

# What the Inspired Version Is

By Bob Moore

---

Joseph Smith maintained and Restoration believers affirm that God spoke in these latter-days just as he prophesied in Biblical times, declaring himself on the American frontier and unveiling his purposes to the young, unlettered lad. One reason for the recent revelation is to invite the world back to gospel truths that Christians once professed but lost during the intervening ages either through deliberate desecration or unintentional misinterpretation of apostolic teachings.

The Reformation agreed that the Roman Church corrupted original Christian beliefs and attempted to return Christianity to the Savior's undiluted doctrines, using the Bible and regarding those scriptures as the sole source for the needed information. The Restoration, however, relied on divine revelation to disclose what those original teachings were and maintained from its advent that the Bible contained altered passages that omitted or concealed once plainly understood truths. The Book of Mormon states, "Thou hast beheld that the book proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew; and when it proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew it contained the plainness of the gospel of the Lord, of whom the twelve apostles bear record; . . . wherefore, thou seest that after the book hath gone forth through the hand of the great and abominable church that there are many plain and precious things taken away from the book, which is the book of the Lamb of God" (1 N 3:165-171). Joseph Smith's comments made years after publishing the Book of Mormon indicate his view of the Bible's condition. He said, "We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly."<sup>1</sup> The Mormon president Joseph Fielding Smith testified that Joseph also said, "From the sundry revelations which had been received, it was apparent that many important points touching the salvation of man, had been taken from the Bible, or lost before it was compiled."<sup>2</sup>

After publishing the Book of Mormon, which claimed among other things to restore some of the lost truths and forgotten covenants originally revealed through the prophets and apostles, Joseph Smith corrected the Bible, which the Reorganized Church began publishing over a century ago as the Inspired Version. Its appearance and the underlying Restoration tenet that the Bible underwent modifications undermined the Reformation's authoritative foundation. It implied that discovery of the original gospel truths could not be successfully accomplished by relying solely on the Bible that present-day Christians inherited. Critics rejected Joseph's belief and staunchly avowed that the Bible never underwent alterations. One commentator wrote, "Over the last four thousand years, Jewish scribes, and later, Christian scribes, were careful to correctly copy and transmit the original manuscripts of sacred scriptures without any significant error."<sup>3</sup> Since these critics see no substantive error in the Bible, they maintain that the Inspired Version was Joseph's attempt to make the sacred text better conform to his unbiblical and heretical teachings. Believers in and advocates for the Restoration find significant confirmation for the Bible's alteration in the historical record.

---

<sup>1</sup>*The History of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints*, Vol. 2, 1967, P 570.

<sup>2</sup>Robert J. Mathews, *Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible*, Brigham Young University Press, 1975, P 247.

<sup>3</sup>Grant R. Jeffrey, *The Signature of God*, Frontier Research Foundation, Toronto, 1997, P 14.

As the enlightened world spread throughout the globe during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it discovered lost texts and ancient manuscripts that, once translated, allow even the least scholarly investigator to examine a growing body of supportive evidence. Those documents show that both Jews and heretics changed the wording of the scriptures, that some of those changes are contained in the Bible as today's believers have inherited it, and that some teachings once commonly held by Christians and presently contained in the sacred text are now ignored because more recent Bible commentators placed different interpretations on certain passages. The following pages examine the historical record to show the need for a corrected version of the Bible. They also identify some plain tenets originally taught by early Christians but lost to present-day believers that the Inspired Version restores. They conclude by deducing what Joseph's new translation is.

---

### **Changes Made By Jews**

Early Christians repeatedly complained that the Jews deliberately changed the Hebrew text. Justin Martyr, who wrote about a century after the ascension, protested, "They [the Jews] have altogether taken away many Scriptures from the translation [the Septuagint] effected by those seventy elders who were with Ptolemy, and by which this very man [Jesus] who was crucified is proved to have been set forth expressly as God, and as man, and as being crucified, and as dying."<sup>4</sup> Tertullian also objected. He wrote, "It is necessary for me to lay claim to those Scriptures which the Jews endeavour to deprive us of."<sup>5</sup>

Origen, who spent an entire lifetime collecting and comparing the different translations and editions that existed in his day, also testified that the Jews removed parts of the Old Testament. He wrote, "Our copies are very much fuller than the Hebrew."<sup>6</sup>

The scriptures to which the Christians referred were the books of the Old Testament. They contain many divine instructions given to the ancient Hebrews as well as their sacred history. Josephus, the Jewish historian of the first century, identifies what books the Jews held sacred. He said, "We have . . . but twenty-two books which contain the records of all the past times, which are justly believed to be divine."<sup>7</sup>

Five were the Pentateuch, thirteen were written by the prophets, and four contain hymns. Rabbi Johannon ben Zakkai, a contemporary of Josephus, convened a Jewish academy at Jamnia, generally thought to have occurred about 90 AD. Most scholars once believed that its purpose was to complete the Hebrew cannon, but how could their decision have reached Josephus who may have written before the academy convened? More recent scholarship suggests that the Jewish cannon was set long before and that the Jamnia academy considered more limited matters.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup>Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*; Ch 71 as quoted by ANF 1:234.

<sup>5</sup>Tertullian, *Tertullian against Marcion*; Bk. 5, Ch 9 as quoted in ANF 3:448.

<sup>6</sup>Origen, *Origen to Africanus* as quoted in ANF 4:386-7.

<sup>7</sup>Josephus, *Against Apion*, Bk. 1, Ch 8.

<sup>8</sup>Borman L, Geisler and William E. Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, P 237

One outcome of the academy may have been to reword the scriptures used by Christians to prove that Jesus is the Christ, for Christian missionaries regularly used Old Testament passages to convert Jews. About 140 AD, Aquila, a contemporary of Justin, published a modified translation of the Septuagint. His publication provided the Jews with an official and uniform set of scriptures that help protect them from Christian missionary efforts by altering certain key passages.

Fortunately for Christians, the Old Testament had been previously translated into Greek. This was done about two centuries before Christ. Scholars disagree on the time, the number of translators, and the years to complete the translation. It began when Eleazar, the Jewish High Priest, complying with a request for the book, sent a copy of the Hebrew text as a gift to Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-246 BC), the Greek ruler at Alexandria, for inclusion in his library. The early Christians believed that 72 Jewish translators accompanied the Hebrew text and translated it into Greek once they arrived in Egypt.<sup>9</sup> Their translation became known as the Septuagint. Since Greek was understood throughout the Roman Empire when Christianity first spread the gospel of Jesus Christ, Gentile Christians naturally preferred the Greek version already available. When Aquila distributed his Greek text to Jews throughout the Roman world, which was followed by other Jewish versions, Christians viewed it as an attempt to change the scriptures that they had received from the apostles.

Origen wrote, “We have been at pains to learn from the Hebrews, comparing our own copies with theirs which have the confirmation of the versions, never subjected to corruption of Aquila and Theodotion and Symmachus.”<sup>10</sup> Christian writers identified several passages altered by the Jews. Justin Martyr said that the verse “Behold a virgin shall conceive” (Is 7:14) was changed by the Jews to read, “Behold a young woman [maiden] shall conceive.”<sup>11</sup> Our present Bible agrees with Justin’s copy, but of all the other examples cited by the early Christians, our copies agree with the text as changed by the Jews, not the rendition that the early Christians embraced. For instance, Justin also said that the Jews removed the phrase “from the tree” from the 96<sup>th</sup> Psalm because it predicted the Lord upon the cross. According to him, the verse originally read, “Tell ye among the nations, the Lord hath reigned from the tree.”<sup>12</sup> Our Bible gives the verse as follows: “Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth” (Psalms 96:10). Justin also quoted the 110<sup>th</sup> Psalm differently than our Bible renders it. It once read, “In the splendours of Thy holiness have I begotten thee from the womb, before the morning star.”<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>9</sup>Augustine, *City of God*, Bk. 18, Ch 42.

<sup>10</sup>Origen, *Commentary on John*, Bk. 6, Ch 24 as quoted in ANF 10:371.

<sup>11</sup>Justin Martyr, *Dialouge with Trypho*, Ch 43 & 71 as quoted in ANF 1:216 & ANF 1:234.

<sup>12</sup>Justin Martyr, *First Apology*, Ch 41 & *Dialouge with Trypho*, Ch 73 as quoted in ANF 1:176 & ANF 1:229.

<sup>13</sup>Justin Martyr, *Dialouge with Trypho*, Ch 63 as quoted in ANF 1:229.

Tertullian agrees, quoting the verse similarly: “Before the morning star did I beget thee from the womb.”<sup>14</sup> Justin Martyr also said that the Jews took the sentence “It is the Lord’s passover”<sup>15</sup> out of Deuteronomy (Deut 23:5). They also removed the following scripture from Ezra: “This passover is our Saviour and our refuge. And if you have understood, and your heart has taken it in, that we shall humble him on a standard, and thereafter hope on Him, then this place shall not be forsaken forever, says the Lord of hosts. But if you will not believe Him, and will not listen to His declaration, you shall be a laughing-stock to the nations.”<sup>16</sup> Since there is one book of Ezra in the Old Testament and two in the Apocrypha, all of which Christians held as sacred until the Reformation, we do not know to which of the three books Justin was referring. The verse does not occur in any of them today.

The Jews also removed the following verse from the Old Testament, probably from Jeremiah, although Irenaeus contradicted himself by once saying it was from Isaiah:<sup>17</sup> “The Lord hath remembered his dead people Israel who lay in graves; and he descended to preach to them His own salvation.”<sup>18</sup> According to Irenaeus, a verse in Deuteronomy should read, “And thy life shall be hanging before thine eyes, and thou wilt not believe thy life.”<sup>19</sup> Our Bible renders it: “Our life shall hang in doubt before thee: and thou shalt fear day and night” (Deut 28:66). Tertullian quoted Isaiah: “Who is there among you that feareth God? Let him hear the voice of His Son.”<sup>20</sup> Today, the verse reads, “Who is among you that feareth the Lord, . . . Let him trust the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God” (Is 50:7). Tertullian also said that Jeremiah contained the phrase: “Let us cast the tree upon His bread,”<sup>21</sup> a reference to the Bread of Life (Jesus) on the tree of crucifixion (the cross). Our Bible has: “Let us destroy the tree with the fruit thereof” (Jeremiah 11:19). Elsewhere, Tertullian taught that the Psalms contained the passage, “My heart hath emitted my excellent Word.”<sup>22</sup> The *Epistle of Barnabus* reveals another change that the Jews made to the Bible. It says that the 17<sup>th</sup> chapter of Genesis once contained the following verse: “And Abraham circumcised ten, and eight, and three hundred men of his household.”<sup>23</sup> No such passage appears in our Bible. The only reference we have today to 318 men with Abraham is in the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of Genesis. According to the *Epistle of Barnabus*, the significance of 318 relates to circumcision. The connection lies in the way numbers were anciently written. Instead of using numerals as we presently do, many ancient languages, including Greek, used letters to depict numbers. In this case, the letters used to write 318 symbolize Jesus upon the cross.

---

<sup>14</sup>Tertullian, *Tertullian Against Marcion*, Bk. 5, Ch 9 as quoted in ANF 3:448.

<sup>15</sup>Tertullian, *Tertullian Against Marcion*, Bk. 4, Ch 40 as quoted in ANF 3:417.

<sup>16</sup>Justin Martyr, *Dialouge with Trypho*, Ch 73 as quoted in ANF 1:234.

<sup>17</sup>Irenaeus, *Irenaeus Against Heresies*, Bk. 3, Ch 20 as quoted in ANF 1:451.

<sup>18</sup>Justin Martyr, *Dialouge with Trypho*, Ch 72 as quoted in ANF 1:234 & Irenaeus, *Irenaeus Against Heresies*, Bk. 2, Ch 22 as quoted in ANF 1:493-494.

<sup>19</sup>Irenaeus, *Irenaeus Against Heresies*, Bk. 4, Ch 10 & Bk. 5, Ch 18 as quoted in ANF 1:474, 547.

<sup>20</sup>Tertullian, *Tertullian Against Marcion*, Bk. 4, Ch 22 as quoted in ANF 3:384.

<sup>21</sup>Tertullian, *Tertullian Against Marcion*, Bk. 4, Ch 40 as quoted in ANF 3:418.

<sup>22</sup>Tertullian, *Tertullian Against Marcion*, Bk. 2, Ch 4 as quoted in ANF 3:299.

<sup>23</sup>*The Epistle of Barnabas*, Ch 9, as quoted in ANF P 142-143.

Another Jewish change to the Bible occurred in Ezekiel. Tertullian quotes it this way: "The Lord said unto me, Go through the gate, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set the mark Tau upon the foreheads of the men."<sup>24</sup>

---

Our Bible does not identify the type of mark placed on the forehead. It says, "The Lord said unto him, Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men" (Ezekiel 9:4). Tertullian's quotation identified the mark as the letter Tau, which forms our letter T. T makes the sign of the cross. The implication is that Ezekiel prophesied that those saved from a coming judgment will be marked with the sign of the cross; that is, they would be Christians. Ezekiel continues quoting the verse with "Begin at my sanctuary" (Ezekiel 9:6). The sanctuary, at least as far as the Jews of Ezekiel's day were concerned, or even in the time of the apostles, was the temple at Jerusalem. In 70 AD, the Romans under Titus conquered Jerusalem and razed the Temple. According to Eusebius,<sup>25</sup> God warned the Christian Jews residing there to leave the city shortly before Titus began his siege. The Christians fled to Pella and escaped the judgment that the destruction of the Temple brought on Jerusalem's residents at that time. Perhaps the Jews eliminated the word *Tau* from Ezekiel to conceal his prophecy about God's judgment on non-Christian Jews during Jerusalem's destruction. The Jews modified the Bible for other reasons than just to conceal the divinity of Jesus. In an effort to foster respect for their leaders at a time when many Jews were embracing Christianity, they tried to conceal the weaknesses and errors committed by past elders. Early Christians claimed that they erased part of the book of Daniel simply because it recorded the proposition that two elders made to a young and attractive woman after they had secretly watched her bathe. The account is preserved in the Apocrypha under the title *The History of Susanna*. It records the two elders' error with these words: "When the maids were gone forth, the two elders rose up, and ran unto her saying, behold, the garden doors are shut, that no man can see us, and we are in love with thee; therefore consent unto us, and lie with us. If thou wilt not, we will bear witness against thee, that a young man was with thee: and therefore thou didst send away thy maids from thee" (Sus 1:19-21). Origen commented about this deletion and also said that the Jews eliminated the history of Isaiah's death. He wrote, "Why then is the 'History [of Susanna]' not in their Daniel, if as your wise men hand down by tradition such stories? The answer is that they hid from the knowledge of the people as many of the passages which contained any scandal against the elders, rulers and judges, as they could, some of which have been preserved in non-canonical writings. As an example, take the story told about Esaias [Isaiah], and guaranteed by the Epistle to the Hebrews [Heb 11:37], which is found in none of their public books."<sup>26</sup> Hippolytus agreed. In his commentary on Susanna, he wrote, "These things the rulers of the Jews wish now to expunge from the book, and assert that these things did not happen in Babylon, because they are ashamed of what was done then by the elders."<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup>Tertullian, *Tertullian Against Marcion*, Bk. 3, Ch 22 as quoted in ANF 3:340.

<sup>25</sup>Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, Bk. 3, Ch 5, P 68.

<sup>26</sup>Origen, *Origen to Africanus*; Sec 9 as quoted in ANF 4:388.

<sup>27</sup>Hippolytus, *On Susannah* as quoted in ANF 5:192.

Origen believed, apparently for erroneous reasons, that the Jews also eliminated the murder of one of their prophets in the Temple. Jesus had said, “The blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, who perished between the altar and the temple” (Lu 11:51). Who was this Zacharias? Origen believed that the Jews erased his history for the same reason that the account of Susanna was expunged. He said, “Then about Zacharias the son of Barachias, who was slain between the temple and the altar, we learn from Jesus only, not knowing it otherwise from any Scripture. Wherefore I think no other supposition is possible, than that they who had the reputation of wisdom, and the rulers and elders, took away from the people every passage which might bring them into discredit among the people.”<sup>28</sup>

Jewish apologists maintained that the Hebrews accurately recorded the ancient text and that Christians introduced the differences to support their claim that the Old Testament predicted every detail of Jesus’ life. Christians disagreed. Justin cited a specific passage that during his life was “still written in some copies in the synagogues of the Jews (for it is only a short time since they were cut out).”<sup>29</sup> While other Christians confirmed Justin’s allegations, Augustine went further. He asserted that the Hebrews not only erased the more obvious references to the Savior, but introduced other scriptural changes simply to multiply the number of differences between the two texts. That way, the Jews could claim that their version was superior to the Christian edition. Augustine wrote, “The Jews, in their jealousy at the transference to us, through translation, of the Law and the prophets, altered some passages in their own texts to diminish the authority of our version.”<sup>30</sup> These three factors made the Christian Old Testament significantly different from the Jewish edition. As a result, Ante-Nicene Christian writers quoted many passages differently than the Hebrew Bible. Of more interest, those quotations also read differently than their corresponding passages now appear in our Bible.

Jewish modifications to the Old Testament did not effect the Bible that the apostles distributed among the Gentiles. The changes were not made to the text first distributed among the Christians, but to the text later accepted among the Jews. The Book of Mormon accurately describes this development. It states, “The book proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew; and when it proceeded forth from the mouth of a Jew it contained the plainness of the gospel of the Lord” (1 N 3:165). Unfortunately, most of the Jewish alterations made their way into our Bible. How Jewish changes became Christian scripture is not completely clear. Jerome, the Christian monk who completed the official Latin version known as the Vulgate, placed those changes in his work, which eventually became canonized scripture for the Roman Church. Later Greek copies also contained the Jewish modifications. Were those Greek copies simply translations of Jerome’s work?

---

<sup>28</sup>Origen, *Origen to Africanus*; Sec 9 as quoted in ANF 4:389.

<sup>29</sup>Justin Martyr, *Dialogue With Trypho*, Ch 72 as quoted in ANF 1:235.

Regardless, the placement of Jewish alterations into the Christian Bible fulfills what the Book of Mormon also details: “These things go forth from the Jews in purity unto the Gentiles, according to the truth which is in God: and after they go forth by the hand of the twelve apostles of the Lamb, from the Jews unto the Gentiles, thou seest the foundation of a great and abominable church, which is most abominable above all other churches; for behold, they have taken away from the gospel of the lamb many parts which are plain and most precious” (1 N 3:166-168).

Jerome prepared the Vulgate, the authorized Latin Bible, about 400. When he did, he included many passages that the Jews modified. Although he used both Hebrew and Greek texts, his preferred Greek text was the one prepared by Symmachus, a Samaritan convert to Judaism, who may have become a member of the Ebonite-Christian sect. Symmachus translated the Hebrew text into Greek at the end of the second century and included the Jewish changes. Origen specifically identified his version as one containing corruptions.<sup>31</sup> One reason that Jerome preferred Symmachus’ rendition is explained by a present-day commentator: “Perhaps Jerome found in Symmachus’ version the embodiment of his own definition of the translator’s task: to be true to the idiomatic essence of the original rather than to the literal meaning.”<sup>32</sup> Another reason is that by the time of Jerome most Christians understood that the Septuagint also included mistakes. For instance, Augustine, one of Jerome’s contemporaries, showed that the ages of some of the early patriarchs at the time of their recorded sons’ birth as stated in the Septuagint were deliberately changed.<sup>33</sup> He believed that these changes were introduced by Jews within a few hundred years of its original translation, maybe when the original Greek text was first transcribed for distribution outside Ptolemy’s library. These changes, perhaps made by Hellenized Jews embarrassed by the unusually long lives of their antediluvian ancestors, helped make the Septuagint suspect.

After the appearance of the Vulgate, particularly after the fall of Rome and the introduction of the reign of barbarism, Greek texts were abandoned in the West. Many Greek copies now available are translations of the Latin text. Although the East retained the Greek language, they may have fallen victim to the same factors that led Jerome to prefer Biblical texts that contained Jewish alterations. None of their current copies agree with the passages as rendered by the Ante-Nicean writers who cataloged the Jewish modifications. Fourth and fifth century Christian preference for the Hebrew rendition instead of the Septuagint as delivered to the church by the apostles fulfilled Nephi’s prophecy. It was the apostate church that placed Jewish changes into the Biblical text that present day Christians inherited.

---

<sup>30</sup>Augustine, *City of God*, Book 15, Ch 11, P 612.

<sup>31</sup>Origen, *Commentary on John*, Bk. 6, Ch 24 as quoted in ANF 10:371.

<sup>32</sup>*The Bible through the Ages*; Reader’s Digest; Pleasantville, NY; 1996; P 207.

<sup>33</sup>Augustine, *The City of God*, Bk. 15, Ch 13; P 616-617.

## Changes Made By Gentiles

History records that heretics also altered the Bible. These false teachers brought strange and depraved doctrines into the church. Paul told the elders at Ephesus, “I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29-30).

False teachers were already at work when Paul gave his warning. John said, “Even now there are many antichrists” (1 John 2:18). The heresy that was assaulting the church at the time when the apostles wrote was authored by Simon, the magician mentioned in Acts, who coveted the giving of the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:18-19). Simon offered to purchase that power, but received a stern rebuke. Tertullian maintained that the heretic pretended repentance and shortly thereafter left the apostles’ company. He then “purchased a Tyrian woman of the name of Helen out of a brothel, with the same money which he had offered for the Holy Spirit, — a traffic worthy of the wretched man. He actually feigned himself to be the Supreme Father, and further pretended that the woman was his own primary conception, wherewith he had purposed the creation of the angels and the arch angels.”<sup>34</sup> Simon claimed that he was the Father (or his temporal manifestation) and that those who followed him received a special, secret knowledge of the Father. Simon spread his heresy throughout Mesopotamia, confirming it with magic, signs he used to witness his divinity. Those believing his theology regarded him as God and rendered him worship. The Clementine Homilies chronicle debates between Simon and Peter. Defeated in every confrontation, Simon fled to Rome where he eventually died. Upon his death, his disciples raised a statute of him in his honor. Irenaeus wrote, “They also have an image of Simon fashioned after the likeness of Jupiter, and another of Helena in the shape of Minerva; and these they worship.”<sup>35</sup>

Simon attracted a number of disciples, many of whom developed their own brand of heresy. All claimed access to a secret knowledge. Since the Greek word for *knowledge* is *gnosis*, the successors to Simon became known as Gnostics. Their religion was an abstract form of paganism, placing Christ, Savior, Wisdom, Logos, or the Word, along with other Christian terms and philosophical attributes into a heavenly tribunal, all of which were opposed by the god of the Old Testament. The Christian fathers responded to this outrage by carefully exposing the Gnostic’s absurdity with reason and refuting its doctrines with scripture. Disarmed, the heretics responded by creating their own scriptures, not new revelations, but new compositions which they attributed to others — generally prominent, but dead Christians. A few of their counterfeit works are the gospels of Peter, Thomas, and the Egyptians. Irenaeus complained, “They [the Gnostic heretics] adduce an unspeakable number of apocryphal and spurious writings, which they themselves have forged.”<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup>Tertullian, *A Treatise on the Soul*, Ch 34 as quoted in ANF 3:215.

<sup>35</sup>Irenaeus, *Irenaeus Against Heresies*, Bk. 1, Ch 23.3 as quoted in ANF P 348.

<sup>36</sup>Irenaeus, *Irenaeus Against Heresies*; Bk. 1, Ch 20 as quoted in ANF 1:344.



Hippolytus added, "Concerning this (nature) they hand down an explicit passage, occurring in the Gospel inscribed according to Thomas . . . This, however, is not (the teaching) of Christ, but of Hippocrates [a pagan philosopher]." <sup>37</sup> Elsewhere, he said, "They have these varied changes set down in the gospel inscribed 'according to the Egyptians.'" <sup>38</sup>

In 1958 Professor Morton Smith of Columbia University discovered a letter reportedly written by Clement of Alexandria in which the author disclosed the existence of a secret gospel carefully guarded by an inner circle of initiates. The letter said, "He [Mark] composed a more spiritual gospel for the use of those who were being perfected. . . Dying, he left his composition to the church in Alexandria, where it even yet is most carefully guarded. . . [but Carpocrates, a Gnostic heretic] got from him [that is, an elder of Alexandria] a copy of the secret Gospel." <sup>39</sup> In all probability, Clement of Alexandria did not write this letter. Heretics often forged famous names to their writings in an attempt to authenticate their spurious scriptures. Dr. Smith probably found such a forgery, although present-day Gnostics maintain its authenticity.

Besides forging scripture, the Gnostics also altered passages in the Bible. Before his martyrdom in 110, Ignatius complained about them, saying, "Because I have heard of some who say; unless I find it written in the originals, I will not believe it to be written in the Gospel. And when I said, It is written; they answer what lay before them in their corrupted copies." <sup>40</sup> Clement of Alexandria bemoaned "some of those who transpose the Gospels." <sup>41</sup> An unknown Christian protested, "They have not hesitated to corrupt the word of God." <sup>42</sup> Eusebius concluded, "So it was that they laid hands unblushingly on the Holy Scriptures, claiming to have corrected them." <sup>43</sup> The Biblical manuscripts that heretics provided to prove their tenets were often written in their own handwriting. An unknown Christian writer observed, "They cannot deny that the impertinence is their own, seeing that the copies are in their own handwriting, that they did not receive the Scriptures in such a condition from their first teachers, and that they cannot produce any originals to justify their copies." <sup>44</sup> The heretics became so bold that one of them, a person named Marcion, published his own Bible. This was particularly insolent, for at the time his edition appeared, about 150, the Bible had not been officially compiled by the Christians. Instead, the scriptures existed among them as individual books in each congregation. Marcion's Bible altered many verses and removed entire books.

---

<sup>37</sup>Hippolytus, *The Refutation of All Heresies*; Bk. 5, Ch 2 as quoted in ANF 5:50.

<sup>38</sup>Hippolytus, *The Refutation of All Heresies*; Bk. 5, Ch 2 as quoted in ANF 5:49.

<sup>39</sup>Michael Baigent, Richard Leigh, and Henry Lincoln, *Holy Blood, Holy Grail*, Dell Publishing, 1983, P 319-20.

<sup>40</sup>Ignatius, *Epistle to the Philadelphians*; Ch 2:20 as quoted in *Lost Books of the Bible*, P 184.

<sup>41</sup>Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*: Bk. 4, Ch 6 as quoted in ANF 2:416.

<sup>42</sup>Unknown Author, A polemic Against Artemon as quoted by Eusebius, *The History of the Church*; Bk. 5, Ch 28, P 177.

<sup>43</sup>Unknown Author, A polemic Against Artemon as quoted by Eusebius, *The History of the Church*; Bk. 5, Ch 28, P 177.

<sup>44</sup>Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, Bk. 5, Ch 28, P 178.

Tertullian wrote a lengthy work against this heretic. In it he disclosed some modifications Marcion made. In one place he said, “What serious gaps Marcion has made in this epistle especially, by withdrawing whole passages at his will, will be clear from the unmutilated text of our own copy.”<sup>45</sup> Marcion removed parts from the gospel that he did not like.

Origen observed, “Marcion . . . made bold to delete from the gospel the passages which have this effect.”<sup>46</sup> Tertullian added, “Now, the garbled form in which we have found the heretic’s Gospel will have already prepared us to expect to find the epistles also mutilated by him with like perverseness — and that even as respects their number.”<sup>47</sup> The last phrase, “even as respects their number,” refers to the fact that Marcion eliminated three epistles. Tertullian said, “He [Marcion] rejected the two epistles to Timothy and the one to Titus.”<sup>48</sup> Clement of Alexandria confirmed that the Gnostics rejected the books of Timothy.<sup>49</sup> Marcion also gave Ephesians another title. Tertullian continues, “Here I pass over discussion about another epistle which we hold to be written to the Ephesians, but the heretics to the Laodiceans.”<sup>50</sup>

Although the Christian fathers complained about a multitude of changes that heretics made to the Biblical text, they identified only a few verses. Tertullian revealed that Marcion altered a verse in Paul’s first epistle to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 15:45). He wrote, “Our heretic, however, in the excess of his folly, being unwilling that the statement should remain in this last shape, altered ‘last Adam’ into ‘last Lord.’”<sup>51</sup> Our Bibles render the verse as Tertullian stated it should read. On the other hand, Irenaeus accused a Gnostic of altering a passage in John’s first epistle. Irenaeus said that the verse originally read, “Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit which separates Jesus Christ is not of God, but of antichrist.”<sup>52</sup> The reason that the Gnostics changed the verse is that they separated Jesus and

Christ. They claimed that Savior, Logos, and Christ were some of the thirty virtues, called Aeons, that resided in a heavenly tribunal.<sup>53</sup> John actively opposed this heresy and even wrote his gospel to refute it.<sup>54</sup> By claiming that the Aeon called Christ descended on the man Jesus, the Gnostics separated Jesus and Christ into two entities. John’s original wording accused those teaching the separation of Jesus and Christ of being against Christ and of the antichrist.

---

<sup>45</sup>Tertullian, *Tertullian Against Marcion*; Bk. 5, Ch 13 as quoted in ANF 3:457.

<sup>46</sup>Origen, *Commentary on John*, Bk. 10, Ch 4 as quoted in ANF 10:284.

<sup>47</sup>Tertullian, *Tertullian Against Marcion*; Bk. 5, Ch 1 as quoted in ANF 3:431.

<sup>48</sup>Tertullian, *Tertullian Against Marcion*; Bk. 5, Ch 21 as quoted in ANF 3:473.

<sup>49</sup>Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, Bk. 2, Ch 11, as quoted in ANF 2:359.

<sup>50</sup>Tertullian, *Tertullian Against Marcion*; Bk. 5, Ch 11 as quoted in ANF 3:454.

<sup>51</sup>Tertullian, *Tertullian Against Marcion*; Bk. 5, Ch 5 as quoted in ANF 3:450.

<sup>52</sup>Irenaeus *Irenaeus Against Heresies*, Bk. 3, Ch 16.8 as quoted in - ANF 1:443

<sup>53</sup>Gnostic theology is confusing. Different Gnostics gave conflicting members for the Pleroma — their name for the heavenly tribunal. The only surviving list is given by Irenaeus in *Irenaeus Against Heresies*, Bk. 1, Ch 1 as quoted in ANF 1:316.

<sup>54</sup>Irenaeus, *Irenaeus Against Heresies*, Bk. 3, Ch 11 as quoted in ANF 1:426.

Today, our Bible renders the verse differently than how Irenaeus said John wrote it. It says, “Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist” (1 John 4:2-3).

Other Bible verses that were changed may have been altered by Gnostics. Several early Christian writers quote a verse from the 96th psalm differently than it appears in our Bible. Today, it reads, “For all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens” (Ps 96:5). Justin Martyr,<sup>55</sup> Tertullian,<sup>56</sup> and Origen<sup>57</sup> all give the verse as follows: “For the gods of the nations are demons, but the Lord made the heavens.” The difference is the substitution of the word *idol* for *demon*. The early Christians not only taught that the idols were manmade statues, but that the devils used them to reveal their will and receive worship. Augustine said that demons made Roman statues shed tears to influence the Senate.<sup>58</sup> He also quoted Hermes Trismegistus, an early pagan who lived before Solomon, to prove that devils reside in idols. He wrote, “Thus, because our ancestors went far astray in their conception of the gods, on account of their lack of faith and their neglect of divine worship and true religion, they invented the art of creating gods. They also brought in a power derived from the nature of the universe as a supplement to this technique, suitable for their purpose, and by this addition (since they could not create souls) they called up the souls of angels or demons and made them in here in sacred images and in divine mysteries, so that by their means the idols could have the power of doing good or inflicting harm”<sup>59</sup> Isaiah also referred to demons, at least if Justin Martyr quoted him correctly. According to Justin, Isaiah originally wrote, “For the princes in Tanis are evil angels.”<sup>60</sup> Our Bible gives the verse, “For his princes were at Zoan, and his ambassadors came to Hanes” (Is 30:4). Notice that the reference to demonic activity as well as the mention of idolatry is excluded.

Today, the only remaining Biblical passage linking idolatry to the worship of devils is found in Paul’s first epistle to the Corinthians. Paul wrote, “But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God” (1 Corinthians 10:20). These changes suggest that someone tried to eliminate any Biblical link between idolatry and devil worship. The most likely candidates are Gnostics.

The fabrication of spurious books and the mutilation of authentic scriptures motivated the church to canonize the Bible. Before Marcion each church had copies of the scriptures, but the exact books considered sacred remained undefined and varied from locality to locality. Many regarded the Epistle of Clement and the Books of Hermas as divine. Some revered the Book of Enoch.

---

<sup>55</sup>Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, Ch 73 as quoted in ANF 1:235.

<sup>56</sup>Tertullian, *On Idolatry*, Ch 20 as quoted in ANF 3:74.

<sup>57</sup>Origen, *Origin Against Celsus*, Bk. 3, Ch 2 as quoted in ANF 4:466.

<sup>58</sup>Augustine, *City of God*, Bk. 3, Ch 11, P 99.

<sup>59</sup>Augustine, *City of God*, Bk. 8, Ch 23, p 334.

<sup>60</sup>Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, Ch 79 as quoted in ANF 1:238.

When Marcion selected only those books for his Bible that he could use to support his heresy, the church realized the need to specify the content of the New Testament Bible. However, they did not publish an authorized edition then — at least as far as we know — or even decree an official list of accepted books.

The earliest complete list for the New Testament Canon as it currently exists in our Bibles comes from the writings of Athanasius<sup>61</sup> and was formally ratified by the Council of Laodicea in A.D. 360, the Council of Hippo in 393, and the Council of Carthage in 397. Nevertheless, by 180, the church seems to have agreed on which books comprised the Bible.<sup>62</sup> The reason for this conclusion is that most surviving Christian writings after that date quote as scripture from only books that are now part of the Bible. Likewise, some authors of that period complained that other works, once venerated, were no longer regarded as sacred.

By the second century, a number of different Biblical editions competed with the original text, if one actually survived until then. In all probability, the original of each New Testament book remained in the specific churches to which it was given — the epistle to the Romans at Rome, the epistles to the Corinthians at Corinth, the Gospel of John at Ephesus, and so on. A copy of Matthew's gospel written in the apostle's own hand existed as far away as India, it being taken there by Bartholomew.<sup>63</sup> Differences between the versions could be corrected by comparing the individual books in each church with every original.

The opportunity to verify the accuracy of any edition ended during the reign of the Roman Emperor Diocletian, who ruled from 245 to 314. At his direction, Christians were not only tortured and executed, but their property was confiscated. Entire churches were destroyed along with all the possessions in them. This destruction included copies of the Bible. Eusebius testified, "I saw with my own eyes the places of worship thrown down from top to bottom, to the very foundations, the inspired holy Scriptures committed to the flames in the middle of the public squares."<sup>64</sup> The wreckage was greatest in large cities, the very cities which would have housed the originals and by virtue of the size of their congregations and priesthood could have verified the accuracy of the Bible's entire text. With the destruction of most, if not all, of the original copies, the authenticity of any copy became suspect. At first, the difficulty was not evident, but as time advanced, new versions appeared to compete with the older ones.

About 318, Arius, a presbyter from Lybia, challenged comments concerning the mystery of the Godhead made by Alexander, the aged Bishop of Alexandria. Arius said, "If the Father begat the Son, then he who was begotten had a beginning existence, and from this it follows there was a time when the Son was not."<sup>65</sup> Arius' observation centered on the proposition that Jesus consisted of a different substance than the Father.

---

<sup>61</sup>*Christian History*, Issue 43 (Vol. 8, No 42), P 29.

<sup>62</sup>Will Durant, *The History of Civilization*, Vol. 3, *Caesar and Christ*, P 616.

<sup>63</sup>Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, Bk. 5, Ch 10, P 157.

<sup>64</sup>Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, Bk. 8, Ch 2; P 258.

<sup>65</sup>*Christian History*, Issue 51 (Vol. 15, No 3), P 11.

The reason for his proposal and its popularity lies in Greek philosophy. The philosophical view maintained that any temporal manifestation of the divine is inferior. Arius reasoned that because Jesus was God in the flesh, he must be inferior to the Father and, more particularly, made of a lesser substance — a substance that must have required a beginning. His heresy, known as Arianism, eclipsed Gnosticism. Almost the entire church embraced it. In fact, Athanasius, a deacon, advisor of, and finally successor to Alexander, is credited with single-handedly preserving the orthodox view of the Godhead. His life was repeatedly threatened, both by ecclesiastical and civil authorities, forcing him to flee into hiding several times. Except for his bishopric, every other bishopric in Christendom, unless left vacant, had, at least at one time, a leader who advocated Arianism. Several congregations vacillated between the competing views — at one time orthodox, at another Arian, perhaps orthodox again, and then Arian. The conflict was fierce and lengthy.

Constantine helped the vacillation. At one time he dismissed all bishops who supported the Arian doctrines, including Arius himself, sending them into exile, only to restore all at a later date to their original positions and jurisdictions.<sup>66</sup> Like the Gnostics, the Arians modified the Bible to substantiate their interpretations.<sup>67</sup> Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, accused them of “playing with Holy Scripture.”<sup>68</sup> They also wrote new books and altered the writings of earlier Christian authors. For instance, about this time someone reworked the epistles that Ignatius wrote from his Roman prison while awaiting execution, probably producing spurious ones as well, and reworded the *Didascalia*. The *Apostolic Constitutions* were also revised, and not necessarily by a different person. Those who presented the alterations were either Arians or semi-Arians.<sup>69</sup> When the Council of Nicea decreed Arianism a heresy, “an imperial edict ordered that all books by Arius should be burned, and made the concealment of such a book punishable with death.”<sup>70</sup> When the Arians were expelled, the state made it “a penal offense to possess a Bible not authorized by the Church and according to some estimates as many as 270 different versions of the Bible were burnt.”<sup>71</sup> As various churches changed their doctrinal status, they vacillated between different scriptural interpretations, altering their biblical perspectives and, perhaps, their versions.

Despite the decision made by the Council of Nicea, the Arian controversy did not end. It gained influence in high places and, for a time, enjoyed the approval of the emperor. Constantius, who reigned from 350-361 embraced the Arian view and banished Athanasius. With his approval, Arians forced Anti-Nicene creeds on bishops and their dioceses by threatening banishment. Bishops who withstood their threats were removed and exiled.

---

<sup>66</sup>Will Durant; *The Story of Civilization*; Vol. 5, *The Age of Faith*; Simon & Schuster; NY; 1950; P 7.

<sup>67</sup>Will Durant, *The History of Civilization*, Vol. 3, *Caesar and Christ*, P 660.

<sup>68</sup>Alexander; *To Alexander, Bishop of the City of Constantinople*; 3; as quoted in ANF 6:292.

<sup>69</sup>*Introductory Notice to Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* as quoted in ANF, Vol. 7, P 388.

<sup>70</sup>Will Durant, *The History of Civilization*, Vol. 3, *Caesar and Christ*, P 660.

<sup>71</sup>[www.barnabus.net/lifebarnabus.html](http://www.barnabus.net/lifebarnabus.html).

In 381 Theodosius became emperor and the Council of Constantinople reaffirmed the orthodox view, rewording the Nicene Creed into its present text. It was during the interval between the Council of Nicea and the Council of Constantinople that Arians and semi-Arians altered some older Christian texts, such as the *Apostolic Constitutions*, and fabricated forgeries, like the spurious Ignatian epistles. Perhaps they also tried to alter the scriptures and, in retaliation for the imperial edict, burned orthodox books and Bibles. By the time that the Council of Constantinople met, the condition of the scriptures was such that a uniform and official version was greatly needed.

In 385, Jerome, an orthodox but controversial monk, left Rome and secluded himself in a cave near Bethlehem where he meticulously translated the Bible into Latin. The task took 18 years.<sup>72</sup> Although he translated the New Testament portion of the Septuagint into Latin, he chose to translate the Old Testament from the Hebrew, teaching himself the language for the task. He also relied on the version made by Symmachus because he appear to Jerome to embody the best qualities of a translator. That decision drew sharp criticism from his contemporaries and undoubtedly contained errors.<sup>73</sup> Despite its weaknesses and the immediate outcry of other clergy, the church eventually received Jerome's edition and elevated it as the authorized edition. Jerome's translation, called the Vulgate, has remained intact since its appearance and served as the official Bible of the Roman Catholic Church for a millennia and a half, being revised only in 1592 and 1907. Once Jerome produced the Vulgate, other editions of the Bible that may have been preferred before and perhaps for some time thereafter disappeared. No copies of either the Old Latin Version or Origen's Hexapla survived.

Today, we have no complete Biblical text that predates the fourth century. Although earlier fragments exists, the most ancient copy, the Codex Vaticanus, was written after the Council of Nicea.<sup>74</sup> This means that we have no way to determine a correct version of the Bible or compare ours with the original autographs.

The King James Version did not come from the Vulgate. "It followed the 1516 and 1522 editions of Erasmus' Greek text."<sup>75</sup> In 1515, Erasmus went to Basle to search for Greek manuscripts of the Bible. He discovered several copies, all of them coming from what scholars call the *Byzantine text*. The Byzantine text developed over the centuries from Bible manuscripts made by the decree of Constantine and housed in Constantinople. Since Constantine ordered the production of fifty copies of the Bible before Jerome's birth, coupled with the fact that Constantinople, which remained the seat of the Greek Orthodox Church throughout the Middle Age, never accepted the Vulgate, most scholars conclude that the Byzantine text stood independent of Jerome's translation. However, when copyists made early copies of the Byzantine texts, "official critical comparison and careful, planned revision were relatively rare."<sup>76</sup>

---

<sup>72</sup>Will Durant, *The History of Civilization*, Vol. 4, *The Age of Faith*, P 54.

<sup>73</sup>Durant, *History of Civilization*, Vol. 4, *Age of Faith*, P 54.

<sup>74</sup>Geisler & Nix, P 391.

<sup>75</sup>Geisler & Nix, P 566.

<sup>76</sup>Geisler & Nix, P 448.

The individual copies occasionally differed among themselves. The earliest Byzantine manuscripts available today date from the eighth century. It is not only plausible, but probable, that the same factors that led Jerome to accept the many Biblical modifications about which earlier Christians complained also motivated copyists of the Byzantine manuscripts to include those changes in their renditions. This helps explain why the Jewish modifications about which the earliest Christians complain are found in the Byzantine text and reproduced in the King James Version.

Early Christians quoted many Biblical passages differently than they now read in our Bibles. The following table contains a list of some examples.

From Christian Writings	From the King James Bible
"If ye believe not, neither shall ye understand." <sup>77</sup>	"If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established" (Isaiah 7:9)
"The word of God cleaveth the rock as an axe." <sup>78</sup>	"Is not my word like unto fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jeremiah 23:29).
"I will appoint their bishops in righteousness, and their deacons in faith." <sup>79</sup>	"I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness." (Isaiah 60:17)
"This is the beginning of God's creation, made for his angels to mock at." <sup>80</sup>	"He is the chief of the ways of God: he that made him can make his sword to approach unto him." (Job 40:19).
"And on the temple shall be the abomination of desolations, and at the end of the time an end shall be put to the desolation." <sup>81</sup>	"For the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate, even until the consumption, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate" (Daniel 9:27).
"Is not the whole life of man upon the earth a temptation." <sup>82</sup>	"Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? are not his days also like the days of a hireling?" (Job 7:1).
"But he that loveth wickedness hateth his own soul." <sup>83</sup>	"Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and a horrible tempest, the portion of their cup" (Psalms 11:6).

---

<sup>77</sup>Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, Bk. 1, Ch 1& Bk. 2, Ch 2 as quoted in ANF 2:301, 349.

<sup>78</sup>Irenaeus, *Irenaeus Against Heresies*, Bk. 5, Ch 17 as quoted in ANF 1:545.

<sup>79</sup>Clement, *First Epistle*, Ch 42 as quoted in ANF 1:16.

<sup>80</sup>Origen, *Commentary on John*, Ch 17 as quoted in ANF 10:306.

<sup>81</sup>Origen, *Origin Against Celsus*, Bk. 4, Ch 46 as quoted in ANF 4:594-595.

<sup>82</sup>Origen, *De Principiis*, Bk. 3, Ch 2 as quoted in ANF 4:334.

<sup>83</sup>Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, Bk. 6, Ch 6 as quoted in ANF 2:492.

From Christian Writings	From the King James Bible
"No one is pure from defilement, not even if his life were but for one day." <sup>84</sup>	"Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one. Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with thee, thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass" (Job 14:4-5).
"Woe to them who bind their own sins as it were with a long rope." <sup>85</sup>	"Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope" (Isaiah 5:18).
"The just shall live to the end, for he shall not see corruption, when he beholds the wise dying." <sup>86</sup>	"According to thy name, O God, so is thy praise unto the ends of the earth; thy right hand is full of righteousness" (Psalms 48:100).
"He who reproveth boldly is a peacemaker." <sup>87</sup>	"He that winketh with the eye causes sorrow" (Proverbs 10:10).
"Instruction unquestioned goes astray." <sup>88</sup>	"He is in the way of life that keepeth instruction; but he that refuseth reproof erreth" (Proverbs 10:17).
"And do thou portray them in a threefold manner, in counsel and knowledge, to answer words of truth to them who who propose them to thee." <sup>89</sup>	"That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth; that thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee." (Proverbs 22:21)
"And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness hath not overtaken it." <sup>90</sup>	"And the light shineth in the world, and the world perceiveth it not" (John 1:5).

Some scriptures that early Christian writers quote and that differ from our Biblical text are not sufficiently identified for investigators to find the corresponding passage in our copies. They may not even be from books that now comprise the sacred text. For instance, Clement of Alexandria said that the Book of Kings contained the following passage: "The Lord hears the righteous, but the wicked He saveth not, because they do not desire to know God."<sup>91</sup>

---

<sup>84</sup>Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, Bk. 4, Ch 17 as quoted in ANF 2:428.

<sup>85</sup>Tertullian, *On Repentance*, Ch 11 as quoted in ANF 3:665.

<sup>86</sup>Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, Bk. 1, Ch 10 as quoted in ANF 2:310.

<sup>87</sup>Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, Bk. 2, Ch 1 as quoted in ANF 2:347.

<sup>88</sup>Origen, *Origin Against Celsus*, Bk. 6, Ch 7 as quoted in ANF 4:576.

<sup>89</sup>Origen, *De Principiis*, Bk. 4, Ch 1 as quoted in ANF 4:359.

<sup>90</sup>Origen, *Commentary on John*, Bk. 3, Ch 20, 30 as quoted in ANF 10:337, 345

<sup>91</sup>Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, Bk. 4, Ch 26 as quoted in ANF 2:440.



He also said that Solomon wrote, “The whole world of wealth belongs to the believer, but not a penny to the unbeliever.”<sup>92</sup> Another lost Biblical passage read: “Good works are an acceptable prayer to the Lord.”<sup>93</sup> Clement of Alexandria recited, “For the Lord gives wisdom out of His own mouth, and knowledge along with understanding, and treasures up help for the righteous.”<sup>94</sup> He also quoted, “Thou hast lived for the fence of the people, thy children were blessed in the tents of their fathers.”<sup>95</sup> Another verse, read, “Thou hast inherited the covenant of Israel”<sup>96</sup> Then, there is: “Look not upon a strange woman, to lust.”<sup>97</sup> Tertullian recited this verse: “He who hath fallen shall rise again, and he who hath been averted, shall be converted.”<sup>98</sup> Thedotus preserved this passage: “And he, as a bridegroom issuing from his chamber, will rejoice as a giant to run his way. From heaven’s end is his going forth; and there is no one who shall hide himself from his heat. He hath set his tabernacle in the sun.”<sup>99</sup>

---

<sup>92</sup>Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, Bk. 2, Ch 3 as quoted in ANF 2:353.

<sup>93</sup>Clement of Alexandria, *The Instructor*, Bk. 3, Ch 12 as quoted in ANF 2:292.

<sup>94</sup>Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, Bk. 1, Ch 4 as quoted in ANF 2:305.

<sup>95</sup>Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, Bk. 2, Ch 6 as quoted in ANF 2:354.

<sup>96</sup>Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, Bk. 2, Ch 6 as quoted in ANF 2:354.

<sup>97</sup>Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, Bk. 7, Ch 8 as quoted in ANF 2:547.

<sup>98</sup>Tertullian, *On Repentance*, Ch 8 as quoted in ANF 3:663.

<sup>99</sup>Thedotus, *Excerpts*, No. 56 as quoted in ANF 8:49.

## **A New Translation**

The evidence bound in early Christian writings resoundingly confirms Joseph Smith’s claim that the Bible as it was printed in his day differed from the sacred text that was available during the apostolic age. It shows that both Jews and heretics changed Biblical passages and even identifies some of the verses that were altered. Since modern Bibles differ from the ancient wording, a better translation was needed, but without the autographs the only way to obtain a better translation was for God to reveal it. Joseph offered a “New Translation.”

He obtained it, not by academic decoding, but by divine revelation. Today, Latter-Day Saints call that translation the *Inspired Version*. Some passages in the Inspired Version follow the wording found in ancient texts. For instance, the Inspired Version gives part of the Lord’s Prayer as follows: “Suffer us not to be lead into temptation” (Mark 6:14). This rendering apparently agrees with the old Latin version. While it is lost in antiquity, both Tertullian and Cyprian, the first two Christian authors with extant works who wrote in Latin, quoted the passage as the Inspired Version presents it.

Tertullian's commentary on prayer said, "'Lead us not into temptation:' that is, suffer us not to be led into it."<sup>100</sup> Cyprian was more explicit. He quoted the prayer as follows: "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven so in earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And suffer us not to be led into temptation; but deliver us from evil. Amen."<sup>101</sup> The Old Latin wording of the Lord's Prayer seems to have expressed how the early church viewed its meaning. Dionysius, who was a contemporary of Cyprian but wrote in Greek, said in regard to the passage, "'And lead us not into temptation;' which means, 'Suffer us not to fall into temptation.'"<sup>102</sup> The Inspired Version offers this passage in the way that the early Christians understood it.

Another example of how the Inspired Version returned a passage to the meaning embraced in the early church appears in John's gospel. The King James Version renders a verse: "No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18). The common interpretation is that people cannot see God, but the Old Testament presents a different view. According to its account, Jacob (Genesis 32:30), Moses (Exodus 33:11), and Solomon (1 Kings 3:5) all saw God.

The Inspired Version corrects the apparent contradiction between the Old and New Testaments by giving John's text this way: "No man hath seen God at any time, except he hath borne record of the Son; for except it is through him no man can be saved" (John 1:19). The change implies that man can see God and ties that experience to the testimony of Jesus. Irenaeus quoted the cited verse similar to the Inspired Version. His copy said, "No man hath seen God at any time, unless the only begotten Son of God, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared [Him]."<sup>103</sup> This quotation teaches that man can see God, but only through the declaration of the Son. The Inspired Version more accurately expresses Irenaeus' quotation than the King James Version does. Origin agrees. While commenting on a passage in Matthew (Matt 11:27), he said, "He himself, in the Gospel, did not say that no one has seen the Father, save the Son, nor anyone the Son, save the Father; but His words are: 'No one knoweth the Son, save the Father; nor any one the Father, save the Son.' By which it is clearly shown, that whatever among bodily natures is called seeing and being seen, is termed, between the Father and the Son, a knowing and being known, by means of the power of knowledge, not by the frailness of the sense of sight."<sup>104</sup> While some corrections in the Inspired Version better conform with early renditions and understandings of the Biblical text as quoted by the early Christians, others augment the account. Consider God's conversation with Cain about the latter's unacceptable sacrifice. Augustine quotes the scripture this way: "Why have you become sullen? Why has your face fallen? If your sacrifice is rightly offered, but not rightly divided, have you not sinned? Calm yourself; for there is to be a return of it to you, and you will have the mastery over it."<sup>105</sup>

---

<sup>100</sup>Tertullian, *On Prayer*, Ch 8 as quoted in ANF 3:684.

<sup>101</sup>Cyprian, *Treatise 4*, Ch 7 as quoted in ANF 5:449.

<sup>102</sup>Dionysius, *An Exposition of Luke XXII* as quoted in ANF 6:119.

<sup>103</sup>Irenaeus, *Irenaeus Against Heresies*, Bk. 3, Ch 11 as quoted in ANF 1:427.

<sup>104</sup>Origen, *De Principiis*, Bk. 1, Ch 2.8 as quoted in ANF, Vol. 2, P 245.

<sup>105</sup>Augustine, *City of God*, Bk. 15, Ch 7; P 603.

The King James says, "Why art thou wroth? and why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door" (Genesis 4:6-7). Note that Augustine's rendition indicates why God rebuked Cain, information missing from our copies. While Cain properly offered the sacrifice, he did not divide it correctly. He did not give his first fruits, but chose lesser quality produce for his gift to God. Cain should have given his best.

After pointing out that fact, God promised that if Cain gave his first fruits, God would return the value of the offering. That return would probably have come to him through a more abundant harvest the next season. The reason God asked Cain to offer the sacrifice before receiving the reward was to strengthen Cain's faith. Obedience before the reward teaches a person to resist temptation and gives him the mastery over sin. Augustine's comment reflected this view: "This was God's instruction to Cain, who was inflamed with the fires of jealousy against his brother, and longed to have him destroyed, when he ought to have imitated his example. 'Calm yourself', God said, 'restrain your hands from crime and do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its desires, and do not place your bodily parts at sin's disposal, as the instruments of wickedness. 'For there will be a return of it to you' provided that you do not encourage it by slackening your control but bridle it by keeping calm 'and you shall have the mastery over it.' Thus, so long as it is not allowed to be active outward, it will be accustomed to remain quiet inwardly as well, under the control of the mind's benevolent sovereignty." <sup>106</sup>

The Inspired Version presents God's conversation with Cain this way: "Why art thou wroth? Why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well thou shalt be accepted, and if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. Except thou shalt harken unto my commandments, I will deliver thee up" (Genesis 4:9-10). This version contains the same sentiment couched in Augustine's quotation. If Cain obeyed God, he would be protected from the devil. His obedience would give him the mastery over sin and keep him from falling into Satan's snare. Cain refused the Lord's offer, choosing instead to conspire with the devil. The Inspired Version completes the story by quoting Cain after he had sealed his devilish pact: "Truly I am Mahan, the master of this great secret, that I may murder and get gain. Wherefore Cain was called Master Mahan" (Genesis 4:16).

When Cain refused the opportunity to master sin, he not only subjected himself to the bondage of sin, but he became the master of sinning secretly. The very point Augustine was trying to draw from his copy of the Bible is more plainly revealed in the Inspired Version.

The cited examples provide credible support that Joseph's translation is a better version of the Bible. It presents the text more compatible with the way early Christians understood it. Such accurate wording, especially when made by someone as uneducated as Joseph Smith was, could not have happened by chance. It is more likely the result of divine revelation. Otherwise, Joseph could not have Christian centuries.

---

<sup>106</sup>ibid., P 606.

Further evidence that the Inspired Version is revelation and not the elucidations or commentary of a nineteenth century religionist comes from an analysis of Joseph's translation itself. Consider Matthew's gospel. Of the four gospels, it quotes the Old Testament prophets most frequently in its effort to persuade its readers that Jesus is the Christ. The Inspired Version preserves all these passages and adds nine more in Matthew, but it adds far fewer to the other three gospels: one in Mark, five in Luke, and three in John.<sup>107</sup> In so doing, it maintains the same relationship between the gospels in their respective reliance on quotations from the prophets to support their individual testimony. This means that the additions to Matthew are consistent with its authorship, as if they were placed there by Matthew himself. Such consistency is more probable from revelation than happen chance additions by Joseph Smith. Textual criticism developed after Joseph finished his translation. It is unlikely that he observed how frequently Matthew quoted the Old Testament and then chose to maintain that relative frequency in his additions to the gospels. It is more likely that God revealed those additions either to replace deletions originally written by the author or add elucidations and commentary that the author would have made.

The Inspired Version's addition of a higher percentage of Old Testament quotations to Matthew when compared to the other gospels provides circumstantial evidence that Joseph's translation is revelation and not his commentary.

Other textual evidence that Joseph's new translation occurred by revelation and not human contemplation is found in the writings of Luke and Paul. The early Christians reported that Paul and Luke were often inseparable in their missionary travels<sup>108</sup> and that Paul regarded Luke's gospel as his own.<sup>109</sup> Modern scholars recognize that Luke's and Paul's writings are similar in vocabulary.<sup>110</sup> This similarity is further confirmed in the Inspired Version. Apostle Paul used the phrase "fulness of time" twice, at least as reported in the King James Version, once in Ephesians 1:10 and again in Galatians 4:4. The Inspired Version includes these passages and adds it to a verse in Luke (Luke 3:8 IV). Likewise, the phrase "thief in the night" added by the Inspired Version to Luke (Luke 12:44 IV) appears in Paul's letter to the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 5:2). "Muzzle the ox" also appears twice in Paul's writings (1 Timothy 5:18 and 1 Corinthians 9:9). The Inspired Version adds it to Luke's gospel (Luke 12:33 IV). In both Paul's and Luke's writings, the phrase "muzzle the ox" is part of a quotation from the Old Testament (Deut 25:4), further tying the language of Paul to Luke's gospel as rendered in Joseph's new translation. The similarity of vocabulary to phrases found in Paul's writings and additions that the Inspired Version makes to Luke's gospel is consistent with how the formation of that gospel occurred.

---

<sup>107</sup>Robert J. Mathews, *Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible*, P 240.

<sup>108</sup>Irenaeus, *Irenaeus Against Heresies*, Bk. 3, Ch 14 as quoted in ANF 1:437-439.

<sup>109</sup>Irenaeus, *Irenaeus Against Heresies*, Bk. 3, Ch 1 as quoted in ANF 1:414.

Origen, Fragment as quoted in ANF 10:412.

Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, Bk. 3, Ch 4, P 67.

<sup>110</sup>Robert J. Mathews, *Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible*, P 240.

Like the case with Matthew's gospel, it is improbable that Joseph Smith understood the relationship between Luke's and Paul's vocabulary, let alone devised additions that conformed to that similarity. These examples provide additional evidence that the Inspired Version is not a product of Joseph's mind, but a revelation from God.

### **Plain and Precious Truths Removed**

Not only does the Book of Mormon teach that the scriptures were altered after the apostles distributed the Bible to the world, but it discloses that many plain and precious truths were also removed. It says, "Wherefore, thou seest that after the book hath gone forth through the hands of the great and abominable church that there are many plain and precious things taken from the book, which is the book of the Lamb of God" (1 Nephi 3:171). Altering the wording of scripture and removing its plainly stated truths, while often different descriptions of the same activity, can be two separate events.

Consider one deleted Biblical passage that plainly taught a precious truth once universally embraced by Christians, but more recently disputed. It is Christ's physical descent into hell after his death. Our copies of the Bible contain verses that suggest the Savior's personal entrance and ministry in hell at his death. Jesus said, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God" (John 5:25), adding "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice" (John 5:28).

Some Christians believe that the cited passage refers to the time of the final judgement and not the time of Christ's crucifixion. Apostle Paul wrote, "Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth" (Ephesians 4:9). Some maintain that this passage only refers to Jesus' descent into the grave when his body laid in the tomb. Peter taught, "Christ also hath suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit: by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which were sometimes disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah" (1 Peter 3:18-20).

Since this passage apparently stands alone in its plain disclosure, some Christians dismiss it as a factual occurrence, supposing that it serves as a symbol of the Savior's invitation to those who are dead in their sins. The various interpretations imposed on the cited Biblical texts would be better refuted by a passage that the Jews deleted from the Old Testament. It says, "The Lord hath remembered his dead people Israel who lay in graves; and he descended to preach to them His own salvation."<sup>111</sup> The Bible once contained another witness testifying that Jesus personally preached his gospel in hell to those who lived and died before his first advent.

---

<sup>111</sup>Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, Ch 72 as quoted in ANF 1:234 & Irenaeus, *Irenaeus Against Heresies*, Bk. 2, Ch 22 as quoted in ANF 1:493-494.

Early Christian writers confirm that Jesus really descended into hell after his crucifixion and, once there, preached his gospel to its inmates. Irenaeus wrote, "It was for this reason, too, that the Lord descended into the regions beneath the earth, preaching his advent there also, and [declaring] the remission of sins received by those who believe in him."<sup>112</sup> Tertullian explained the concept this way: "The lower regions (of Hades) are . . . a vast deep space in the interior of the earth, and a concealed recess in its very bowels; inasmuch as we read that Christ in His death spent three days in the heart of the earth, that is, in the secret inner recesses."<sup>113</sup> A generation later, Hippolytus wrote, "For this reason the wanders of Hades trembled when they saw Him; and the gates of brass and the bolts of iron were broken. For, lo, the Only-begotten entered, a soul among souls, God the Word with a (human) soul. For His body lay in the tomb, not emptied of divinity; but as, while in Hades, He was in essential being with His Father, so was He also in the body and in Hades. . . Of His own will he dwelt in a body animated by a soul, in order that with His soul He might enter Hades, and not with His pure divinity."<sup>114</sup> At the beginning of the fourth century, Alexander of Alexandria wrote, "Darkness covered the earth on which the Lord had closed His eyes. Meanwhile hell was with light resplendent, for thither had the star descended. The Lord, indeed did not descend into hell in His body but in His Spirit."<sup>115</sup>

The early Christians not only maintained that Jesus personally preached his gospel in hell, but that the Lord's ministers after their respective deaths did the same. One of the earliest surviving Christian texts teaches, "These apostles and teachers who preached the name of the Son of God, after falling asleep in the power and faith of the Son of God, preached it not only to those that were asleep, but themselves also gave them the seal of the preaching."<sup>116</sup> A century later Hippolytus recorded, "He [John the Baptist] also first preached to those in Hades, becoming a forerunner there when he was put to death by Herod, that there too he might intimate that the Saviour would descend to ransom the souls of the saints from the hand of death."<sup>117</sup>

Later Christian generations lost the original Christian belief that Jesus and his ministers preached the gospel to the dead bound in hell. While one scripture that contained the teaching was removed, others remained. The reason that the teaching became lost to future generations was not because the tenet was eradicated from the sacred text, but because later Christians interpreted the remaining Biblical passages differently than their predecessors. This example illustrates two ways by which plainly stated truths were removed from the Bible. One is modifying or erasing some passages. Another is by revising the meaning of some texts without altering their wording.

---

<sup>112</sup>Irenaeus, *Irenaeus Against Heresies*, Bk. 4, Ch 27.2 as quoted in ANF 1:499.

<sup>113</sup>Tertullian, *A Treatise on the Soul*, Ch 55 as quoted in ANF 3:231.

<sup>114</sup>Hippolytus, *On Luke* as quoted in ANF 5:194.

<sup>115</sup>Alexander, *On the Soul and Body and the Passion of the Lord*, Sec 6 as quoted in ANF 6:301

<sup>116</sup>*The Pastor of Hermas*, Bk. 3, Sim 9, Ch 16 as quoted in ANF 2:29.

<sup>117</sup>Hippolytus, *Treatise on Christ and Antichrist: Part 2*, Sec 45 as quoted in ANF 5:213.

Clement of Alexandria complained about how heretics changed the meaning of some scriptures: “For in almost all the quotations they make, you will find that they attend to the names alone, while they alter the meanings; neither knowing, as they affirm, nor using the quotations they adduce, according to their true nature.”<sup>118</sup> When anyone explains a Biblical passage differently than originally intended, he creates the opportunity for the original meaning to be lost and a new understanding to replace it. Redefining and reinterpreting some Biblical passages whose wording remained intact removed some plain and precious truths from the Bible.

Just as the writings of the early church Fathers confirm that Jesus descended into hell after his crucifixion and preached his gospel to its prisoners, they reveal other apostolic teachings that eventually became lost to latter generations of Christians simply because the meaning of certain passages was changed. For instance, the apostles taught that one of the Savior’s parables revealed three distinct and separate habitations in glory. In the parable of the sower Jesus said, “He that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty” (Mat 13:23). For the first Christians, the three different yields, hundredfold, sixty, and thirty, signified three distinct glories in eternal life. Papias, who wrote about 110 AD, explained, “The presbyters say, Then those who are deemed worthy of an abode in heaven shall go there, others shall enjoy the delights of paradise, and others shall possess the splendour of the city. [They say moreover] that there is this distinction between the habitation of those who produce an hundred-fold, and that of those who produce sixty-fold, and that of those who produce thirty fold: for the first shall be taken up into the heavens, the second will dwell in paradise, the last will inhabit the city; and that it was on this account the Lord declared, “In My Father’s house are many mansions.”<sup>119</sup> A generation later Clement of Alexandria wrote, “Therefore, there are various abodes according to the worth of those who have believed. . . . These chosen abodes, which are three, are indicated in the Gospel - the thirty, the sixty, the hundred.”<sup>120</sup> Nearly a century later, Gregory Thaumaturgus, concisely stated, “There are three several glories,”<sup>121</sup> and Methodius reasoned, “The Lord does not profess to give the same honours to all; but to some He promises that they should be numbered in the kingdom of heaven, to others the inheritance of the earth, and to others to see the Father.”<sup>122</sup>

---

<sup>118</sup>Clement of Alexandria, *The Stomata*, Bk. 7, Ch 41 as quote in ANF 2:551.

<sup>119</sup>Irenaeus, *Irenaeus Against Heresies*, Bk. 5, Ch 36 as quoted in ANF 1:567.

<sup>120</sup>Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, Bk. 6, Ch 14 as quoted in ANF 2:506.

<sup>121</sup>Gregory Thaumaturgus, *A Sectional Confession of Faith*; Ch 5 as quoted in ANF 6:41.

<sup>122</sup>Methodius, *The Banquet of the Ten Virgins*, Discourse 7, Ch 3 as quoted in ANF 6:332.

These quotations show that the doctrine of three glories in the resurrection was originally taught by the apostles, although it subsequently became lost to Christendom. The reason for the loss was not because the Biblical passages teaching it were removed, but because the original meaning of the relevant verses were ignored or revised. Another early Christian tenet that more recent generations of Christians disputed, primarily because of a new interpretation present by Augustine, is the Savior's millennial reign at the conclusion of the world's history just before the final judgment. Papias a member of the first generation church, wrote, "There will be a millennium after the resurrection from the dead, when the personal reign of Christ will be established on the earth."<sup>123</sup> A few years later, Justin Martyr recorded, "There will be a resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem which will then be built, adorned, and enlarged, [as] the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare."<sup>124</sup> Elsewhere, he said, "John, one of the apostles of Christ, who prophesied, by a revelation that was made to him, that those who believed in our Christ would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem; and that thereafter the general, and, in short, the eternal resurrection and judgement of all men would likewise take place."<sup>125</sup> Two decades later, Irenaeus certified, "The predicted blessing, therefore, belongs unquestionably to the times of the kingdom, when the righteous shall bear rule upon their rising from the dead; when also the creation, having been renovated and set free, shall fructify with an abundance of all kinds of food, from the dew of heaven, and from the fertility of earth: as the elders who saw John, the disciple of the Lord, related that they heard from him how the Lord used to teach in regard to these times."<sup>126</sup>

Baptism also became a misunderstood issue. By the Reformation, the Catholic Church baptized babies, a practice repeated by Luther. Anabaptists insisted on adult baptism. Countless debaters, regardless of the side they took on this issue, used the Bible to verify their position. Their conclusion depended on how important passages were interpreted. The differing interpretations illustrate how the truth about baptism became lost. The first Christians were not at all confused about its process and purpose.

An examination of the first Christian writings reveal their views. Even by the third century, they preferred immersion. The *Apostolic Teachings* decree, "Baptize into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, in living [running] water. But if thou have not living water, baptize into other water; and if thou canst not in cold, in warm. But if thou have not either, pour out water thrice upon the head into the name of Father and Son and Holy Spirit."<sup>127</sup> The *Tradition* specifies, "A presbyter [elder] takes his right hand and he turns his face to the East.

---

<sup>123</sup>Papias, *Fragments of Papias*; Ch 6 as quoted in ANF 1:154

<sup>124</sup>Justin Martyr, *Dialogue With Trypho*, Ch 80 as quoted in ANF 1:239.

<sup>125</sup>Justin Martyr, *Dialogue With Trypho*, Ch 80 as quoted in ANF 1:240.

<sup>126</sup>Irenaeus, *Irenaeus Against Heresies*, Bk. 5, Ch 33.3 as quoted in ANF 1:563.

<sup>127</sup>*The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, Ch 7 as quoted in ANF 7:379.



Before he descends into the water, while he still turns his face to the East, standing above the water he says after receiving the Oil of Exorcism, thus: I believe and bow me unto Thee and all Thy service, O Father, Son and Holy Ghost. And so he descends into the water. And let them stand in the water naked.”<sup>128</sup> *The Constitutions* requires the priest to “dip them in the water”<sup>129</sup>

but it was debated during the third century. Cyprian appears to be the first apologist for the change.<sup>130</sup> He wrote, “You asked also, dearest son, what I thought of those who obtain God’s grace in sickness and weakness, whether they are to be accounted legitimate Christians, for that they are not to be washed, but sprinkled, with the saving water.”<sup>131</sup> He answers, “As far as my poor understanding conceives it, I think that the divine benefits can in no respect be mutilated and weakened.”<sup>132</sup> Cornelius, who lived after Cyprian, was less supportive. He wrote, “Since he was thought to be on the point of death, there as he lay in bed he received baptism by affusion — if it can be called baptism in the case of such a man.”<sup>133</sup> These references show that the preferred and more ancient custom for baptism was immersion in water.

After the water ordinance, the First Christians laid hands on the baptized for the reception of the Holy Spirit. The Bible records how the apostles gave the gift of the Holy Ghost: “When the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost; (for as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus,) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost” (acts 8:14-17). Tertullian showed that the church continued to lay on hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost: “After this, when we have issued from the font, we are thoroughly anointed with a blessed unction.”<sup>134</sup> After a brief discussion of the Old Testament symbol of anointing, he adds, “In the next place the hand is laid on us, invoking and inviting the Holy Spirit through benediction. . . Then, over our cleansed and blessed bodies willingly descends from the Father that Holiest Spirit.”<sup>135</sup> Almost a generation later Cyprian recorded, “Wherefore, in the name of the same Christ, are not hands laid upon the baptized persons among them, for the reception of the Holy Spirit?”<sup>136</sup>

---

<sup>128</sup> Hippolytus; *The Apostolic Tradition*; Ch 21; The Alban Press; London; 1992; P 35.

<sup>129</sup> *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*, Bk. 3, Sec 2, No 16 as quoted in ANF 7:431.

<sup>130</sup> *Elucidations*; ANF 5:419.

<sup>131</sup> Cyprian; *The Epistles of Cyprian*; Epistle 75; *To Magnus, on Baptizing the Novatians, and Those who Obtain Grace on a Sick-bed*; No 12; as quoted in ANF 5: 400.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>133</sup> Eusebius; Bk. 6; 43.20; P 217.

<sup>134</sup> Tertullian, *On Baptism*, Ch 7 as quoted in ANF 3:672.

<sup>135</sup> Tertullian, *On Baptism*, Ch 8 as quoted in ANF 3:672-673.

<sup>136</sup> Cyprian, *Epistle to Pompey* as quoted in ANF 5:397.

The early Christians taught that baptism was a necessary condition of salvation. The Clementine writings quote apostle Peter: “Unless a man be baptized in water, in the name of the threefold blessedness, as the true prophet has taught, he can neither receive remission of sins nor enter into the kingdom of heaven.”<sup>137</sup> Elsewhere, they record, “[There is] a law that not even a righteous person should enter into the kingdom of God unbaptized. . . The decree of God is clearly set down, that an unbaptized person cannot enter into his kingdom.”<sup>138</sup> Cyprian agreed: “Unless a man have been baptized and born again, he cannot attain unto the kingdom of God.”<sup>139</sup>

Another precious truth lost from Christian tenets is the holy nature of children. Jesus highlighted their condition when he said, “Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for such is the kingdom of God” (Mark 10:14). Because Christians baptized children as early as the third century, they began to consider them defiled and needing the purifying waters available in that ordinance. Before the third century, Christian writers disclosed a different view of children. Hermes taught, “All infants are honourable before God, and are the first persons with him.”<sup>140</sup> At a later date, Tertullian records the martyrdom of Perpetua, who received a divinely-given vision to prepare her for her ordeal. To her surprise, the young woman saw her brother, who had previously died at the age of seven without the gospel or its ordinance of baptism, “translated from the place of punishment.”<sup>141</sup>

These examples illustrate that some plainly stated gems of gospel truths once held by Christians became lost to later generations, not necessarily because key Biblical passages were altered, but because they were reinterpreted. With such important truths missing from the Christian consciousness, the Lord included them when he restored his church. Joseph’s new translation placed them in the sacred writings from which they originally sprang.

### **The Nature of Ancient Scripture**

While some passages in the Inspired Version correct the text to better express the scriptural meaning as understood by early Christians, all the known changes that were made to the Bible by either the Jews or heretics remained uncorrected in Joseph’s translation. In addition, most differences between the Inspired Version and the King James edition occur in different passages than those now known to have been changed. Latter-day saints maintain that these passages are also a better translation of the original divine utterance. Their belief raises the question: what was the reason for many of the changes made by the Inspired Version?

---

<sup>137</sup>*Recognitions of Clement*, Bk. 1, Ch 69 as quoted in ANF 8:95.

<sup>138</sup>*The Clementine Homilies*, Homily 8, Ch 21 as quoted in ANF 8:304-305.

<sup>139</sup>Cyprian, *The Treatises of Cyprian*; No. 25 as quoted in ANF 5:542.

<sup>140</sup>*The Pastor of Hermas*; Bk. 3; Similitude 9, Ch 29 as quoted in ANF 2:53.

<sup>141</sup>Tertullian, *The Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas*, Ch 2 as quoted in ANF 3:702.

The task of writing scripture in ancient times was arduous. Moses wrote the Ten Commandments in stone — a time consuming effort. Often authors not only needed to compose, they had to prepare the material on which they laboriously etched each letter. Their time consuming method affected their composition. Economy of effort required that sacred writings be concise, but God's grandeur and the magnitude of his works demanded that their descriptions be complex. Ancient authors united conciseness and complexity by producing multilayered writings. They intricately wove into ancient scripture esoteric messages filled with tantalizing meanings and concealed predictions. That technique shortened the amount of writing so that the time spent creating the materials or engraving the letters was greatly reduced. It also compressed the information.

Perhaps the very nature of revelation layers scripture with hidden truths that remain unrecognized until the Holy Spirit discloses their meaning. God's infinite nature cannot be confined by mere words. Any codified account limits the extent of the revelation. Whenever God reveals himself, the words describing the manifestation contain less than the revelation itself. Part of the unwritten disclosure is esoterically imprinted in the words of the revelation. The Bible explains the phenomenon this way: "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings to search out a matter" (Proverbs 25:2). Concealed in ancient scripture, especially when breathed by the Holy Spirit, are eternal truths and prophetic utterances not readily discernable to the untrained reader.

Origen explains the nature of scripture and, in the process, quotes a proverb (Proverbs 22:21) differently than it reads in our Bibles. He wrote, "By Solomon in the Proverbs we find some such rule as this enjoined respecting the divine doctrines of Scripture: 'And do thou portray them in a threefold manner, in counsel and knowledge, to answer words of truth to them who propose them to thee.'" <sup>142</sup> This early rendition of the scripture reveals its compressed nature.

Origen urges believers to portray the ideas contained in the sacred text so that its three aspects are disclosed. Those three components are the historical or apparent element, the spiritual or esoteric principle, and the prophetic or predicted portion. Each scripture describes real incidents, but contains some nugget of eternal truth, as well as a shadow of future events. Justin, a believer during the generation following the apostles, referred to scripture's compressed nature as he described Satan's rebellious conduct. He wrote, "Before the Lord's appearance Satan never dared to blaspheme God, inasmuch as he did not yet know his own sentence, because it was contained in parables and allegories; but that after the Lord's appearance, when he had clearly ascertained from the words of Christ and His apostles that eternal fire has been prepared for him as he apostatized from God of his own free-will, and likewise for all who unrepentant continue in apostasy, he now blasphemes." <sup>143</sup>

---

<sup>142</sup>Origen, *De Principiis*, Bk. 4, Ch 1 as quoted in ANF 4:359.

<sup>143</sup>Justin Martyr as quoted by Irenaeus, *Irenaeus Against Heresies*, Bk. 5, Ch 26 as quote in ANF 1:555

The Savior's teachings, which the apostles plainly repeated, disclosed the same information that was embedded in Old Testament scripture, being hidden, as Justin said, in parables and allegories.

Jesus confirmed the compressed nature of Old Testament scripture. He told the Jews, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). The Old Testament accurately details the Savior's advent, sometimes concealing the prophecies within its record. God embeds prophecies in scripture to help future generations more readily believe in the very day that those prophecies become fulfilled. The Savior said, "I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he" (John 13:19).

To predict and accurately describe an event centuries, even a millennium, before its occurrence, is beyond human ability, but to place those prophecies in a text where they remain undecipherable and maybe undetected until their consummation, belongs only to God. The detailed fulfilment of prophecy, both plainly stated and esoterically embedded, confirms the divine nature of scripture and the divinity of he who fulfills it. When Jesus fulfilled the words of ancient prophets, he made it easier for people to believe in his divinity by showing how well hidden predictions in scripture detailed his life's activities. The Savior's explanations of the scriptures better equipped his disciples to convince the world of his Messiahship. To that end, Jesus explained how he fulfilled the scriptures after he rose from the dead. He appeared to two disciples walking the road to Emmaus. The Bible records, "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27).

The early Christians understood the compressed nature of scripture as well as many esoteric mysteries and concealed prophecies that it contains. They inherited the understandings first communicated to the Savior's disciples. Jesus gave his disciples the mysteries of his kingdom. He said, "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom" (Luke 8:10). Apostle Paul spoke of "the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints" (Col 1:26). Having received the proper understanding of scripture, the apostles were able to unfold the mysteries of God that were embedded in ancient scripture as they preached the Savior's gospel. Paul explained, "The preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25). Those mysteries kept secret since the beginning of the world were contained in the word of God, first uttered by holy men as they were moved by the Spirit of God and afterwards made flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. The advent of Jesus exposed most esoteric truths and enigmatic prophecies divinely concealed in Old Testament scripture and provided the point of reference from which to properly interpret them.

Because early Christians understood the mystery of godliness, written in scripture, personified in Jesus, and preached by the apostles, they correctly taught many plain and precious truths embedded in the Old Testament. They disclosed Biblical prophecies predicting the Savior's sufferings, crucifixion, and atoning grace. They unfolded the meaning of the Mosaic Law, the symbolism of its ordinances, the significance of sacred history, and the model temporal works

are of the Creator's heavenly activity and habitation. That knowledge allowed them to explain the symbolism of circumcision, the significance of Cain's sin, and the composition of eternal glory. Some of those embedded truths became lost to subsequent generations. A comparison between the interpretations record by early Christians and Joseph's new translation shows that the Inspired Version plainly states what the Bible esoterically contains.

The account describing Cain and his murder of his brother Abel recorded in Genesis contains additional, but embedded, information about the crime, which early Christians understood. The motivation for Cain's crime was greed — the desire to obtain temporal and spiritual possessions. That fact is concealed in the meaning of Cain's name, which Augustine said means "to get," "to possess," or "to acquire." The Bible records, "Adam knew his wife, and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the Lord" (Genesis 4:1 KJ). Augustine observed, "Now the name Cain is translated 'possession', which is why his father or his mother said at his birth, 'I have acquired a man, through God's help.'" <sup>144</sup>

His desire to acquire goods motivated Cain to both withhold the best fruits from his offering to God and to possess his brother's goodness. In his comments about the cause of Cain's fratricide, Augustine wrote, "When Cain discovered that God had approved his brother's sacrifice but not his own, he ought surely to have changed his ways and imitated his good brother, instead of showing pride and jealousy. In fact Cain turned sullen, and his face fell. This is a sin which God particularly rebukes, namely, sullenness about another's goodness, and a brother's goodness at that." <sup>145</sup> After repeating God's counsel to Cain, Augustine added, "But Cain received that instruction from God like a lawbreaker. For the fault of jealousy grew stronger, and he planned and carried out his brother's murder." <sup>146</sup> As a result, Cain and the city that he founded dedicated themselves to possessing the goods and pleasures of this world under the illusion that their attainment fulfilled their purpose and pleased their Creator.

The early Christians taught that Cain was consumed by the desire to acquire possessions and that God offered him the opportunity of mastering sin by resisting that temptation. Joseph's new translation disclosed the same information, not in esoteric symbols, but in plain, every-day language. After revealing the secret pact that Cain made with Satan to murder Abel, it records Cain's jubilation with these words: "And Cain said, Truly I am master Mahan, the master of this great secret, that I may murder and get gain. Wherefore Cain was called Master Mahan' (Gen 5:16 IV). In this brief passage, Cain's motivation for murdering his brother and his preference to be master of a secret instead of mastering sin is revealed. The Inspired Version plainly states what the Biblical text concealed in signs and parables.

---

<sup>144</sup>Augustine, *City of God*, Bk. 15, Ch 17, P 626.

<sup>145</sup>Ibid., P 604.

<sup>146</sup>Ibid., P 606.

The Inspired Version clarifies another parable. The early Christians understood that God instituted circumcision among Abraham's family as a seal for and a sign of Christ, which seal, because of the incarnation, Christians observed in the ordinance of baptism. The Epistle of Barnabas states, "Learn then my children, concerning all things richly, that Abraham, the first to enjoin circumcision, looking forward in spirit to Jesus, practiced that rite, having received the mysteries of the three letters."<sup>147</sup> The three letters to which the epistle refers indicate the number of men circumcised. That number, which is 318, is clear in the Septuagint, but missing from our Bibles. Greek used letters for numbers. The Greek letters for 318 were TIH, a clear representation to Greek speaking Christians of Jesus on the cross. The epistle explains, "The ten and the eight are those denoted — Ten by I, and Eight by H. You have [the initials of the name of] Jesus. And because the cross was to express the grace [of our redemption] by the letter T, he says also 'Three Hundred.' He signifies, therefore, Jesus by two letters, and the cross by one."<sup>148</sup> The number of men circumcised by Abraham clearly told the Greeks that circumcision was tied to Jesus on the cross. In so doing, it implied that Abraham understood the purpose of the Savior's first advent. Jesus told the Jews, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad" (John 8:56). From this embedded information, the early Christians understood that circumcision foreshadowed Jesus on the cross.

Old Testament scripture uses circumcision to point to Jesus in other ways. For instance, it records how Zipporah circumcised Moses' sons with a sharp stone (Exodus 4:26). Justin taught, "The former [Moses] is said to have circumcised the people a second time with knives of stone (which was a sign of this circumcision with which Jesus Christ himself has circumcised us from idols made of stone and of other materials), and to have collected together those who were circumcised from the uncircumcision, i.e., from the error of the world, in every place by the knives of stone, to wit, the words of our Lord Jesus. For I have shown that Christ was proclaimed by the prophets in parables a Stone and a Rock."<sup>149</sup> The hidden meaning that Christians saw in the corresponding Old Testament history, was that the words of Jesus, represented by stone knives, severed believers from false worship as soon as they believed and obeyed. Since the redemption wrought by Jesus saves, but fleshly circumcision does not, Christians maintained that the Jews who refused Jesus practiced a dead work when they observed the rite of circumcision. A similar and, therefore, related Jewish dead work was their broken cisterns condemned in prophecy by Isaiah. Christians naturally tie these two dead works together. Justin explained, "This circumcision is not, however, necessary for all men, but for you alone. . . Nor do we receive the useless baptism of cisterns for it has nothing to do with this baptism of life. Wherefore also God has announced that you have forsaken Him, the living fountain, and digged for yourself broken cisterns which can hold no water. Even you, who are the circumcised according to the flesh, have need of our baptism."<sup>150</sup>

---

<sup>147</sup>*The Epistle of Barnabas*, Ch 9 as quoted in ANF 1:142.

<sup>148</sup>*The Epistle of Barnabas*, Ch 10 as quoted in ANF 1:143.

<sup>149</sup>Justin Martyr, *Dialogue With Trypho*, Ch 63 as quoted in ANF 1:255.

<sup>150</sup>Justin Martyr, *Dialogue With Trypho*, Ch 19 as quoted in ANF 1:203.

The Jews practiced baptism,<sup>151</sup> but the Christians maintained that it was as ineffective as their fleshly circumcision. Christians believed that God had rejected both and recognized Christian baptism as the only seal of his divine covenant. Justin announced, “We have believed, and testify that that very baptism which he [Isaiah] announced is alone able to purify those who have repented; and this is the water of life. But the cisterns which you have dug for yourselves are broken and profits you nothing.”<sup>152</sup> The first generations of Christians understood that circumcision symbolized the redemption that Jesus Christ wrought on the cross and which cleanses all who come to the Savior through baptism. Justin explained, “The command of circumcision, again, bidding [them] always circumcise the children on the eighth day, was a sign and type of the true circumcision.”<sup>153</sup>

The intricate and esoteric relationship between Jewish circumcision and Christian baptism is plainly stated in the Inspired Version. Joseph’s new translation equates the law of circumcision given to Abraham with the grace of Christ, wrought on the cross and received by the repentant in baptism. It also reveals that the mystery of this symbolism was divinely explained to Abraham. It records, “Abram fell on his face, and called upon the name of the Lord. And God talked with him, saying, My people have gone astray from my precepts, and have not kept mine ordinances, which I gave unto their fathers; and they have not observed mine anointing, and the burial, or baptism wherewith I commanded them” (Genesis 17:3-5 IV), adding, “And have not known wherein they are accountable before me” (Genesis 17:7 IV). After changing his name to Abraham, God continues, “And I will establish a covenant of circumcision with thee, and it shall be my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations; that thou mayest know forever that children are not accountable before me until they are eight years old” (Genesis 17:11 IV). According to the Inspired Version account, when God established circumcision, he linked it with baptism. It was also associated with the number of Jesus’ name.

The number of the name *Jesus Christ* is 888, a tri-repetition of eight. Jesus rose from the dead on the eighth day (the day after the seventh day) and raises the righteous to celestial glory in the eighth dispensation (the dispensation after the seventh or millennial reign). The connection in the Inspired Version between baptism and circumcision with the number eight connected the number of Jesus’ name with baptism much like it was linked in the minds of the early Christians.

---

<sup>151</sup>Cyprian, *Epistle 74*, Ch 13 as quoted in ANF 4: 393.

<sup>152</sup>Justin Martyr, *Dialogue With Trypho*, Ch 14 as quoted in ANF 1:201.

<sup>153</sup>Justin Martyr, *Dialogue With Trypho*, Ch 16 as quoted in ANF 1:215.

Christians saw other Old Testament passages in which the cross and baptism were embedded. The Epistle of Barnabas states, "Let us further inquire whether the Lord took any care to foreshadow the water [of baptism] and the cross."<sup>154</sup> After quoting several passages from the prophets and Psalms (Is 16:1-2, 14:2, 33:16-18, Ps 1:3-6), the epistle concludes, "Mark how He has described at once both the water and the cross."<sup>155</sup> Tertullian saw baptism concealed in another part of the text. He wrote, "For this 'tree' [or cross] in a mystery, it was of yore wherewith Moses sweetened the bitter water; whence the People, which was perishing of thirst in the desert, drank and revived; just as we do, who, drawn out from the calamities of the heathendom in which we were tarrying perishing with thirst (that is, deprived of the divine word) drinking, 'by the faith which is in Him,' the baptismal water of the 'tree' of the passion of Christ, have revived,—a faith from which Israel has fallen away."<sup>156</sup>

Baptism by water, which the first Christians saw embedded in the Old Testament text, comprised only the first part of the divine seal. Regeneration by water must be followed by rebirth through the Holy Spirit. Cyprian wrote, "There is no baptism where the Holy Spirit is not,"<sup>157</sup> adding, "One is not born by the imposition of hands when he receives the Holy Ghost, but in baptism, that so, being already born, he may receive the Holy Spirit."<sup>158</sup> Tertullian describes how the gift of the Holy Ghost was bestowed: "After this, when we have issued from the font, we are thoroughly anointed with a blessed unction,"<sup>159</sup> adding, "In the next place the hand is laid on us, invoking and inviting the Holy Spirit through benediction. . . Then, over our cleansed and blessed bodies willingly descends from the Father that Holiest Spirit."<sup>160</sup> Cyprian provides similar testimony when he writes, "Wherefore, in the name of the same Christ, are not hands laid upon the baptized persons among them, for the reception of the Holy Spirit?"<sup>161</sup> The early Christians regarded those who were baptized in water and subsequently given the Holy Ghost through the laying on of hands as being anointed. They were anointed with the Holy Ghost, just like Jesus was (Acts 10:38).

Since the first Christians observed both baptism by water and baptism of the Holy Spirit given through the laying on of hands, they saw a tie embedded in the Old Testament between these two parts of baptism. Tertullian explained that those who were born of the Spirit were only following the example observed when the ancients anointed: "When we have issued from the font, we are thoroughly anointed with a blessed unction,—(a practice derived) from the old discipline, wherein on entering the priesthood, men were wont to be anointed with oil from a horn, ever since Aaron was anointed by Moses.

---

<sup>154</sup>*The Epistle of Barnabas*, Ch 11 ANF 1:144

<sup>155</sup>*ibid.*

<sup>156</sup>Tertullian, *An Answer to the Jews*, Ch 12 as quoted in ANF 3:170.

<sup>157</sup>Cyprian, *Epistle 73*, Ch 5 as quoted in AN F 4:388.

<sup>158</sup>Cyprian, *Epistle 73*, Ch 7 as quoted in ANF 4:388.

<sup>159</sup>Tertullian, *On Baptism*, Ch 7 as quoted in ANF 3:672.

<sup>160</sup>Tertullian, *On Baptism*, Ch 8 as quoted in ANF 3:672-673.

<sup>161</sup>Cyprian, *Epistle to Pompey* as quoted in ANF 5:397



Whence Aaron is called 'Christ' from the 'chrism' which is 'the unction'."<sup>162</sup> The Christian fathers linked the Greek word for *anointed*, which is *Christos*, from which we get both *Christ* and *Christians*, with the reception of the Holy Ghost. That linkage allowed them to understand that ancient Israelites were Christians. Eusebius maintained, "All these, whose righteousness won them commendation, going back from Abraham himself to the first man, might be described as Christians. . . Hence, you will find that those men, God's beloved, were even honoured with the appellation of Christ."<sup>163</sup> The Clementine Homilies record how Peter taught that Adam must have been anointed: "If the first man prophesied, it is certain that he was also anointed."<sup>164</sup> The earliest Christians understood that the Old Testament contains symbols for the baptism of water and the bestowal of the Holy Ghost. Their presence in that text not only foreshadows the Christian ordinances, but implies that the ancients received both water baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Joseph's New Translation clarifies the symbols contained in the Old Testament by teaching that the ancients practiced the rite of baptism, both baptism in water and the bestowal of the Holy Ghost through the laying on of hands. According to Joseph's new translation, God revealed the ordinance to Adam (Genesis 6:53-67 IV), Enoch (Genesis 7:13 IV), Noah (Genesis 8:11 IV), and Abraham (Genesis 17:5 IV). It even specifies that the Holy Ghost descended on those who were anciently baptized. For instance, it records God's words to Adam after the latter's baptism: "Thou art baptized with fire and with the Holy Ghost" (Genesis 6:69). Information that the early Christians knew was embedded in the Old Testament text is plainly stated in Joseph's New Translation.

The early Christians saw evidence concealed in the Old Testament text of the holy city. Augustine wrote, "Scripture tells us that Cain founded a city, whereas Abel, as a pilgrim, did not found one. For the City of the saints is up above, although it produces citizens here below, and in their persons the city is on pilgrimage until the time of its kingdom come."<sup>165</sup> The apostle Paul viewed Sarah, the mother of the promised son Isaac, as a symbol for the heavenly Jerusalem (Galatians 4:26), at least that is how Augustine interpreted the passage.<sup>166</sup>

Enoch also symbolized the heavenly city. Augustine wrote, "Enoch means 'dedication', and that was the name of the seventh from Adam. Now Enoch is the man who was 'translated because he won God's approval'; and his number in the order of descent, the seventh from Adam, is the significant number which made the Sabbath a consecrated day. He is also the sixth from Seth, the father of the line that is distinguished from the descendants of Cain; and it was on the sixth day that man was created and God brought his works to completion.

---

<sup>162</sup>Tertullian, *On Baptism*, Ch 7 as quoted in ANF 3:672.

<sup>163</sup>Eusebius, *The History of the Church*, Bk. 1, Ch 4, P 15.

<sup>164</sup>*Recognitions of Clement*, Ch 67 as quoted in ANF 8:90

<sup>165</sup>Augustine, *City of God*, Bk. 15, Ch 1, P 596.

<sup>166</sup>*Ibid.*, Ch 2, P 597-598.

The translation of Enoch thus prefigures the deferment of our own dedication. . . This dedication is deferred until the end, when there will be the resurrection of those who are to die no more. Whether we call it the 'House of God', or the 'Temple of God', or the 'City of God', it is the same thing."<sup>167</sup> As far as these early Christians were concerned, the future establishment of the city of God was foreshadowed by Enoch, whose dedication to holiness allowed his translation. He waits in that condition for the end times, when the holy city, no longer on pilgrimage, will reign on earth. A holy kingdom, free from all iniquity and sorrow, has been the hope of the righteous from the beginning.

Unfortunately, not all people want such a kingdom. They want peace and prosperity, perhaps freedom and justice, but they prefer worldly goods and carnal pleasures, goals outside divine purposes and to which the worldly city, to use the terminology of the early Christians, was dedicated. Those seeking the worldly kingdom oppose the holy city, sometimes deliberately, but more generally ignorantly. Their greed for possessions and lust for power places sometimes causes them to oppose righteousness. That is when they help to send the holy city on pilgrimage during this life and forcing it to await the end of time when, according to the prophets, God will establish his holy kingdom throughout the earth. Early Christians looked forward to the holy city's temporal establishment before the world ends. Justin wrote, "There will be resurrection of the dead, and a thousand years in Jerusalem, which will be built, adorned, and enlarged, [as] the prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah and others declare."<sup>168</sup>

Elsewhere, he said, "John, one of the apostles of Christ, who prophesied, by a revelation that was made to him, that those who believed in our Christ would dwell a thousand years in Jerusalem; and that thereafter the general, and, in short, the eternal resurrection and judgement of all men would likewise take place."<sup>169</sup> A generation later, Irenaeus wrote, "The predicted blessing, therefore, belongs unquestionably to the times of the kingdom, when the righteous shall bear rule upon their rising from the dead; when also the creation, having been renovated and set free, shall fructify with an abundance of all kinds of food, from the dew of heaven, and from the fertility of earth."<sup>170</sup> Some saw Enoch, because he was translated, as well as Elijah, another whom God translated, playing some role in the coming of the holy city. Hippolytus wrote of the time when Christ comes "in which Elias will appear, and Enoch."<sup>171</sup>

---

<sup>167</sup>Augustine, *City of God*, Bk. 15, Ch 19, P 629.

<sup>168</sup>Justin Martyr, *Dialogue With Trypho*, Ch 80 as quoted in ANF 1:239.

<sup>169</sup>Justin Martyr, *Dialogue With Trypho*, Ch 81, as quoted in ANF 1:240.

<sup>170</sup>Irenaeus, *Irenaeus Against Heresies*, Bk. 5, Ch as quoted in ANF 1:562.

<sup>171</sup>Hippolytus, *Fragments*, as quoted in ANF 5:183.

Although Christians saw themselves as a mocked and persecuted band of believers, on pilgrimage amidst the kingdoms of this world until God establishes his heavenly kingdom at the end of time, they did not suppose that the righteous had not occasionally been gathered to a holy city in the past. Augustine maintained that believers resided in a “holy community” during antediluvian times.<sup>172</sup> Melchisedec, King of Salem, must have ruled a righteous kingdom during the time of Abraham, for the Bible calls him “King of Righteousness” (Hebrews 7:2). God invited the Israelites through Moses to become a “holy nation” (Exodus 19:6). Although they repeatedly failed to complete that assignment, Isaiah prophesied the future establishment of a holy city: “They shall call thee; The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.” (Isaiah 60:14). He also revealed that when Zion appears again, it would be for the second time. He said, “They shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring Zion again” (Isaiah 52:8). Embedded in the original autographs of the Old Testament text is esoteric information about a holy city that existed on earth before the flood, which city is symbolized in Enoch and his translation. Since then, that city has been on pilgrimage, appearing briefly under the reign of righteous leaders, but waiting for righteousness to seep the earth at the end of time. Then, Zion will be established for a second time, a holy city to which Jesus can descend in clouds of glory to rule the earth for a millennium of peace and righteousness.

The Inspired Version plainly states the information that was previously concealed in the sacred text. It says, “Enoch continued his preaching in righteousness unto the people of God. And it came to pass in his days, that he built a city that was called the city of Holiness, even Zion. And it came to pass, that Enoch talked with the Lord, and he said unto the Lord, Surely, Zion shall dwell in safety forever . . . and lo! Zion in process of time was taken up into heaven” (Gen 7:24-27). Later, it adds, “Righteousness and truth will I cause to sweep the earth as with a flood, to gather out mine own elect from the four quarters of the earth, unto a place which I shall prepare; an holy city, that my people may gird up their loins, and be looking forth to the time of my coming, for there shall be my tabernacle, and it shall be called Zion; a New Jerusalem. And the Lord said unto Enoch, Then shalt thou and all thy city meet them there; and we will receive them into our bosom; and they shall see us, and we will fall upon their necks, and they shall fall upon our necks, and we will kiss each other; and there shall be mine abode” (Genesis 7:70-72). The Inspired Version plainly states what was embedded in the Old Testament account: that the holy city existed in the first dispensation, was taken to heavenly places, and will be returned in the last dispensation to meet the kingdom of God set up on earth.

One purpose of Joseph’s New Translation was to plainly state what was esoterically embedded in the original scriptures, whether it be about the introduction of devilish conspiracies among men during the life of Cain, the ancient understanding of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost, or the existence of the holy city in antediluvian times. This, along with other information, was first concealed in scripture by the Holy Spirit and later revealed in the same way to the righteous. It remained discernable to those anciently skilled in sacred writings, specifically those endowed with the spirit of prophecy. That knowledge was lost, particularly after the Roman Church codified the alterations made to the Biblical text.

---

<sup>172</sup>Augustine, *City of God*, Bk. 15, Ch 22, P 636.

The Holy Spirit revealed some of the truths esoterically placed in the scriptures to Joseph Smith so that his new translation restored some of those lost understandings, particularly those that God wanted disclosed to present-day believers.

### **Joseph Smith's New Translation**

Those apostolic teachings and Old Testament mysteries that God deemed necessary for restoring to the minds of nineteenth century Christians were divinely placed in Joseph's translation. Since they already existed in contemporary Bibles at the time Joseph prepared the new translation, although shrouded with enigma and misunderstanding, the Holy Spirit added those tenets to the original wording of other passages. For instance, the Spirit added revelation about the three heavenly abodes, which the Christian Fathers saw referenced in the three rewards given the hearers of the word in the Savior's parable of the sower (Matthews 13:23), to Paul's epistle to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 15:40 IV).<sup>173</sup> The Spirit also illuminated the meaning encapsulated in the first verse of John's gospel by stating, "In the beginning was the gospel preached through the Son" (John 1:1 IV), confirming apostle Paul's statement, which said that God "preached before the gospel unto Abraham" (Galatians 3:8). Likewise, the Spirit added the phrase "some of whom"<sup>174</sup> to Peter's statement describing how Jesus, upon his death, preached to those in hell (1 Peter 3:20). The addition reveals that the Savior preached in hell to more than the unbelievers who perished in the flood. This particular addition agrees with the passage that the Jews removed from the Old Testament, either from Isaiah or Jeremiah. Elsewhere, the Lord confirmed the holy nature of children by placing it in God's covenant of circumcision with Abraham and he underscored the Savior's millennial reign in his conversation with Enoch. He disclosed the means and necessity of baptism by including it in the histories of Adam, Enoch and Abraham and clarified the antediluvian existence of the holy city on earth in his revelation to Enoch, adding that the first holy city was taken to heavenly places to await its reestablishment on earth just before the Savior's second advent. The location here the Holy Spirit placed these clarifying portions of information was not necessarily in passages altered after the original scripture was written, but to passages he chose best helped illuminate the intended readers.

Another example of how the Inspired Version clarified information embedded in the Old Testament in ways that did not necessarily return the translation to the wording of the original text occurred in the history of the giants' conception, a passage that was anciently misinterpreted, which misunderstanding was perpetuated until our day. The Jews believed that the giants of antiquity were conceived by a union between women and angels.

---

<sup>173</sup>The addition is not found in the earliest existing quotation of this verse found in Origen, *Against Celsus*, Bk. 5, Ch 10 as quoted in ANF 4:547.

<sup>174</sup>That phrase is not in the earliest existing quotation of this passage found in Origen, *De Principiis*, Bk. 2, Ch 5 as quoted in ANF 4:279.

Josephus, in his history, wrote, “Many angels of God accompanied with women, and begat sons that proved unjust, and despisers of all that was good, on account of the confidence they had in their own strength, for the tradition is that these men did what resembled the acts of those whom the Grecians call giants.”<sup>175</sup> Some Christians repeated this legend, making the Bible appear to support the affair, and causing some present-day Christians to believe that the Bible teaches such an event. While some early Christians repeated Josephus’ view, others did not. Augustine wrote, “In the Septuagint also they are called ‘angels of God’ and ‘sons of God’; though it is true that this reading is not offered in all the texts, for some of them read only ‘sons of God’. While Aquilla, whose translation the Jews prefer to all the others, gives neither ‘angels of God’ nor ‘sons of God’; his version gives ‘sons of gods’.”<sup>176</sup> Later, Augustine adds, “The expression is ambiguous in the Hebrew, and admits of either ‘sons of God’ or ‘sons of gods’ as a translation.”<sup>177</sup> Augustine argues that the phrases “sons of God” and “angels of God” are synonymous and mean “righteous men.” He goes on to reference several scriptures to prove his point. He states, “Now the holy Scripture gives abundant witness that men of God were often called ‘angels’.”<sup>178</sup> He concludes that holy men of antiquity mated with worldly women, losing their holy estate in the process and multiplying wickedness throughout the antediluvian world. He concluded, “Thus the sons of God were captivated by love for their daughters of men, and in order to enjoy them as wives, they abandoned the godly behavior they had maintained in the holy community and lapsed into the morality of the earth-born city.”<sup>179</sup>

The Inspired Version presents the account in such a way as to remove the legendary interpretations of the ancient event. In so doing, it confirms Augustine’s conclusion. It says, “And Noah and his sons hearkened unto the Lord, and gave heed; and they were called the sons of God. And when these men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, the sons of men saw that their daughters were fair, and they took them wives even as they chose. And the Lord said unto Noah, The daughters of thy sons have sold themselves, for behold, mine anger is kindled against the sons of men, for they will not harken unto my voice” (Genesis 8:1-3 IV).

Some clarifications that the Inspired Version made do not return the text to its original wording, but, like the previous example correct an errant conclusion. Consider the passage in Hebrews: “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection” (Hebrews 6:1). Many nineteenth century religionists cited this passage to support their conclusion that baptism, which is one of the principles that the verse placed among the Savior’s doctrine, was no longer required.

---

<sup>175</sup>Josephus, *Antiquity of the Jews*, Bk. 1, Ch 3.1, P 28.

<sup>176</sup>Augustine, *City of God*, Bk. 15, Ch 23, P 641.

<sup>177</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>178</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>179</sup>*Ibid.*, Bk. 15, Ch 22, P 636.

They maintained that the command to baptize was only extended by Christians when the church was small, but once the Savior's gospel became accepted throughout the Western world, it was no longer demanded of believers. The Holy Spirit corrected this errant interpretation by stating, "Therefore not leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection" (Heb 6:1 IV). While this change that the Spirit placed in the Inspired Version corrected the false conclusion, it did not represent the text as originally written, at least as the early Christians quoted it. Clement of Alexandria, who wrote about 180 AD, cited the passage as follows: "Wherefore, leaving the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection."<sup>180</sup> The Holy Spirit took liberty in stating this verse as he wanted it understood by nineteenth century believers, not as it existed among first century Christians, because the former misunderstood the passage's intent.

Another example of this kind of clarification comes from John's gospel. Many religionists in the early nineteenth century believed that the gospel was not preached until the Savior's first advent. The Holy Spirit chose to correct this fallacy by rewording the first verse of John's gospel. The King James states, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Irenaeus is the first person whose writings we have that quotes this verse. His close association to the beloved apostle makes his rendition of the verse nearly certain. Three times,<sup>181</sup> he quotes the passage the same as the King James renders the passage. Two Greek words John originally used, *arche* and *logos*, which the King James Version translates as *beginning* and *Word*, carry meanings not contained in their English counter parts. This means that the English translation does not adequately express what the apostle tried to convey.

Origen took an entire book in his *Commentary on John* to consider the ramifications of just the first phrase of this passage. After showing that the word *architect* comes from *arche*, or our *beginning*, he goes on to say, "The heavens were founded by the reason (logos) of God, as when we say that a house is built by the plan (logos) of the architect, or a ship by the plan (logos) of the of the shipbuilder."<sup>182</sup> This explanation teaches us that the plan of the heavenly Father was implemented by the Son, just as an architect draws and executes the plan of his client. Since the plan of the heavenly Father is the gospel, an equivalent way to say in English what John wrote in Greek is, "In the beginning was the gospel preached through the Son" (John 1:1 IV). The Holy Spirit placed a translation of John's statement into the Inspired Version that better expresses the meaning of the original verse and also clarifies that the gospel plan that the Son taught in the beginning was preached to earth's first inhabitants.

---

<sup>180</sup>Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, Bk. 5, Ch 10 as quoted in ANF 2:459.

<sup>181</sup>Irenaeus, *Irenaeus Against Heresies*, Bk. 1, Ch 8.5 as quoted in ANF 1:328; Bk. 3, Ch 6.8 as quoted in ANF 1: 428; Bk. 5, Ch 18 as quoted in ANF 1:546.

<sup>182</sup>Origen, *Commentary on John*, Bk. 1, Ch 42 as quoted in ANF 10:321.

Language is dynamic, changing in usage over time. The meanings that the Spirit wishes to convey to people in a different dispensation with a different language and a different culture can sometimes be better stated with different words than originally given to another people in another language with another culture. The Spirit's rewording of its own sayings, especially in a translation of the text, is not new. Augustine observed that some differences between the Greek and Hebrew texts could not be adequately explained by claiming that some person altered the passage. For instance, the Hebrew text says that Jonah gave the people of Nineveh forty days to repent (Jonah 3:4), but the Greek states that he only gave them three days. Our Bibles follow the Hebrew version. Augustine concludes that both versions are right and that the Holy Spirit used forty for the Jews to invoke memory of their ancestor's wanderings with Moses in the wilderness and three for the Greeks to represent the Savior in the grave.

Without identifying other passages or the reasons that he considers both renditions to be the words of the Spirit to his respective audience, he says, "If then we see, as we ought to see, nothing in those scriptures except the utterances of the Spirit of God through the mouths of men, it follows that anything in the Hebrew text that is not found in that of the seventy translators [Septuagint] is something that the Spirit of God decided not to say through the translators but through the prophets. Conversely, anything in the Septuagint that is not in the Hebrew texts is something which the same Spirit preferred to say through the translators, instead of through the prophets, thus showing that the former and the latter alike were prophets. For in the same way the Spirit spoke, as he chose, some things through Isaiah, others through Jeremiah, others through one prophet or another; or he said the same things, differently expressed, through this prophet or that. Moreover, anything that is found in both the Hebrew and the Septuagint, is something which the one same Spirit wished to say through both, but in such a way that the former gave the lead by prophesying, while the latter followed with a prophetic translation."<sup>183</sup>

Similar application of Augustine's explanation applies to Joseph's new translation. Anything spoken in the Inspired Version, but not in the original biblical text, is that which the Holy Spirit wished to say to nineteenth century Christians, especially those attracted to the latter-day gospel. It also implies that while the original Biblical text came through prophecy, the Inspired version came by "prophetic translation." Since the Inspired Version remained unpublished until the excesses then beginning to make their way into the restored church could be fully manifest and their participants rejected, leaving the Reorganization

to preserve and publish it, we can equally conclude that some things stated in Joseph's translation are sayings that the Spirit wanted said to the Reorganized Church and its members. For example, the King James Bible states, "For there must be also heresies among you" (1 Corinthians 11:19). Heresies were the precise problem that faced the early Christian church and to which Tertullian addressed his work entitled *Prescription Against Heretics* and in which he quoted this passage as it reads in the King James Version.<sup>184</sup>

---

<sup>183</sup>Augustine, *City of God*, Bk. 18, Ch 44, P 822.

<sup>184</sup>Tertullian, *Prescription Against Heretics*, Ch 4 as quoted in ANF 3:245.

However, division, not heresy, has plagued the Reorganized Church. Foreknowing that development, the Holy Spirit rendered the verse, “For there must be also divisions among you” (1 Corinthians 11:19 IV) and, in so doing spoke directly to the Reorganization. In like manner, the Spirit attached the sentence, “Whoso treasureth up my words, shall not be deceived” (Matt 24:39 IV) to the Savior’s prophecy about conditions existing prior to his second coming. This addition is designed to prepare believers for the assault that doubt has waged during the last century and half, warning members that safety from those doubts lay in scriptural knowledge and understanding.

The Spirit also gave protection for an improper interpretation of scripture that has recently become popular — the rapture of believers before or during a proposed future period of tribulation. He enlarged the Savior’s discourse on the end times by saying, “And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body is gathered; or, in other words, whithersoever the saints are gathered, thither will the eagles be gathered together; or thither will the remainder be gathered together. This he spake, signifying the gathering of his saints; and of angels descending and gathering the remainder unto them; the one from the bed, the other from the grinding, and the other from the field, whithersoever he listeth” (Luke 37-38 IV).

One passage that proponents of the rapture use to bolster their private interpretation was clarified by the Spirit before that belief spread throughout Protestantism so that the believers to whom the revelation was given might understand that the mentioned gathering is not off the earth, but to Zion, the place where the rest of the saints are gathered before Jesus returns.

The Inspired Version is Joseph’s translation of the biblical text as originally breathed by the Holy Spirit, which text as originally written we now know was altered. His prophetic translation provides an English version that better expresses the original content of those sacred breathings. It was received as it was first written, that is by revelation. In a few instances, it restores the original wording. More often, it translates into plain English what was originally embedded in the compressed language of ancient sacred writings. In some cases, the Holy Spirit added to the words that he spoke through Biblical authors to highlight apostolic teachings and Old Testament symbols that were in other scriptures but lost to Christian consciousness through misinterpretation and misunderstanding. Occasionally, the same Spirit re-phrased the words he previously placed in the scriptures to speak directly to the people to whom the new translation was being presented. In all cases, Joseph’s translation corrected the text to more adequately express the scriptures as they exist in the bosom of God. The Lord told Sidney Rigdon, Joseph’s secretary during the production of the Inspired Version, “The Scriptures shall be given as they are in mine own bosom” (D&C 34:5b). Latter Day Saints believe that is just what happened. The historical record provides abundant evidence that their belief is true.