

**1. DNA Evidence Disproves BOM Claims:** DNA analysis undermines the premise of the Book of Mormon. Specifically, DNA evidence establishes that Native American Indians originate from Asia and not from the Middle East or from Israel as claimed by the Book of Mormon and various prophets. The thousands of DNA samples from every known Native American tribe indicate an Asiatic origin (rather than Semitic origin, as LDS leaders have speculated) and widely support the theory of a prehistoric Asiatic migration across the Bearing Strait over 50,000 years ago. This evidence refutes the Church's claim that American Natives are the descendants of Semitic migrants who arrived in America in 590 B.C. Even LDS researchers, such as anthropologist [Thomas W. Murphy](#), have concluded that the substantial collection of Native American genetic markers now available are not consistent with any detectable presence of ancestors from ancient Middle East. This DNA evidence likely contributed to the Church changing the introduction page of the [2006 edition](#) Book of Mormon from "[the Lamanites] are **the principal** ancestors of the American Indians" to "[the Lamanites] are **among the** ancestors of the American Indians."

LDS defenders attempt to rebut this damning DNA evidence by claiming that it may not be reliable due to "genetic drift," "swamp effect," and "bottleneck effect" upon the initial migrant population of the Book of Mormon. Notably, none of these defenses provide a cohesive hypothesis reconciling current DNA evidence with Book of Mormon claims. Rather, these largely unsupported defenses focus instead upon pushing the Book of Mormon text outside the realm of scientific provability.

Perhaps the most comprehensive analysis of the DNA evidence undermining the Book of Mormon is a book written by molecular biologist and former LDS bishop Simon G. Southerton, *Losing a Lost Tribe: Native Americans, DNA, and the Mormon Church* (which is excerpted [here](#)). Southerton has also written a [comprehensive article](#) in response to LDS criticisms of his book.

Recently, the Church published an essay entitled, [Book of Mormon and DNA studies](#). Many of the theories and much of the information contained in the essay contradicts 170 years of Church teachings on the subject. Southerton recently published a response essay exposing some of the Church's "[corporate doublethink](#)." Moreover, buried in the lengthy essay, the Church concedes that Lamanite DNA has not been found and that most Native Americans are descended from Asians. Additionally, Southerton's article, "[Could Generations of Lamanite DNA just disappear?](#)" thoroughly refutes the idea that Lamanite DNA could have simply disappeared, as the Church suggests. The following paragraphs from the article illustrate some of the recent DNA developments implicating the Book of Mormon.

"The research on Neanderthals and Denisovans clearly illustrates that if ancestors of other ethnic backgrounds are hiding unnoticed in our family trees, traces of their DNA can be found in our genomes. Even after tens of thousands of years. It is no longer reasonable to claim that Lamanite DNA cannot be found. The recent advances in whole genome sequencing and analysis have changed the research landscape. Genetic tests are now so sensitive, that it is possible to detect a tiny fraction of a percent of mixed ancestry in a person's DNA."

"Let's suspend disbelief for a moment and consider that the apologists are on to something, and all the prophets have been misguided. Lehi and his small band colonize a restricted region of the Americas. The Book of Mormon records that Lehi's descendants multiplied exceedingly and spread upon the face of the land. Their Middle Eastern nuclear DNA would have spread, over the last 3,000 years, throughout adjacent populations like a drop of ink in a bucket of water. At the very least their genes would have spread over many hundreds of kilometres. It would be exceedingly unlikely that their genomic DNA would go extinct and scientists exploring the genomes of Native Americans would stumble on it if it was there. But apparently the Lamanite generation, along with their genes, are nowhere to be found beyond the pages of the Book of Mormon."

The main idea is this: DNA evidence has definitively established that Native American Indians originate from Asia and not from the Middle East or from Israelites as the Book of Mormon claims.

**2. Errors and Anachronisms:** The Book of Mormon contains numerous **errors**, including many **anachronisms**, in that it refers to words, phrases, animals, etc. that simply did not exist during the Book of Mormon timeline. For example:

- **Horses** are referred to in Alma 18: 9, Alma 18: 12, Alma 20: 6, and 3 Né. 3: 22, but did not exist during Book of Mormon times. Horses evolved in North America, but became extinct at the end of the Pleistocene (2.5 million to 12,000 years ago) period. Horses did not reappear until the Spaniards brought them from Europe in 1519.
- **Elephants** are mentioned (Ether 9:19) in the Jaredite era (2500 BC). There is no fossil evidence to support this placement. Mastadons and Mammoths lived during the Pleistocene in the New World, however, the fossil record indicates that they became extinct at the end of the last Ice Age (10,000 years ago).
- **Domesticated cattle** are mentioned in Ether 9:18, but no evidence has been recovered suggesting that Old World cattle inhabited the New World prior to European contact in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century AD.
- **Goats and swine** (Ether 9:8) are referred to as though they are domesticated. There is evidence that some wild varieties of goats and pigs were present in pre-Columbian America, but there is no evidence that these animals were domesticated. There is no artwork portraying either of these types of animals. Furthermore, animals that did exist are not mentioned, such as deer, sloth, monkeys and jaguars.
- **Barley and wheat** are mentioned numerous times. However, domesticated forms of these grains were not introduced until a thousand years after the end of the Book of Mormon era.
- **Chariots** are mentioned numerous times in the Book of Mormon (Alma 18:9-10, 12, Alma 20:6, 3 Nephi 3:22). There is no archeological evidence to support the use of wheeled vehicles in the pre-Columbian Mesoamerica. This is probably because there were no large domesticated animals to pull wagons, carts, plows, or chariots.
- **Steel and iron** are mentioned several times (1 Nephi 16:18, 2 Nephi 5:15, Jarom 1:8, Ether 7:9). There is no evidence for hardened steel in the pre-Columbian Americas. The Book of Mormon also refers to “swords,” stating that “the blades thereof were cankered with rust” (Mosiah 8:11). This reference is in context of the discovery of the Jaredites’ final battlefield where an estimated 250,000 warriors were killed. No such battlefield has ever been found in archeological study, nor has any “sword” as we know them.
- **“Cimiters”** (presumably scimitars) are mentioned numerous times in the BOM. A scimitar is a long, curved sword used by the Persians and Turks. These weapons did not exist in the Americas (or anywhere else) until 450 AD, approximating the close of the BOM period. Furthermore, the word was not used by the Hebrews (a linguistic anachronism).
- The Book of Mormon refers to a type of **monetary system** based on weights of precious metals (Alma 11). Such a system, however, has not been discovered in Mesoamerica.
- **Silk** is mentioned six times (1 Nephi 13:7,8, Alma 1:29, Alma 4:6, Ether 9:17, Ether 10:24), but is a product of the Orient and was unknown in the pre-Columbian Americas.
- The BOM describes cultures whose **language and writing** was rooted in Hebrew and Egyptian. Archaeological evidence shows that the only people who ever developed a written language in America were the Mayans. The Mayan language has no resemblance to Hebrew or

Egyptian.

The Book of Mormon mentions numerous animals, objects, etc. that did not exist in the Americas between 2200 BC and 421 AD. Unless the Book of Mormon is a work of fiction, how does one account for the numerous errors, mistakes, and anachronisms?

**3. Archaeology:** There is **no archaeological evidence** to directly support the Book of Mormon or the Nephites, Lamanites, or Jaredites who purportedly numbered in the millions.

The Book of Mormon is purportedly a record of two great civilizations that lived on the American continents spanning a period of over 2,600 years from approximately 2,200 BC to 480 AD. During this time frame, the Book of Mormon describes highly-populated cultures developing from extremely small colonization groups. This presents at least two problems. First, the millions of people referred to in the Book of Mormon could have only come about if the **population grew at a rate many times greater** than what was ever achieved in ancient history. Second, if the Book of Mormon people grew as large and as sophisticated as the depicted in the book's text, there should be some archeological evidence of their existence.

For example, the Book of Mormon depicts two major battles that took place at the Hill Cumorah (Ramah to the Jaredites). Approximately 230,000 Nephites and Lamanites were slain in the 5<sup>th</sup> Century AD, and 2 million Jaredites were killed in 600 BC in the same place. (Ether 15:2.) To compare how big these battles were, the American Civil War claimed the lives of 620,000 soldiers over a four-year period. These Book of Mormon battles claimed over three times as many lives and in a much more localized area and in a much shorter time frame. However, no evidence (including steel swords, armor, horses and chariots) has been found to substantiate these cataclysmic battles.

As noted by **Jeremy Runnells**, "compare this to the Roman occupation of Britain and other countries. There are abundant evidences of their presence during the first 400 years AD such as villas, mosaic floors, public baths, armor, weapons, writings, art, pottery, and so on. Even the major road systems used today in some of these occupied countries were built by the Romans. Additionally, there is ample evidence of the Mayan and Aztec civilizations as well as a civilization in current day Texas that dates back 15,000 years. Where are the Nephite or Lamanite buildings, roads, armors, swords, pottery, art, etc.?"

The lack of archaeological evidence supporting is one of the reasons why some church members now push the "**Limited Geography Model**" (*i.e.*, the Nephites and Lamanites lived in a limited area in Central or South America, etc.) and that the real Hill Cumorah is not in Palmyra, New York but in Mesoamerica. This theory, however, contradicts what Joseph Smith and other prophets repeatedly taught. The following link provides numerous statements from church leaders **linking the Hill Cumorah to Palmyra, New York**.

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS  
OFFICE OF THE FIRST PRESIDENCY  
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84150

October 16, 1990

Bishop Darrell L. Brooks  
Moore Ward  
Oklahoma City Oklahoma South Stake  
1000 Windemere  
Moore, OK 73160

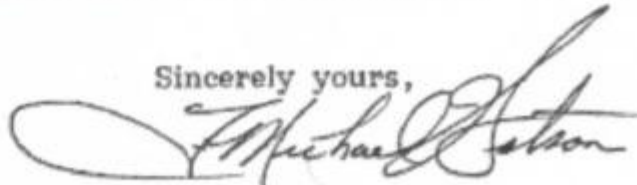
Dear Bishop Brooks:

I have been asked to forward to you for acknowledgment and handling the enclosed copy of a letter to President Gordon B. Hinckley from Ronnie Sparks of your ward. Brother Sparks inquired about the location of the Hill Cumorah mentioned in the Book of Mormon, where the last battle between the Nephites and Lamanites took place.

The Church has long maintained, as attested to by references in the writings of General Authorities, that the Hill Cumorah in western New York state is the same as referenced in the Book of Mormon.

The Brethren appreciate your assistance in responding to this inquiry, and asked that you convey to Brother Sparks their commendation for his gospel study.

Sincerely yours,



F. Michael Watson  
Secretary to the First Presidency

In fact, as late as October 16, 1990, the First Presidency reiterated that the Hill Cumorah referenced in the Book of Mormon is located in Palmyra, New York. Above is a copy of a letter issued by the First Presidency to an LDS bishop relating to the location of the Hill Cumorah. Aside from the location of Cumorah, the Book of Mormon contains many other archeological problems. Consider the wheel. According to the Book of Mormon, Lehi's family brought one of the world's inventions with them, the wheel, which they used to make chariots. Yet no chariots or other large wheeled objects have been found in ancient America. That would mean that all knowledge of this most useful intention was lost and not used by the Nephite and Lamanite descendants, which is highly unlikely. Simply stated,

archeologists have been unable to find any archeological evidence of Book of Mormon events. Latter-day Saint Thomas Stuart Ferguson was BYU's archaeology division (New World Archaeological Fund-ing) founder, which was financed by the Church. NWAf and Ferguson were tasked by BYU and the Church in the 1950s and 1960s to [find archaeological evidence](#) to support the Book of Mormon. After 17 years of work, Ferguson concluded as follows:

"[Y]ou can't set Book of Mormon geography down anywhere - because it is fictional and will never meet the requirements of the dirt-archaeology. I should say - what is in the ground will never conform to what is in the book." - [Letter dated February 2, 1976](#)

Additionally, in 1973, [Michael Coe](#), one of the best known authorities on New World archaeology, published a paper on Book of Mormon archeology. In so doing, he stated:

"Mormon archaeologists over the years have almost unanimously accepted the Book of Mormon as an accurate, historical account of the New World peoples.... Let me now state unconditionally that as far as I know there is not one professionally trained archaeologist, who is not a Mormon, who sees any scientific justification for believing the foregoing to be true, and I would like to state that there are quite a few Mormon archaeologists who join this group....

"The bare facts of the matter are that nothing, absolutely nothing, has even shown up in any New World excavation which would suggest to a dispassionate observer that the Book of Mormon, as claimed by Joseph Smith, is a historical document relating to the history of early migrants to our hemisphere." ([Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought](#), Summer 1973, pp. 41, 42 & 46)

Ferguson and Coe's conclusions are universally accepted within the archeological community. For example, in August 2013, a 17-year-old named Zachary emailed 60 college professors specializing in Pre-Columbian Mesoamerica Archaeology, Pre-Columbian Mesoamerica Anthropology, and/or Egyptology. Zachary sought their professional opinion on the historicity of the Book of Mormon and Book of Abraham. Of the 60 professors Zachary emailed, 25 responded, and 14 gave Zachary permission to publish their names and comments. The consensus from these experts is that neither the Book of Mormon nor the Book of Abraham is historical, factual, or congruent to the current and existing data and evidence. The responses from these professors and experts can be read [here](#).

Additionally, consider the [National Geographic Society's letter](#) on the matter, which states in pertinent part: "Archaeologists and other scholars have long probed the hemisphere's past, and the Society does not know of anything found so far that has substantiated the Book of Mormon." The letter went on to state:

[S]tudents of prehistoric American by and large conclude that the New World's earliest inhabitants arrived from Asia via the Bering "land bridge." (Lower sea levels during ice ages exposed the continental shelf beneath Bering Strait, allowing generations of ancient Siberians to migrate east.)

Not only did the National Geographic Society conclude that there is no evidence to substantiate the Book of Mormon, it also endorsed the [following statement](#), from the Smithsonian Institute.

## STATEMENT REGARDING THE BOOK OF MORMON

1. The Smithsonian Institution has never used the Book of Mormon in any way as a scientific guide. Smithsonian archeologists see no direct connection between the archeology of the New World and the subject matter of the book.
2. The physical type of the American Indian is basically Mongoloid, being most closely related to that of the peoples of eastern, central, and northeastern Asia. Archeological evidence indicates that the ancestors of the present Indians came into the New World—probably over a land bridge known to have existed in the Bering Strait region during the last Ice Age—in a continuing series of small migrations beginning from about 25,000 to 30,000 years ago.
3. Present evidence indicates that the first people to reach this continent from the East were the Norsemen who briefly visited the northeastern part of North America around A.D. 1000 and then settled in Greenland. There is nothing to show that they reached Mexico or Central America.
4. One of the main lines of evidence supporting the scientific finding that contacts with Old World civilizations, if indeed they occurred at all, were of very little significance for the development of American Indian civilizations, is the fact that none of the principal Old World domesticated food plants or animals (except the dog) occurred in the New World in pre-Columbian times. American Indians had no wheat, barley, oats, millet, rice, cattle, pigs, chickens, horses, donkeys, camels before 1492. (Camels and horses were in the Americas, along with the bison, mammoth, and mastodon, but all these animals became extinct around 10,000 B.C. at the time when the early big game hunters spread across the Americas.)
5. Iron, steel, glass, and silk were not used in the New World before 1492 (except for occasional use of unsmelted meteoric iron). Native copper was worked in various locations in pre-Columbian times, but true metallurgy was limited to southern Mexico and the Andean region, where its occurrence in late prehistoric times involved gold, silver, copper, and their alloys, but not iron.
6. There is a possibility that the spread of cultural traits across the Pacific to Mesoamerica and the northwestern coast of South America began several hundred years before the Christian era. However, any such inter-hemispheric contacts appear to have been the results of accidental voyages originating in eastern and southern Asia. It is by no means certain that even such contacts occurred; certainly there were no contacts with the ancient Egyptians, Hebrews, or other peoples of Western Asian and the Near East.
7. No reputable Egyptologist or other specialist on Old World archeology, and no expert on New World prehistory, has discovered or confirmed any relationship between archeological remains in Mexico and archeological remains in Egypt.
8. Reports of findings of ancient Egyptian, Hebrew, and other Old World writings in the New World in pre-Columbian contexts have frequently appeared in newspapers, magazines, and sensational books. None of these claims has stood up to examination by reputable scholars. No inscriptions using Old World forms of writing have been shown to have occurred in any part of the Americas before 1492 except for a few Norse rune stones which have been found in Greenland.

**4. Book of Mormon Contains KJV Text:** The Book of Mormon contains numerous errors found in the 1769 KJV edition of the Bible, which Joseph Smith owned. These errors suggest that Joseph copied portions of the Bible and inserted them into the Book of Mormon.

As noted by Jeremy Runnells: “When King James translators were translating the KJV bible into English between 1604 and 1611, they would occasionally insert their own words into the text to make it more readable.” They did so because word meanings and idioms change slightly when translating from one language to another. We know which words they added because they are italicized in the KJV Bible. The problem is that the Book of Mormon, in quoting passages from the Bible, contains the identical italicized words, which could not be unless Joseph copied the KJV text to construct the Book of Mormon. The following are two examples identified by Runnells:

**Isaiah 9:1 (KJV)** Nevertheless the dimness *shall* not *be* such as *was* in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict *her by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations.

**2 Nephi 19:1** Nevertheless, the dimness **shall** not **be** such as **was** in her vexation, when at first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, and afterwards did more grievously afflict **by** the way of the Red Sea beyond Jordan in Galilee of the nations.

Runnells: “The above example, 2 Nephi 19:1, dated in the Book of Mormon to be around 550 BC, quotes nearly verbatim from the 1611 AD translation of Isaiah 9:1 KJV – including the translators’ italicized words. Additionally, Joseph qualified the sea as the Red Sea. The problem with this is that (a) Christ quoted Isaiah in Matt. 4:14–15 and did not mention the Red Sea; (b) ‘Red’ sea is not found in any source manuscripts; and © the Red Sea is 250 miles away.”

**Malachi 3:10 (KJV)** ... and pour you out a blessing, that *there shall not be room* enough to receive it.

**3 Nephi 24:10** ... and pour you out a blessing that **there shall not be room** enough to receive it.

Runnells: “In the above example, the KJV translators added seven italicized words not found in the source Hebrew manuscripts to its English translation. Why does the Book of Mormon, completed 1,200 years prior, contain the exact identical seven italicized words of 17<sup>th</sup> century translators?”

**5. Book of Mormon Contains KJV Translation Errors:** Runnells noted that “the Book of Mormon contains mistranslated biblical passages that were later changed in Joseph Smith’s translation of the Bible. These Book of Mormon verses should match the inspired JST version instead of the KJV version that Joseph later fixed.” The following is an example identified by Runnells as to the differences between the KJV, the BOM, and the JST:

**3 Nephi 13:25–27:**

**25:** Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

**26:** Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

**27:** Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

**Matthew 6:25–27 (from the King James Version bible – not the JST):**

**25:** Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

**26:** Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

**27:** Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

Runnells: “The above passages are identical, which is understandable as Christ may have said the same thing to both groups of people in the Old World as well as the New World. Let’s look at the JST version of the above identical passages:”

**Joseph Smith Translation of the same passages in the LDS bible for Matthew 6:25–27:**

**25:** And, again, I say unto you, Go ye into the world, and care not for the world: for the world will hate you, and will persecute you, and will turn you out of their synagogues.

**26:** Nevertheless, ye shall go forth from house to house, teaching the people; and I will go before you.

**27:** And your heavenly Father will provide for you, whatsoever things ye need for food, what ye shall eat; and for raiment, what ye shall wear or put on.

Joseph Smith claimed to have corrected the Bible because it had been corrupted. However, according to Joseph, the Book of Mormon is “the most correct book” and did not need to be corrected. Why, then, does the Book of Mormon still contain the same corrupted language as its Biblical counterpart, and why doesn’t the Book of Mormon match the JST?

**6. Similarities with *View of the Hebrews*:** Runnells noted that in 1825, Reverend [Ethan Smith](#) published a book entitled *View of the Hebrews*. Ethan Smith was a pastor in Poultney, Vermont when he wrote the book. [Oliver Cowdery](#), also a Poultney resident, was a member of Ethan’s congregation prior to joining his cousin, Joseph Smith, in New York. Cowdery later played an instrumental role in bringing forth the Book of Mormon.

Over the years, numerous scholars have noted striking similarities between the Book of Mormon and *View of the Hebrews*. (The full text of the book can be found [here](#).) LDS General Authority and scholar [Elder B.H. Roberts](#) conducted a thorough examination of *View of the Hebrews* to determine whether there were any links to the Book of Mormon. In so doing, Elder Roberts analyzed information that was available to Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris and others prior to the publication of the Book of Mormon. Roberts’ work has been documented in [Studies of the Book of Mormon](#). The following are some of the similarities noted by Elder Roberts between the first edition (1823) of the *View of the Hebrews* ([Online Source](#)) and the first edition (1830) of the Book of Mormon ([Online Source](#)):

- The destruction of Jerusalem
- The scattering of Israel
- The restoration of the Ten Tribes
- Hebrews leave the Old World for the New World
- Religion a motivating factor
- Migrations a long journey
- Encounter “seas” of “many waters”
- The Americas an uninhabited land
- Settlers journey northward
- Encounter a valley of a great river
- A unity of race (Hebrew) settle the land and are the ancestral origin of American Indians
- Hebrew the origin of Indian language
- Egyptian hieroglyphics
- Lost Indian records (the *View of the Hebrews* depicts a set of “yellow leaves” buried in “Indian Hill,” whereas Joseph Smith described gold plates buried in Hill Cumorah)
- Breastplate, Urim & Thummim
- A man standing on a wall warning the people saying, “Wo, wo to this city...to this people” while subsequently being attacked. For example, [View of Hebrews, p.20](#) describes Jesus, son of Ananus, standing on the wall crying, “Wo, wo to this city, this temple, and this people.” *View of the Hebrews* also states that Jesus (a) preached for many days; (b) went upon a wall; © cried with a loud voice; (d) prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem; and (e) had stones cast at him. Meanwhile, [Helaman 13 — 16](#) of the Book of Mormon describes Samuel the Lamanite standing



on the wall crying, “Wo, wo to this city” or “this people.” Additionally, the Book of Mormon states that Samuel (a) preached for many days; (b) went upon a wall; © cried with a loud voice; (d) prophesied the destruction of the Nephites; and (e) had stones cast at him.

- Prophets, spiritually gifted men transmit generational records
- The Gospel preached in the Americas
- Quotes whole chapters of Isaiah
- Good and bad are a necessary opposition
- Pride denounced
- Polygamy denounced
- Sacred towers and high places
- Messiah visits the Americas
- Idolatry and human sacrifice
- Hebrews divide into two classes, civilized and barbarous
- Extensive military fortifications, observations, “watch towers”
- Barbarous exterminate the civilized
- Discusses the United States

Source: B.H. Roberts, *Studies of the Book of Mormon*, p.240–242,324–344

After completing his analysis of the BOM and *View of the Hebrews*, B.H. Roberts concluded that the two books were strikingly similar. He stated



Did Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews* furnish structural material for Joseph Smith's *Book of Mormon*? It has been pointed out in these pages that there are many things in the former book that might well have suggested many major things in the other. Not a few things merely, one or two, or half dozen, but many; and it is this fact of many things of similarity and the cumulative force of them that makes them so serious a menace to Joseph Smith's story of the Book of Mormon's origin.

B.H. Roberts - Mormon Seventy and LDS church historian  
*Studies of the Book of Mormon*, p.240

**7. Similarities with *The Late War*:** As noted by Runnells, the Book of Mormon bears striking similarities with *The Late War between the United States and Great Britain*. The Late War was an 1819 textbook written in King James Version-style language for New York school children, one of them likely being Joseph Smith. The *first chapter* alone is stunning in its resemblance to the Book of Mormon:

1. Now it came to pass, in the one thousand eight hundred and twelfth year of the Christian era, and in the thirty and sixth year after the people of the provinces of Columbia had declared themselves a free and independent nation;
2. That in the sixth month of the same year, on the first day of the month, the chief Governor, whom the people had chosen to rule over the land of Columbia;
3. Even James, whose sir-name was Madison, delivered a written paper to the Great Sannhedrim of the people, who were assembled together.

4. And the name of the city where the people were gathered together was called after the name of the chief captain of the land of Columbia, whose fame extendeth to the uttermost parts of the earth; albeit, he had slept with his fathers ....

Along with the above KJV-style language used throughout the book, Runnells noticed that *The Late War* (published a mere decade before the Book of Mormon) contains the following Book of Mormon phrases, themes, and storylines:

- Devices of “curious workmanship” in relation to boats and weapons
- A “stripling” soldier “with his “weapon of war in his hand”
- “A certain chief captain ... was given in trust a band of more than two thousand chosen men, to go forth to battle” and who “all gave their services freely for the good of their country”
- Fortifications: “the people began to fortify themselves and entrench the high Places round about the city”
- Objects made “partly of brass and partly of iron, and were cunningly contrived with curious works, like unto a clock; and as it were a large ball”
- “Their polished steels of fine workmanship”
- “Nevertheless, it was so that the freeman came to the defence of the city, built strong holds and forts and raised up fortifications in abundance”
- Three Indian Prophets
- “Rod of iron”
- War between the wicked and righteous
- Maintaining the standard of liberty with righteousness
- Righteous Indians vs. savage Indians
- False Indian prophets
- Conversion of Indians
- Bands of robbers/pirates marauding the righteous protagonists
- Brass plates
- *Compare* The Late War: “And it came to pass, that a great multitude flocked to the banners of the great Sanhedrim” with Alma 62:5: “And it came to pass that thousands did flock unto his standard, and did take up their swords in defense of their freedom ... ”
- Worthiness of Christopher Columbus
- Ships crossing the ocean
- A battle at a fort where righteous white protagonists are attacked by an army made up of dark-skinned natives driven by a white military leader. The white protagonists are prepared for battle and slaughter their opponents to such an extent that they fill the trenches surrounding the fort with dead bodies. The surviving attackers flee into the wilderness/forest.
- Cataclysmic earthquake followed by great darkness
- Elephants/mammoths in America
- Literary Hebraisms/Chiasmus
- Boats and barges built from trees and fashioned after the ark
- The phrase “it came to pass” is used repeatedly
- **Numerous other parallels**

The similarities between *The Late War* and the Book of Mormon are astounding. This [web page](#) outlines just how devastating *The Late War* is to the Book of Mormon and its claims. Rick Grunder states in his paper: “The presence of Hebraisms and other striking parallels in a popular children’s textbook (*Late War*), on the other hand – so close to Joseph Smith in his youth – must sober our perspective.” (Grunder, pg. 770.)

**8. Similarities with *The First Book of Napoleon*:** As noted by Runnells, the Book of Mormon is also strikingly similar to [The First Book of Napoleon](#), which was published in 1809. The [first chapter](#):

1. And behold it came to pass, in these latter days, that an evil spirit arose on the face of the earth, and greatly troubled the sons of men.
2. And this spirit seized upon, and spread amongst the people who dwell in the land of Gaul.
3. Now, in this people the fear of the Lord had not been for many generations, and they had become a corrupt and perverse people; and their chief priests, and the nobles of the land, and the learned men thereof, had become wicked in the imagines of their hearts, and in the practices of their lives.
4. And the evil spirit went abroad amongst the people, and they raged like unto the heathen, and they rose up against their lawful king, and slew him, and his queen also, and the prince their son; yea, verily, with a cruel and bloody death.
5. And they moreover smote, with mighty wrath, the king's guards, and banished the priests, and nobles of the land, and seized upon, and took unto themselves, their inheritances, their gold and silver, corn and oil, and whatsoever belonged unto them.
6. Now it came to pass, that the nation of the Gauls continued to be sorely troubled and vexed, and the evil spirit whispered unto the people, even unto the meanest and vilest thereof ...

The First Book of Napoleon, published only two decades before Book of Mormon, contains many of thematic similarities to the BOM. The following is a side-by-side comparison of the beginning of The First Book of Napoleon with the beginning of the Book of Mormon as identified by Runnells.

#### The First Book of Napoleon

Condemn not the (writing) ... an account ... the First Book of Napoleon ... upon the face of the earth ... it came to pass ... the land ... their inheritances their gold and silver and ... the commandments of the Lord ... the foolish imaginations of their hearts ... small in stature ... Jerusalem ... because of the perverse wickedness of the people.

#### Book of Mormon

Condemn not the (writing) ... an account ... the First Book of Nephi ... upon the face of the earth ... it came to pass ... the land ... his inheritance and his gold and his silver and ... the commandments of the Lord ... the foolish imaginations of his heart ... large in stature ... Jerusalem ... because of the wickedness of the people.

**9. Early BOM Edition Teaches Trinity:** Early editions of the Book of Mormon taught a Trinitarian view of the Godhead before subsequent revisions altered the text. Joseph Smith's early theology (even after the First Vision) also subscribed to the doctrine of the Trinity. Including minor grammatical changes, the Book of Mormon has undergone over **100,000 changes** and at least **3,913 substantive changes**. However, some of those changes were quite significant and made to reflect Joseph's evolving view of the Godhead. Here are several examples identified by Runnells:

## Original 1830 Edition Text

[View Online](#)

1 Nephi 3 (p.25):

And he said unto me, Behold, the virgin whom thou seest, is [the mother of God](#), after the manner of the flesh.

1 Nephi 3 (p.25):

And the angel said unto me, behold the Lamb of God, yea, even [the Eternal Father!](#)

1 Nephi 3 (p.26):

And I looked and beheld the Lamb of God, that he was taken by the people; yea, [the Everlasting God](#), was judged of the world;

1 Nephi 3 (p.32):

These last records...shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people, that the Lamb of God is [the Eternal Father and the Savior of the world](#);

## Current, Altered Text

[View Online](#)

1 Nephi 11:18:

And he said unto me: Behold, the virgin whom thou seest is [the mother of the Son of God](#), after the manner of the flesh.

1 Nephi 11:21:

And the angel said unto me: Behold the Lamb of God, yea, even [the Son of the Eternal Father!](#)

1 Nephi 11:32:

And I looked and beheld the Lamb of God, that he was taken by the people; yea, [the Son of the everlasting God](#) was judged of the world;

1 Nephi 13:40:

These last records...shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people, that the Lamb of God is [the Son of the Eternal Father, and the Savior of the world](#);

As noted by Runnells, the following verses are among the many verses *still in* the Book of Mormon that hold a Trinitarian view of the Godhead:

[Alma 11:38-39:](#)

**38:** Now Zeezrom saith again unto him: Is the Son of God the very Eternal Father?

**39:** And Amulek said unto him: Yea, he is the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth, and all things which in them are; he is the beginning and the end, the first and the last;

[Mosiah 15:1-4:](#)

**1:** And now Abinadi said unto them: I would that ye should understand that God himself shall come down among the children of men, and shall redeem his people.

**2:** And because he dwelleth in flesh he shall be called the Son of God, and having subjected the flesh to the will of the Father, being the Father and the Son -

**3:** The Father, because he was conceived by the power of God; and the Son, because of the flesh; thus becoming the Father and Son -

**4:** And they are one God, yea, the very Eternal Father of heaven and of earth.

[Mosiah 16:15:](#)

**15:** Teach them that redemption cometh through Christ the Lord, who is the very Eternal Father. Amen."

LDS scholar, Boyd Kirkland, made the following observation:

"The Book of Mormon and early revelations of Joseph Smith do indeed vividly portray a picture of the Father and Son as the same God... Why is it that the Book of Mormon not only doesn't clear up questions about the Godhead which have raged in Christianity for centuries, but on the contrary just adds to the confusion? This seems particularly ironic, since a major avowed purpose of the book was to restore lost truths and end doctrinal controversies caused by the "great and abominable Church's" corruption of the Bible... In later years he [Joseph] reversed his earlier efforts to completely 'monotheise' the godhead and instead 'tritheised' it." (LDS scholar, Boyd

**10. Conflict with First Vision:** The documented changes to the Book of Mormon relating to the Godhead are particularly troubling, as they occurred long after Joseph Smith claimed to have seen God the Father and Jesus Christ. Runnells asks: "Assuming that the official [1838 First Vision account](#) is truthful and accurate, why would Joseph Smith hold a Trinitarian view of the Godhead if he personally saw God and Jesus Christ as separate and embodied beings a few years earlier in the Sacred Grove?" Why did early editions of the Book of Mormon (which, according to Joseph, was the most correct book on earth) perpetuate a Trinitarian doctrine?

**11. Implausibility of Jaredite Story:** There are many implausible stories contained within the Book of Mormon. For example, Joseph Smith said the first group of Book of Mormon people, the Jaredites, came to America in eight barges that resembled submarines. They were sealed all the way around except for two air holes. One air hole was located at the top and one on the bottom of the barges so as the barges rolled upside down in the water they could occasionally unstop one of the two air holes. These eight, airtight, rolling, rotating barges contained flocks of animals, swarms of bees, and enough provisions to enable them to travel to the New World over a period of 344 days. All eight ships miraculously landed at the same place even though they had no way to steer them.

**12. Authorship:** Most Church members claim that it would have been impossible for Joseph Smith (or Sydney Rigdon or Oliver Cowdery) to write the Book of Mormon. B.H. Roberts, however, casts doubt on that assumption. Roberts served as the President of the First quorum of the Seventy and the Assistant Church Historian. Though B.H. Roberts remained faithful to the Church and was a Book of Mormon defender, he was honest and bold enough to declare in his writings that Joseph Smith was indeed capable of creating the Book of Mormon. Roberts said:

"In light of this evidence, there can be no doubt as to the possession of a vividly strong, creative imagination by Joseph Smith, the Prophet. An imagination, it could with reason be urged, which, given the suggestions that are to be found in the 'common knowledge' of accepted American antiquities of the times, supplemented by such work as Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews*, would make it possible for him to create a book such as the Book of Mormon is."

There are many amazing mysteries that we cannot explain, but the first response is not to claim that the mysteries must have some supernatural origins. For example, how did Beethoven write symphonies when he was deaf? We still do not know exactly how the Egyptian pyramids were built. How did Einstein come up with the Theory of Relativity? And how did Mozart compose remarkable music as a mere child? Millions of books have been written by millions of authors. It seems that the vast majority outside of the LDS community do not believe the Book of Mormon to be a work of a genius or a literary masterpiece. Accomplished authors like Mark Twain read the Book of Mormon and found nothing in it to be divine. Twain actually referred to it as chloroform in print. If you examine a first edition Book of Mormon written in paragraph form, without the biblical-like chapters and verses, you would discover thousands of grammatical errors.

A fair question to ask is this: exactly what parts of the Book of Mormon could not have been written by Joseph Smith? Is there any phrase so profound, any idea so unique that someone who studied the Bible, attended religious services, exhorted at his local church, and had an excellent imagination could not have written or copied from another source? Church members do not question that the principal ancestors of the American Indians wrote the original Book of Mormon on gold plates, but they reject the idea that a 19<sup>th</sup> Century man could have done the same.

**13. Sources Joseph Smith Likely Used in Composing the Book of Mormon:** The majority of

the Book of Mormon can be accounted for in various texts that were available in Joseph Smith's time. According to historian and former CES educator [Grant Palmer](#), 75 percent of the book's content is accounted for by Joseph Smith's use of six 19<sup>th</sup> Century sources of which he was very familiar. Twenty-five percent came from the Bible and another 25 percent came from the Methodist religion. The remaining 25 percent came from three other sources. Most of this evidence is detailed in, *An Insider's View of Mormon Origins*, chapters 2-4. For example:

- **Outline:** The Book of Mormon's general story line may have come from Ethan Smith's, 1823 New York novel, *View of the Hebrews*. *In fact*, B. H. Roberts concluded there was "a great probability" that the Smith's read or were familiar with *View of the Hebrews*. The book told of a small colony of Israelites that left a European city about 600 BC, crossed the ocean, and arrived in the Americas. They divided into two classes (an industrious and an idle group) and engaged in many wars. The gospel was preached and a Christ figure was emphasized throughout the book. Finally, the barbaric division exterminated the civilized group.
- **1, 2 Nephi:** Bible passages dominate the text in these two books. Over half of the chapters in 2 Nephi are from the 1769 KJV edition of the Bible. We know this because the Book of Mormon contains the specific errors of that Bible translation. (Additionally, in 1 Nephi, [two 1811 dreams of Joseph Smith Sr.](#) are seen in Lehi's first dream and Lehi's tree of life dream. A number of other family biographical facts were used by Joseph in the Book of Mormon).
- **Jacob, Enos, Mosiah, Alma 1-42:** These books are dominated by evangelical Methodist Camp Meeting, terms, practices, patterns, and doctrines of which Joseph Smith was familiar. The 11 main Book of Mormon preachers between Jacob and Alma reflect, in virtually every way, what one would expect to find when making a study of the Second Great Awakening preachers of Joseph's era.
- **Alma 43-63:** These war chapters reflect the strategies of the American Indian Wars and the War of 1812, especially the British/Indian combat strategies used against the American soldiers in the War of 1812. Joseph heard his relatives and neighbors recount these stories.
- For some of this evidence, see Mercy Otis Warren's 1805 book, *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution*; and David Ramsey's 1789 book, *History of the American Revolution*.
- **Helaman; 3 Nephi 1-7:** The text of these ("Gadianton") chapters reveals strong influences from the anti-Masonic terms/rhetoric/methodology/practice/fears and sentiment reported during the presidential election of 1828-29. They flooded the newspapers (the Smith's subscribed to a newspaper) and the talk of the day. Andrew Jackson was a Mason, and the papers had a field day speculating on what Jackson would do to the Executive and Judicial branches of government if elected. Many of these anti-Masonic terms, concepts and predictions, are seen in this section of the Book of Mormon.
- **3 Nephi 11-28:** Again, Bible passages dominate this section of the Book of Mormon, specifically a 1769 edition or later printing of the KJV, including its errors. Of the 490 verses in these chapters, 246, or 50 percent contain, recognizable KJV quotations or phrases.
- **Ether:** This book appears to be Joseph Smith's essay on the central message of the Book of Mormon. The first half of Ether describes what happens to the Jaredites when they follow Christ and the second half explains what happens when they do not. In many ways, Ether is a miniature Book of Mormon story of the Nephites and Lamanites, including the extreme annihilation of both the Jaredites and Nephites down to the last man.