and added a caution to me, telling me that Satan would try to tempt me (in consequence of the indigent circumstances of my father's family), to get the plates for the purpose of getting rich. This he forbade me, saying that I must have no other object in view in getting the plates but to glorify God, and must not be influenced by any other motive than that of building His kingdom; otherwise I could not get them.

"After this third visit, he again ascended into heaven as before, and I was again left to ponder on the strangeness of what I had just experienced; when almost immediately after the heavenly messenger had ascended from me the third time, the cock crowed, and I found that day was approaching, so that our interviews must have occupied the whole of that night.

"I shortly after arose from my bed, and, as usual, went to the necessary labors of the day; but, in attempting to work as at other times, I found my strength so exhausted as to render me entirely unable. My father, who was laboring along with me, discovered something to be wrong with me, and told me to go home. I started with the intention of going to the house; but, in attempting to cross the fence out of the field where we were, my strength entirely failed me, and I fell helpless on the ground, and for a time was quite unconscious of anything.

"The first thing that I can recollect was a voice speaking unto me, calling me by name. I looked up, and beheld the same messenger standing over my head, surrounded by light as before. He then again related unto me all that he had related to me the previous night, and commanded me to go to my father and tell him of the vision and commandments which I had received.

"I obeyed; I returned to my father in the field, and rehearsed the whole matter to him. He replied to me that it was of God, and told me to go and do as commanded by the messenger. I left the field, and went to the place where the messenger had told me the plates were deposited; and owing to the distinctness of the vision which I had had concerning it, I knew the place the instant that I arrived there.