

# The Coming forth of The Book of Mormon

What We Know About the Translation and Use in the  
Early Church





Q. *What is the truth of Mormonism?*

A. I know Mormonism to be the truth; and believe the church to have been established by divine direction. I have complete faith in it. In writing for your father I frequently wrote day after day, often sitting at the table close by him, he sitting with his face buried in his hat, with the stone in it, and dictating hour after hour with nothing between us.

Q. *Had he not a book or manuscript from which he read, or dictated to you?*

A. He had neither manuscript or book to read from.

Q. *Could he not have had, and you not know it?*

A. If he had anything of the kind he could not have concealed it from me.

—Emma Smith, 1879



Q. *Are you sure that he had the plates at the time you were writing for him?*

A. The plates often lay on the table without any attempt at concealment, wrapped in a small linen table cloth, which I had given him to fold them in. I once felt of the plates, as they thus lay on the table, tracing their outline and shape. They seemed to be pliable like thick paper, and would rustle with a metallic sound when the edges were moved by the thumb.

—*Emma Smith, 1879*

## Events Surrounding the Translation of the Book of Mormon, 1827–1828

<b>1827</b>	Sept.	Joseph obtains the plates from the angel Moroni
	Oct.	
	Nov.	
	Dec.	
<b>1828</b>	Jan.	Joseph and Emma move to Harmony, Pennsylvania
	Feb.	Joseph translates some characters from the plates Martin Harris takes sample of characters and Joseph's accompanying translation to Charles Anthon
	Mar.	
	Apr.	Book of Lehi translated (April 12–June 14)
	May	
	June	Joseph and Emma's first child is born and dies Martin Harris loses 116 pages
	July	Joseph travels to Manchester, New York Interpreters and plates are taken away from Joseph
	Aug.	
	Sept.	Joseph reobtains interpreters and plates
	Oct.	
	Nov.	
	Dec.	David Whitmer makes business trip to Palmyra, where he meets Oliver Cowdery

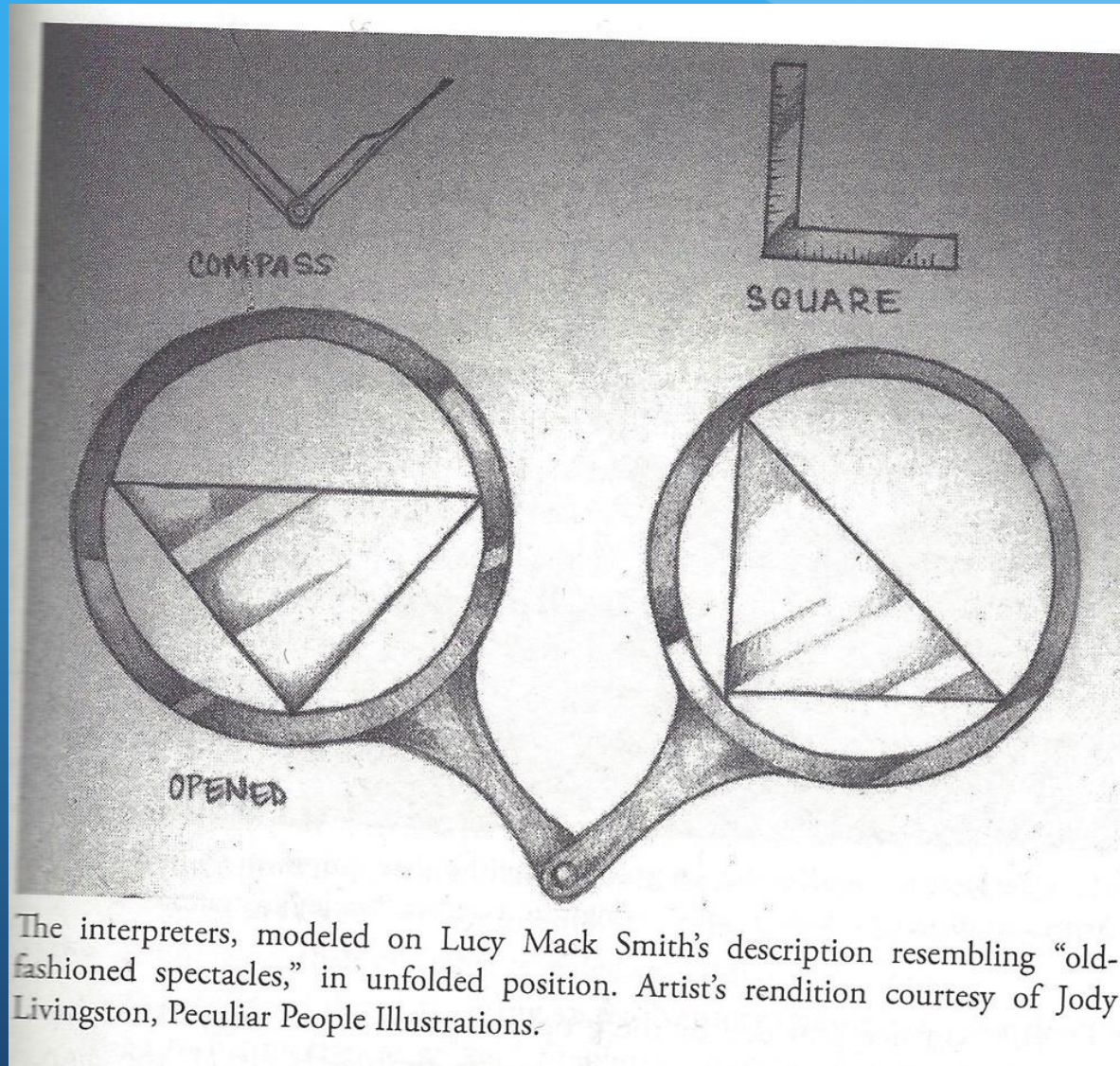
# The initial scribes for the lost manuscript

- Emma Smith
- Alva Hale (Emma's older brother)
- Reuben Hale (Emma's younger brother)
- Samuel Smith (Joseph's younger brother)
- Martin Harris until about June 14, 1828

# What were the Interpreters?

- Lucy Mack Smith saw and handled through thin cloth
- Lucy heard Joseph describe them
- “‘keys’ of triangular shape—‘three cornered diamonds’”.
- “set in curved frames”
- “‘connected with each other in much the same way, as old-fashioned spectacles’”
  - Don Bradley, *The Lost 116 Pages*” (2019) pp. 45-53.

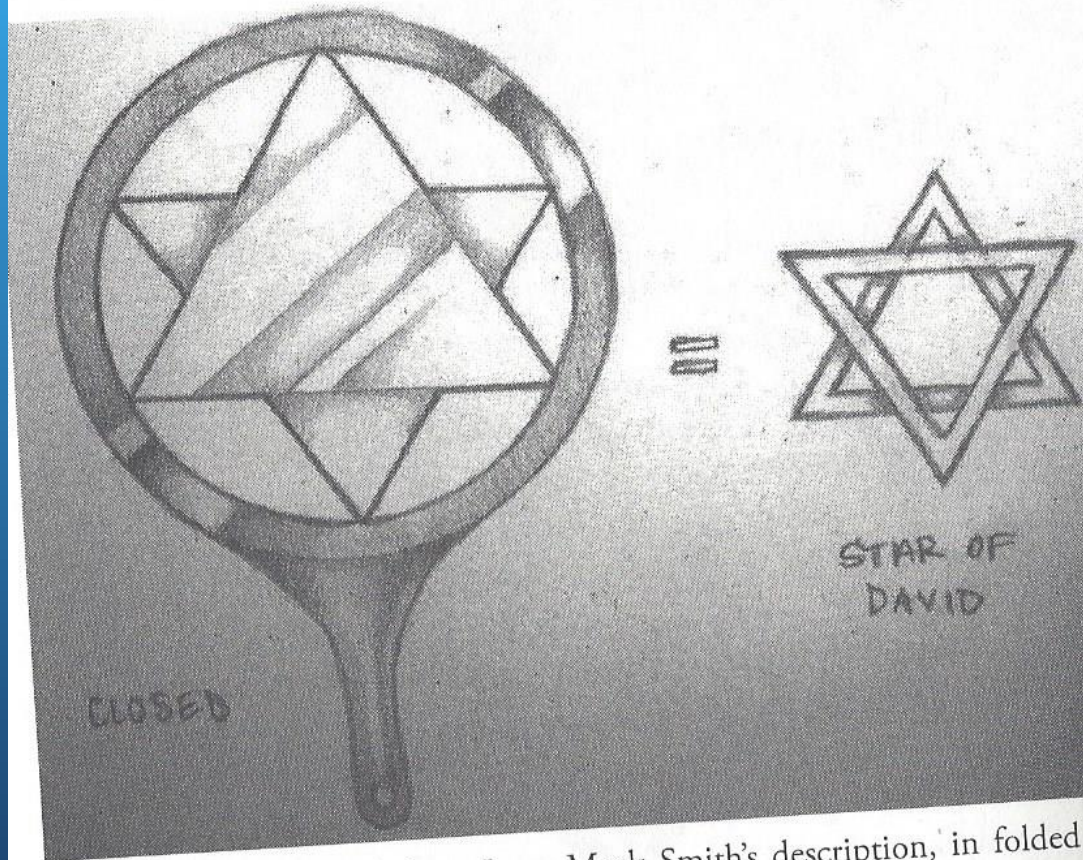




The interpreters, modeled on Lucy Mack Smith's description resembling "old-fashioned spectacles," in unfolded position. Artist's rendition courtesy of Jody Livingston, Peculiar People Illustrations.



*The Lost 116 Pages*



The interpreters, modeled on Lucy Mack Smith's description, in folded position  
Artist's rendition courtesy of Jody Livingston, Peculiar People Illustrations

# Old Fashioned Spectacles



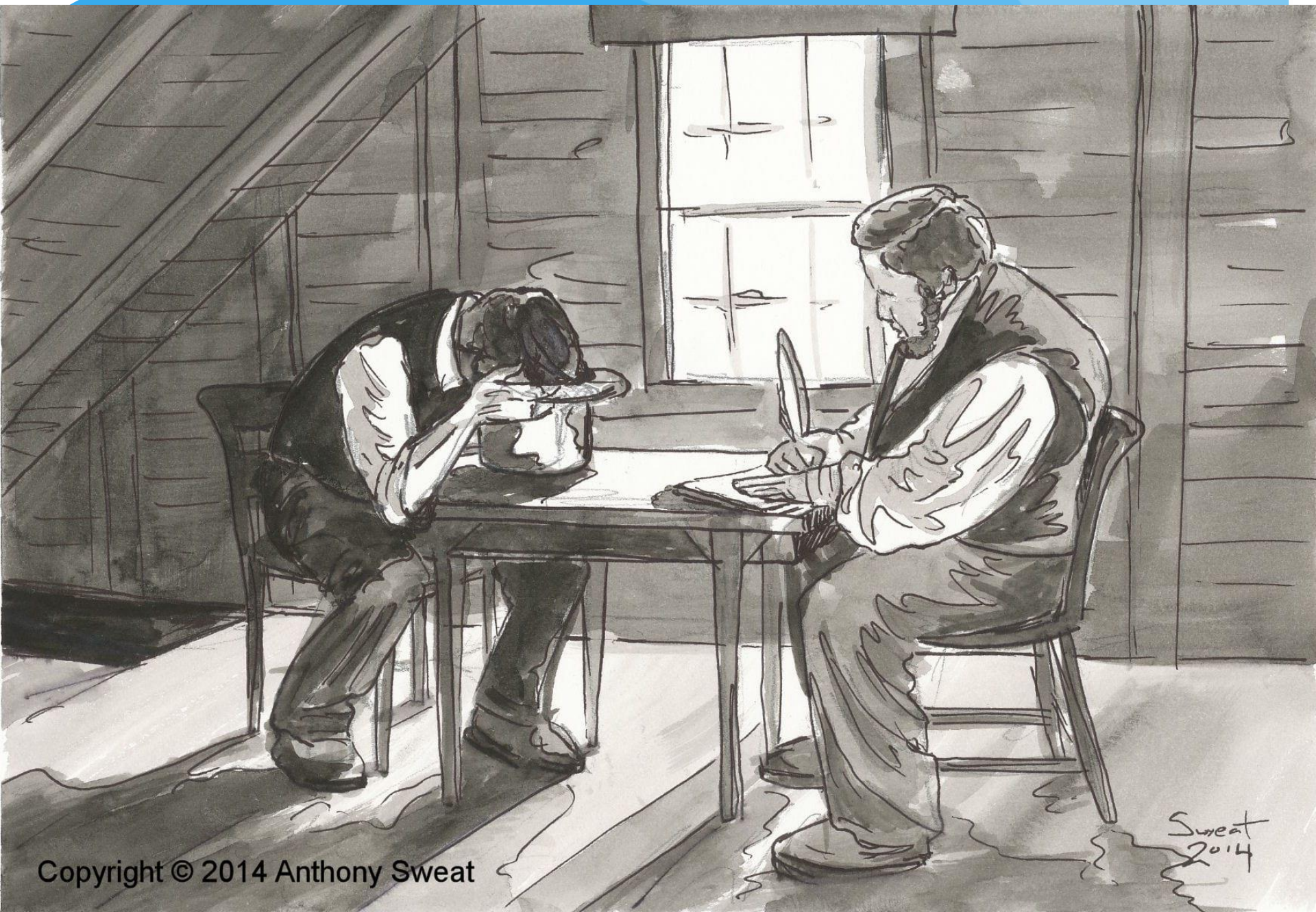


Late May 1829 Oliver Cowdery  
begins to act as scribe.

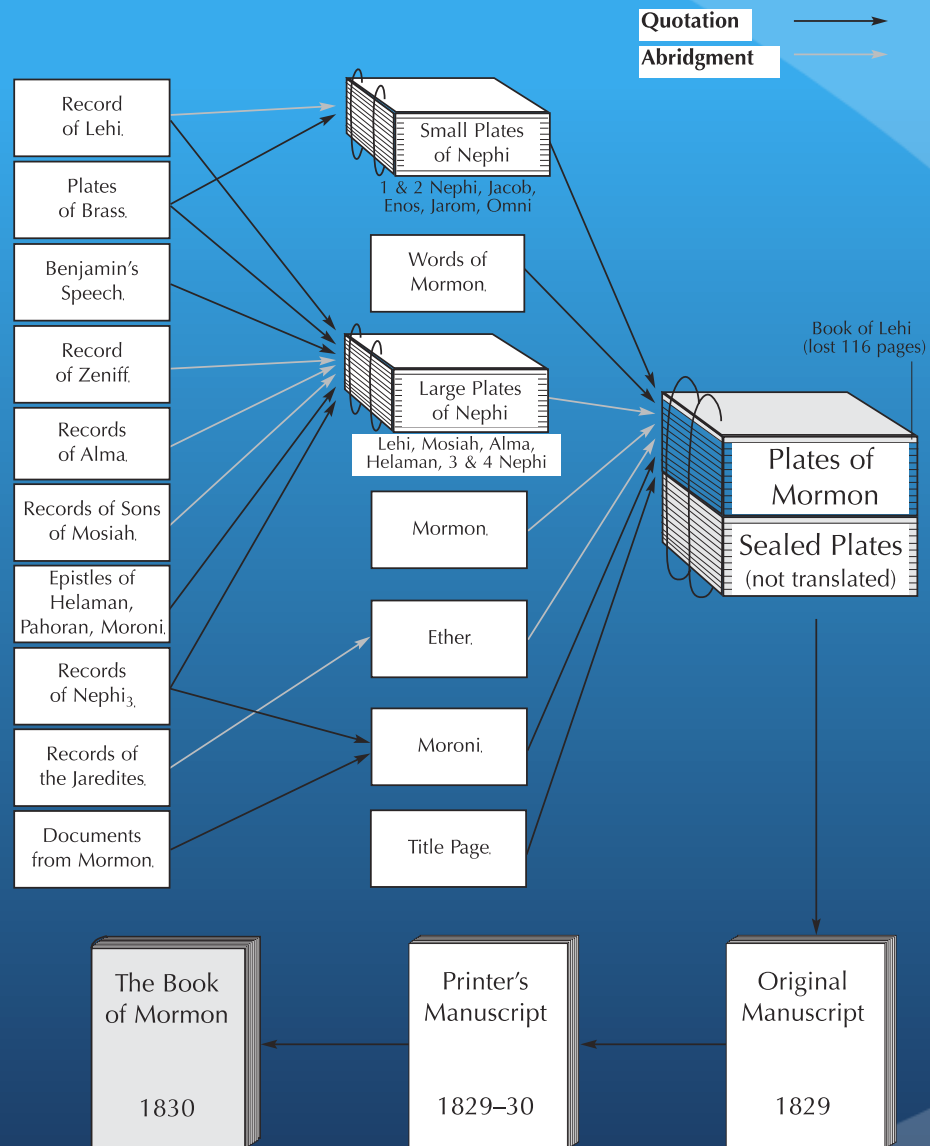
# Seer Stone







# Book of Mormon Plates and Records





# Events Surrounding the Translation of the Book of Mormon, 1829–1830

1829	Jan.	
	Feb.	Joseph receives D&C 4 in Harmony, Pennsylvania The Lord appears to Oliver Cowdery
	Mar.	Joseph translates a few pages of the Book of Mormon Martin Harris of Palmyra visits Joseph in Harmony
	Apr.	Oliver arrives in Harmony to meet Joseph <b>April 7</b>
	May	<b>Book of Mormon Translated</b>
	June	<b>End of June</b>
	July	E. B. Grandin and T. Weed decline to print Book of Mormon
	Aug.	Grandin agrees to print; typesetting begins Martin Harris mortgages his farm
	Sept.	
	Oct.	
	Nov.	Printer's manuscript is prepared through Alma 36
	Dec.	
1830	Jan.	
	Feb.	
	Mar.	
	Apr.	Printing is finished Restored Church of Jesus Christ officially organized

AND ALSO THE TESTIMONY OF EIGHT  
WITNESSES.

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

CHRISTIAN WHITMER,  
JACOB WHITMER,  
PETER WHITMER, Jr.  
JOHN WHITMER,  
HIRAM PAGE,  
JOSEPH SMITH, SEN.  
HYRUM SMITH,  
SAMUEL H. SMITH.

# References to other places in text

Alma 36:22

Translated about April 24

22 Yea, methought I saw, even as our father <sup>a</sup>Lehi saw, God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels, in the attitude of singing and <sup>b</sup>praising their God; yea, and my soul did long to be there.

1 Nephi 1:8

Translated about June 5

he thought he <sup>c</sup>saw God sitting upon his throne, surrounded with numberless concourses of angels in the attitude of singing and praising their God.

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# References to other places in text

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- Compare Mosiah 12-15 translated about April 10
  - Abinidai's 13 incidence references of phraseology
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- With Alma 39-43 translated about April 26 (130 pages later).
  - Alama talking to his son Corianton

# Mosiah 5:11

And now it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall not take upon him the  
**NAME** of Christ must be  
**CALLED** by some other name; therefore, he findeth himself on the  
**LEFT HAND OF GOD**. And I would that ye should  
**REMEMBER** also, that this is the **NAME** that I said I should give unto you that never should be  
**BLOTTED OUT**, except it be through  
**TRANSGRESSION**; therefore, take heed that ye do not  
**TRANSGRESS**, that the name be not  
**BLOTTED OUT** of your hearts. I say unto you, I would that ye should  
**REMEMBER** to retain the **NAME** written always in your hearts, that ye are not found on the  
**LEFT HAND OF GOD**, but that ye hear and know the voice by which ye shall be  
**CALLED**, and also, the  
**NAME** by which he shall call you.

# References to other Text

- Compare Mosiah 27 translated about April 13
- Alma the Younger describing his conversion after coming out of comma
- With Alma 36 translated about April 24 (10 days later)
- Alma the Younger retelling in chiastic form



# Chiasmus in Alma 36

My son give ear to my words (v. 1)  
Keep the commandments and ye shall prosper in the land (v. 1)  
Do as I have done (v. 2)  
Remember the captivity of our fathers (v. 2)  
They were in bondage (v. 2)  
He surely did deliver them (v. 2)  
Trust in God (v. 3)  
Supported in trials, troubles, and afflictions (v. 3)  
Lifted up at the last day (v. 3)  
I know this not of myself but of God (v. 4)  
Born of God (v. 5)  
I sought to destroy the church (vv. 6–9)  
My limbs were paralyzed (v. 10)  
Fear of being in the presence of God (vv. 14–15)  
Pains of a damned soul (v. 16)  
Harrowed up by the memory of sins (v. 17)  
I remembered Jesus Christ, a son of God (v. 17)  
I cried, Jesus Christ, son of God (v. 18)  
Harrowed by the memory of sins no more (v. 19)  
Joy as exceeding as was the pain (v. 20)  
Long to be in the presence of God (v. 22)  
My limbs received strength again (v. 23)  
I labored to bring souls to repentance (v. 24)  
Born of God (v. 26)  
Therefore my knowledge is of God (v. 26)  
Supported under trials, troubles, and afflictions (v. 26)  
Trust in him (v. 27)  
He will deliver me (v. 27)  
And raise me up at the last day (v. 28)  
As God brought our fathers out of bondage and captivity (vv. 28–29)  
Retain a remembrance of their captivity (v. 29)  
Know as I do know (v. 30)  
Keep the commandments and ye shall prosper in the land (v. 30)  
This according to his word (v. 30).

# How Often did Church Leaders Quote the Book of Mormon

An extensive review of Church periodicals printed before 1846 reveal that there were 1,489 citations to the Bible and 77 to the Book of Mormon, or a 19:1 ratio.

. A study of the Nauvoo discourses of Joseph Smith revealed allusions to 451 different biblical passages compared to 22 references to the Book of Mormon, or a ratio of 21:1.

**The Book of Mormon among the  
Saints: Evolving Use of the Keystone  
Scripture**  
*Casey Paul Griffiths*

Ezra Taft Benson's presidency was the culmination of a long journey to bring the Book of Mormon from obscurity to primacy in Church doctrine and teaching. Partially as a result of his urgings, there was an explosion in the use of the Book of Mormon within the Church. Noel Reynolds's 1999 study showed the skyrocketing use of the Book of Mormon by exploring three categories:

first, before Ezra Taft Benson's presidency, the number of scriptures from the Book of Mormon used in conference hovered consistently around 12 percent. After President Benson's first challenge in 1986, the number shot to 40 percent, then it gradually leveled off to 25 percent. Other statistics—measuring not just the references to scriptures but the topics of the talks themselves—also showed a peak in Book of Mormon topics during 1986-89, when President Benson sparked the new emphasis on the Book of Mormon.<sup>[91]</sup> Even before President Benson's tenure, the number of publications, both in favor and polemical, experienced a dramatic increase during the latter part of the 1980s.

I will give unto you for a sign—for verily I say unto you that when these things which I declare unto you . . . shall be made known unto the Gentiles . . . it shall be a sign unto them, that they may know that the work of the Father hath already commenced unto the fulfilling of the covenant which he hath made unto the people who are of the house of Israel” (3 Nephi 21:2, 7).



This [the Holy Ghost] must ever be the chief source of evidence for the truth of the Book of Mormon. All other evidence is secondary to this, the primary and infallible. No arrangement of evidence, however skillfully ordered; no argument, however adroitly made, can ever take its place. . . .

To be known, the truth must be stated and the clearer and more complete the statement is, the better opportunity will the Holy Spirit have for testifying to the souls of men that the work is true. . . .

Secondary evidences in support of truth, like secondary causes in natural phenomena, may be of first-rate importance, and mighty factors in the achievement of God's purposes.

—*Elder B. H. Roberts, 1909*